THE POLICING OF RACIST INCIDENTS IN STRATHCLYDE

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THANKS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   In 2002, Strathclyde Police commissioned a Glasgow University team of researchers to examine the policing of racist incidents and crimes in the Strathclyde force area. The study was carried out between August 2002 and April 2003.

Aims of the research

1.2   The Force asked us to address several key concerns. We were asked to examine the range and prevalence of racist incidents occurring in the Force area, and to whom these were being reported, if anyone.

1.3   We were also asked to look at the Force's procedures for receiving, recording and witnessing racist incidents. This required us to consider what impact these have had on public awareness and on police officer awareness. We were also asked to examine how successfully these procedures address the needs of victims, witnesses and others, and the delivery of policing services to the various communities in the Force area. We were asked to report on the views, experiences and perceptions of people from minority and majority ethnic backgrounds. We were to highlight the best of police practice and areas requiring improvement.

Research methods

1.4   Our research methods included:
- examination and analysis of anonymized police records of racist incidents
- in-depth interviews, some lasting up to two hours or more, with 175 individuals at their home or another place of their choice
- twenty focus groups with members of the public and representatives of agencies and voluntary organisations
- fifteen focus groups with police officers
- a street survey of 157 people in Glasgow, focusing on experiences of crime.

1.5   The participants were drawn from a range of social backgrounds and geographical locations as wide as possible. They ranged in age from twelve to elderly. Most were settled in Scotland, but we included temporary residents and asylum-seekers. Interpreters were provided for interviews and focus groups.

1.6   We asked most members of the public who took part in in-depth interviews to classify their ethnic group, first in words of their own choice and then according to official census categories. The range of participants covered all the census categories, including the majority white Scottish groups.[1] At several points we refer to participants using a simplified description of this ethnic background (where their families originated from).[2] Categorising people by their

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[1] We bring together catholic, protestant and those of Irish origin under this one category. There are issues of sectarianism which are relevant to those of racism, and some manifestations of anti-Irish prejudice and discrimination may be thought of as racist rather than solely sectarian. We cannot however explore those in greater depth in the limited space we have here.

[2] Following the terms typically used by participants themselves, we refer to South Asian backgrounds as simply "Asian", and other Asian backgrounds by the country of origin, such as China.

supposed ethnic group is a controversial matter.[3] This can perpetuate discrimination against the individuals who are linked together as a special category. Moreover, those individuals may have little in common and may not even regard themselves as belonging, either primarily or at all, to that category. Describing people by an assigned ethnic category implies that this is the most relevant factor in explaining their experiences: it may not be. We have tried where possible to take account of this by bringing in other factors which appeared from the data analysis to be relevant. Nevertheless, the focus on ethnicity does carry the risk of perpetuating the problems rather than identifying the causes.

There are, then, many limitations in carrying out research of this nature and reporting the findings: we try to indicate these where we can in the course of the report. Where we consider a simplified category of ethnicity important and relevant, we draw attention to it; otherwise we leave it out.

In the reporting of individual responses, we have been careful to ensure anonymity. On occasion this means we have chosen to suppress detail that could breach this anonymity. We are hugely grateful for the time and effort generously contributed by all our participants.

A more detailed description of the research methods will be found in the Appendix.

The national framework of policing racist incidents

1.7   The definition of a "racist incident" used by Strathclyde Police is that used throughout the British police forces. It is taken from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, which states: *"A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person."*[4]

All police forces must comply with national guidelines in investigating and recording reported racist incidents. They also have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between "persons of different racial groups".[5] Furthermore, they must co-operate with local government and other agencies in sharing information. In many ways this positions police forces as the lead agency in combating racism as it is officially defined.

1.8   As the weight of these responsibilities has grown, so has the power of other agencies and individuals to ensure that police forces comply. The Commission for Racial Equality has new, stronger powers to review policing policy and bring about operational changes. Individuals have more powerful rights to sue the police and a different burden of proof[6] now applies to certain types of cases involving actions against the police, making it easier for the litigant to prove their claim.

1.9   The Force must also comply with procedures applying specifically to the Scottish forces. The 2002 Lord Advocate's Guidelines[7] lay down requirements on assessing language needs and

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[3] It is also an exercise which is misleadingly definitive. There is no absolute marker for distinguishing these social, not biological categories. Even if there were, they would not mesh with varying local perceptions. A few of our participants spoke about their experiences of being "mistaken for" a member of another ethnic group.

[4] Recommendation 12 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny (1999) London: The Stationery Office.

http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm

[5] s.71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which came fully into force in Scotland in November 2002.

[6] Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin; relevant articles brought into force in the UK by the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003.

[7] These came about following the Jandoo Report on the murder of Surjit Singh Chhokar and can be found at: http://www.crownoffice.gov.uk/publications/LordAdvocate_guidelines_on_racist_crime.doc,

cultural sensitivities, liaising with the Scottish prosecution services and investigating racist crime. (Scots law has made provision to deal specifically with some elements of racism through statutory crimes and sentence enhancement. The main provisions include the offences of incitement to racial hatred[8] and racially aggravated harassment,[9] and the requirement imposed on Scottish courts to take proven racial motivation into account when passing sentence.[10] The expectation is that the racial element will increase the sentence.)[11]

1.10   The Force itself has a long history of proactive work on anti-racist training and combating racism. It has run a course called "Policing in a Multi-Racial Society" since the 1980s and has had a "Race" Policy in place since 1997. The broader developments in British and Scottish policing, combined with the Force's own initiatives, have produced a comprehensive set of procedures for dealing with racist incidents.

1.11   The Force has very significant responsibilities, governed by powerful constraints, many of them external. These have increased pressure on front-line officers and many feel resentful and feel unsupported. It is crucial that its officers understand and respect the policies and procedures imposed on them and are supported in any difficulties they have in following them. The public must also be aware of the Force's role.

The Force will not be able to achieve this without understanding the specific contexts of racism, which we will discuss next.

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with translations into several languages.

[8] ss.18-23 of the Public Order Act 1986.

[9] s.33 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a new section (s.50A) into the existing Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995.

[10] s.96 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

[11] For more detail, see *Pride and Prejudice: A Review of police Race Relations in Scotland* HMIC Thematic Inspection of Race Relations Edinburgh: Scottish Executive 2003.

CHAPTER TWO: RECORDED, REPORTED AND UNREPORTED INCIDENTS

Force records of racist incidents

2.1   The national definition of a "racist incident" is in some ways very wide. If any person perceives an incident as racist, it must be recorded it as such. The person who perceives this might not be the victim or investigating officer. The victim does not need to belong to a minority ethnic group. Given the breadth of this definition, it is interesting to compare the Force's records with those of other organisations. Official records are often dismissed as reflecting a subset of incidents which are both reported and recorded. Together however they add up to the most comprehensive database of incidents currently available in Scotland.

2.2   The Force records reports of racist incidents on a paper-based system, although last year it issued a summary statistical analysis of its records for 2001-02. The typical incident last year as racist involved an adult male complainer, in a shop or business, and the typical incident was racially aggravated conduct or harassment. 85% resulted in a crime report.

2.3   These statistics give a very useful but limited insight into the detail of recorded incidents. We were given access to full (anonymized) records of racist incidents reported to the Force between April 2001 and April 2002.

Accessibility

2.4   These records were often incomplete or illegible. They had to be anonymized by Force officers, then input by researchers into computer databases. There were also lengthy delays in the final version of forms reaching headquarters, so the researchers had to work with the great majority, but not all, of the records for that year. A broad interpretation of data protection requirements meant that it was not possible to identify repeat incidents. Paper records are of most use to supervisory officers within each division: they are less help in quickly identifying patterns and planning a response at Force level. The Force is upgrading to an electronic recording system, the Vulnerable Persons Database, where data will be entered by trained operators.[12] This will enable more rapid and effective analysis in the future.

Locus and targets

2.5   The published statistics for 2001-02 only provide basic information regarding locus. Full records show that a high proportion of recorded incidents are perpetrated against frontline staff in small businesses, the overwhelming majority of the perpetrators white. The great majority of the people targeted were men from Asian backgrounds. Around three-quarters of those targets worked in small shops and mini-markets, and another sixth worked in takeaways and restaurants. The typical incident was face-to-face, involving verbal abuse, often accompanied by threats or assault. Criminal damage was also common. The incidents were most frequent between 3pm-10pm, with the highest peak in mid-evening. Incidents were not always reported by victims or colleagues: some were reported by customers, passers-by or police officers.

2.6   This requires a policing focus beyond a generic response to "racist incidents". Other specialists, particularly those dealing with Crime Prevention and Business Crime, must be involved. They need to consider whether to provide a dedicated phone line, and whether they provide public information in several major languages and in a format which is accessible to minority ethnic users. The Community Safety team is taking the lead in providing leaflets in several languages; other teams should be keeping pace.

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[12] See also the additional discussion of this database in Chapter Six.

Errors and omissions

Simple summary statistics obscure the detail in individual reports. They also obscure errors and omissions.

2.7   Records frequently failed to show the preferred languages which a complainer wished to use for spoken and written communication. One in twelve records had no note of preferred languages at all. Around one in five listed only a spoken language and not a written one. This can be a serious omission.   Among those victims for whom both language preferences were recorded, around one in twenty preferred a different language for written communication than for spoken. Also, accurate records are required under the Lord Advocate's Guidelines.

2.8   The records also frequently failed to indicate whether the case had been followed up. Just under half of the records had been marked as completed, without written indication that there had been three follow-up visits. Two-fifths had a record of a third visit, but not a second visit, while around one in twelve showed a second visit, but had no record of a third visit. One in ten showed either only one follow-up visit or none at all. A quarter of records indicated that the visits had all taken place on the same day. On closer examination, it became clear that other forms of follow-up had been indicated, as where a case was referred on to a local community officer. It appeared from others that either Force procedure was not being followed, or if it was, this information was not being stored in the racist incident database.

2.9   As the police are frequently the starting point in the chain of communication from incident through to court case, officers need to be precise, accurate and consistent in the detail that they record. Force records also act as resources for planning future initiatives, so they need to be comprehensive. The Vulnerable Persons Database will help to ensure consistency, but officers still need to get accurate answers by asking questions appropriately and adhering to Force policy.

Examples of good practice

2.10   Several officers exercised their own judgement and recorded some incidents as racist where they noted that the complainer had not identified it as such, or where no complainer had come forward. These cases were typically ones in which an officer had been a witness to the incident. On one occasion, officers were speaking to a person who had committed a parking offence, when a passer-by approached them and drunkenly congratulated the officers on arresting a "f***ing Chinky". That perpetrator was charged with a racially aggravated offence,[13] referred to the local sheriff court.

2.11   There were also several incidents involving asylum-seekers where there was no overt racist language but the investigating officer had decided that the circumstances of the incident indicated a racist motivation. Sometimes officers added their own perceptions of hostile media portrayals of minority ethnic groups as a backdrop.

2.12   As racist incident records for previous years were wholly paper-based, it was not practicable to use previous records as a significant source of evidence to examine whether there was an increase in reports of particular types of incident immediately following 11th September 2001. It is clear that the language of racist abuse quickly incorporated references to terrorism and Islam after Sept. 11th and that this abuse was targeted against people from a very wide range of ethnic origins, often asylum-seekers. Some officers included this context when recording an incident's potentially racist motivation.

2.13   Other officers recorded relatively subtle cues which suggested a racist motive, such as a person carrying out an apparently unprovoked offence and then, when interviewed by attending officers, satirising the victim's accent. This level of sensitivity is valued by groups who are targeted for regular abuse.

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[13] s.50A Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995.

These examples of good practice should be commended, and emulated elsewhere.

Records kept by other agencies

2.14   A recent study for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation examined experiences of everyday racism in four UK cities, including Glasgow. This study did not estimate the prevalence of racist incidents but provided a deep investigation of the isolating effects of racist harassment.   The authors observe:

"Reporting to a relevant agency was rarely the first response after an incident. Reporting was viewed as a strategy only when people felt that they could not take any more harassment and abuse, the problem was getting worse, it was becoming life-threatening or there had been serious property damage and physical attack."[14]

2.15   It was clear from our own fieldwork that many incidents are never reported to any agency, and that not all of those which are reported to an agency end up being reported to the police. The existing evidence does not give a comprehensive picture, but we will consider what can be pieced together.

2.16   Many serious incidents are reported to agencies other than the police and are dealt with by civil means rather than through the criminal justice system. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), for instance, does not have statistical information on all enquiries made to it, so we cannot identify how many enquiries are made to the CRE in Strathclyde each year, or how many are taken up as formal cases. The CRE does state that there are a substantial number its cases do not come to the attention of the police and are pursued through tribunals or civil courts instead. Some of these are extremely serious, such as severe harassment and discrimination at work. The CRE encourages people to report to local agencies: a local Racial Equality Council, housing association or other body most likely to be able to resolve the problem. Some of these incidents may also be reported to the police later on but a substantial number will not.

2.17   Agencies in Strathclyde which have a formal system of third-party reporting to the police, such as the West of Scotland Racial Equality Council (WSREC), state that the majority of racist incidents reported to them will be reported to the police either directly by the complainant or through the third-party reporting system. A number of other support organisations, such as Positive Action in Housing (PAIH) also encourage reporting and the majority of racist incidents reported to them have at some stage been reported to the police. Participants in the research who had approached WSREC and PAIH praised them highly for tenacity and commitment, as did others who had approached non-governmental organisations in Glasgow. Experiences in other parts of Strathclyde were more mixed.

2.18   Many incidents are reported to landlords, concierges, doctors, teachers, employers and others who may or may not encourage further reporting or who may not make enquiries to elicit whether an incident appears to be racist.

2.19   PAIH, which encourages staff to enquire specifically about racist incidents, has noted an increase in racial harassment cases. They have discovered individuals who have not reported racially motivated incidents because they thought they should not raise such issues, or did not know they could. It is problematic for people to identify and report racial harassment cases for the first time. A particular agency's system of third-party reporting may encourage reporting of cases which are identified by its staff as racist incidents, but this does not necessarily mean that the agency itself is picking all of these up. Some may only be picked up if the agency operates a procedure which reliably elicits the relevant information. At present there is no comprehensive system in Strathclyde for recording racist incidents reported to governmental and non-

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[14] Kusminder Chahal and Louis Julienne (2003) *"We can't all be white!": Racist victimisation in the UK*, York: YPS. The quote above is drawn from the online summary at:

http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/679.asp: it does not appear in the full report.

governmental agencies and bringing those records together. Attention would require to be given both to cases normally progressed as civil matters, and to confidentiality. A comprehensive system would also require consistent staff training.

Existing survey data on unreported racist incidents

2.20   Research on minority ethnic groups in Scotland quickly becomes out of date due to the changing demography of the population, so we examined only recent data on crime reporting. The findings from the ethnic minority booster sample in the Scottish Crime Survey, carried out in 2000,[15] indicated that the "ethnic minority" sample group were slightly less likely to have been at risk of of personal offences such as theft, robbery and assault when compared to the "white" sample group. They were more likely to have been victims of household offences such as vandalism or theft from their home or motor vehicle. They were less likely to know one or more of the perpetrators.

2.21   People in the ethnic minority sample group whose homes were targeted were more likely to suffer repeat victimisation than were those in the white sample group. People in the ethnic minority sample group were also significantly more likely to become the personal target of group attacks (three or more perpetrators) carrying out offences such as assault. Around a sixth of the sample received abusive comments during the last year, most of which they regarded as racially motivated. The minority ethnic sample group reported less than a third of the vandalism incidents and around half of the personal offences incidents (theft, assault, robbery, etc. – the survey did not examine reporting of verbal abuse).

2.22   The size of the sample makes the findings more useful for exploratory purposes, rather than for detailed statistical examination. Also, the minority ethnic category is not broken down further and the survey excluded 2% of the sample on the grounds of language barriers. The findings are nevertheless a useful addition to the Scottish crime surveys.

Findings from our own surveys, interviews and focus groups

Experiences of racism

2.23   Our studies revealed that the number and range of reported incidents formed only a small part of the experiences which our participants described as racist. Also, there was only partial agreement on what was or was not "racist". Even within the study, individual perceptions of "racism" varied in different research settings. Social phenomena are rarely easy to pin down, but identifying racism is particularly problematic.

This disagreement is crucial to policing racist incidents for two reasons: first, because so many experiences did not take the form of an expressly racist criminal act; second, because so much fell outwith the range of problems which participants felt the police could or would be interested in. We will discuss this in barriers to reporting.

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[15] Ian Clark and Traci Leven (2002) *The 2000 Scottish Crime Survey: Analysis of the Ethnic Minority Booster Sample*. Edinburgh, Scottish Executive Social Research.
www.scotland.gov.uk/cru

Unreported incidents

Any attempt to estimate the extent or prevalence of these sorts of incidents is beset with difficulties, but it is worth attempting nonetheless because so many participants spoke about how serious they perceived these to be.

2.24   We used a range of methods to investigate unreported incidents: a street survey, in-depth interviews and focus groups. We asked our participants about incidents and crimes which they themselves had not reported, and incidents and crimes which others might or might not report.

2.25   Among the individual interviewees who had already reported one or more racist incidents to the police, around four-fifhs had experienced at least one other incident in the last year which they viewed as racist and which they did not report. The great majority of these incidents were also not reported to any other agency. Over half had experienced several such incidents, and over a third described incidents happening so frequently that they could not quantify the number involved. Around a third of this latter group commented that it occurred "every day" or "constantly". The great majority of these were personal incidents, usually involving verbal abuse, with a significant number involving threats or assault. While the victims did include what are usually seen as "typical" targets for repeat racist victimisation - frontline shop and food outlet staff, asylum-seekers and people living in high-crime areas there were just as many individuals from a wide range of social backgrounds suffering abuse in the street or at work, or around their homes. The majority experienced this abuse from different perpetrators, rather than receiving repeat victimisation from a single source. Over half of the perpetrators were children or "youths".

2.26   We therefore found from our sample home interview group - people who had taken the step of reporting at least one incident to the police – that they nevertheless experienced a large amount of verbal racist abuse and other racist incidents which they did not report. We explored this in focus groups of people from minority ethnic backgrounds, asking participants to estimate the proportion of unreported racist incidents. The typical response was that between 50% and 80% of incidents went unreported to the police.

2.27   The range of views on what is racism and what might be a racist incident is extensive. Even though individuals are not all speaking about the same things, they throw light on community discussions about racism and non-reporting. This in turn gives an insight into how communities view the police role and the work they do.

Experiences in established urban communities

2.28   According to recent census data, the largest groups from minority ethnic backgrounds in Strathclyde are the established Asian communities in large urban areas, particularly Glasgow. In focus groups in these communities, the general view was that their members would report around half of violent racist incidents and perhaps a fifth or a sixth of incidents of overtly racist verbal abuse.

2.29   Participants thought that people in their twenties were most likely to report, while younger people were very unlikely to report. (Across Scotland, almost a third of people from Asian backgrounds are 15 or younger, making this a large sector of that population.) It was thought that the older generation, particularly first generation individuals, would report when persuaded to do so by younger adults. Some, particularly small business staff and school students, said that they experienced abuse and harassment so regularly that they saw little point in abstracting particular incidents to report.

Experiences of asylum-seekers

2.30   The proportion of incidents reported by asylum-seekers and refugees (particularly those who had been in Strathclyde for a year or more) was generally thought to have increased thanks to supportive and proactive policing. The Force has provided a range of support mechanisms for

asylum-seekers, from interpreters accompanying officers on patrol, to a booklet in 17 languages with introductory information and advice on safety and racial harassment. It tags racist incidents against asylum-seekers and has appointed an Asylum Liaison Officer, who was widely praised. Several participants mentioned that the police surgeries, alongside other measures, had increased asylum-seekers' confidence in the police. This had encouraged asylum-seekers not only to report more incidents, but also to report them directly rather than through third-party reporting channels.

2.31   Key officers themselves were keen to proactively visit the families to provide advice at an early stage, and to help them settle in and become secure. This service seems to have been very successful and it would be valuable to find a way to promote it to all new arrivals, perhaps through a partner agency.

2.32   Some external factors limit the power of the Force to carry out proactive policing. Many asylum-seekers are reluctant to report incidents to police because they believe that it could affect their chances of remaining in the UK. The Force is being forced to spread its specialist services more thinly. The majority of asylum-seekers had been housed in the Sighthill area of Glasgow, enabling the Force to concentrate specialist provision there. Now asylum-seekers are being dispersed more widely. This can undermine the proactive approach, and exposes the limitations of concentrating resources into specialist policing. One family placed outwith Sighthill told us that police officers had done little to help them although they had suffered serious and traumatising attacks outwith and within their home.

Overall, however, the Force's work with asylum-seekers has been innovative and exemplary. It should be publicised widely and emulated elsewhere.

Experiences of people living outwith large minority ethnic communities

2.33   A very small number of racist incidents are recorded as reported by people from Chinese backgrounds. In its 2001/02 records of racist incidents, the Force records only 23, even though the 2001 census identifies over 7000 living in the council areas of Strathclyde. We explored this in three focus groups involving people in Chinese social networks. They estimated that the proportion of racist incidents reported was very low, particularly among the elderly.

2.34   There was no consensus on why the records were so few. Some suggested this was characteristic of a stoical "Chinese culture"; others argued that incidents were being reported, but not recognised as potentially racist. We were told of several incidents which participants felt were probably racist and which had been reported. In some instances it appeared that the incident had not been tagged as racist and followed up as such.

2.35   However, we also found in individual interviews that those who are geographically isolated from others of similar ethnic background were less likely to report, particularly if they lived in deprived areas. Among these individuals in rural areas, or predominantly majority ethnic suburban areas, we found that those who reported to the police fell into two categories. They were either wealthy people living in affluent communities, or people living in deprived areas who felt driven to report after repeated serious harassment. Census data indicate that people from Chinese backgrounds tend to be thinly spread across Strathclyde. Our data suggest that people from all smaller ethnic groups are particularly reluctant to report racist incidents (or to find that these are not recorded as such). In extremely marginalized communities, such as Gypsy Travellers, any reporting was extremely rare.

2.36   The small number of illegal "economic" migrants were said to avoid all contact with authorities, even when they need such vital help as medical treatment or protective policing.

2.37   Police officers and other participants in majority ethnic focus groups tended to be unaware of the views frequently expressed by minority ethnic participants regarding the extent and prevalence of non-reporting. This suggests that officers were attending calls about racist incidents while not fully informed about the context in which those incidents are happening. There

were notable exceptions, particularly among community officers working in areas where there were large minority ethnic communities. We will return to this point later.

Changes following September 11th

2.38   Whether or not they thought that all incidents were reported, officers generally took the view that the huge increase in the number of racist incidents recorded by the police in recent years was largely due to changes in recording procedures rather than an increase in racist victimisation, with the exception of certain incidents following September 11th and also incidents directed against asylum-seekers.

2.39   Among representatives of community agencies, there was a generally-held view that racist incidents had increased since September 11th, although there was not a consensus over whether the numbers had fallen back. Some stated that victimisation "came in waves", with particular groups being targeted following negative media attention to asylum or international conflict. Although research elsewhere has suggested that such "waves" are more perceived than real, this did not appear to be the case after September 11th. People were reporting incidents which they described as untypical of their experiences prior to September 11th.

One woman participant from an Asian background observed:

"… if you look at after September 11th, I think there definitely was an increase in women who were being approached in terms of either wearing hijab or just looking Asian, you know. But that doesn't mean that all of them are gonna run away to the police and report it. …there has been this increase, but does that just mean that there has been an increase in women coming to the police and reporting it? Because a lot of the stuff which I know of is what's been picked up by some of the Muslim newspapers who have done this trawl across the UK through the people who know others and this is what is happening. So, this information isn't what is coming from police stats, it's coming from a kind of knowledge within the community."

2.40   Force records for this period indicate many references to September 11th, suggested by abusive language referring to the Taliban, Al Qaeda and so on. Victims were typically men rather than women. Specialist officers thought that these reflected a real increase in the number of incidents, rather than an increase in the proportion of incidents reported.

Which incidents are not reported, and by whom

Participants in focus group discussions were asked to identify the kinds of incidents they would be most and least likely to report to the police, and who in their communities were generally less likely to report.

2.41   The kinds of racist incident people said they would be least likely to report were verbal abuse (other than perhaps racist remarks in the workplace).

"People who are racially abused verbally turn a blind eye. Especially because usually it comes from strangers. It's something that you shouldn't have to deal with, but it happens all the time." (participant in a focus group of young women from minority ethnic backgrounds)

2.42   Some said that they would be very unlikely to report any harassment by police officers which they perceived to be racially-motivated.

2.43   Participants were most likely to report crimes of violence, and graffiti or vandalism at their place of residence if there was evidence that they had been personally targeted. Reporting was seen as a last rather than a first resort. One man explained:

"*I suppose people only report it when they know that it's going to get out of hand or it's - you know it's not very - there is gonna be violence attached to it, or it's gonna be very detrimental to them. Then I suppose they would report it.   It's sort of very much like - up against the wall*."

2.44   The decision on what to report did not necessarily reflect how seriously the victims themselves felt the incident to be.

Survey results

2.46   For the purposes of comparison with our other data, we carried out an indicative survey in four areas of Glasgow, comparing experiences of majority and minority ethnic individuals.

2.47   The survey produced some interesting insights into perceptions about ethnic minority categories and how fluid these can be. Five people said they had been "mistaken" for a member of a different minority ethnic group or had been abused for having a partner who was identified as having a minority ethnic background. We asked our participants to classify themselves using census categories, but as before, we emphasise that these identities may not fully capture how those individuals viewed themselves, or were viewed by others, in other settings in daily life.

We grouped the results by three ethnic divisions:

- majority ethnic (long-established white Scots),[16]
- visible minority (such as those from an African, Caribbean or Asian background)[17]
- white minority (such as East European, English or Irish).

2.48   In the last twelve months, around two-fifths of majority ethnic participants and just over a half of minority white participants had experienced property damage, physical assault, or offensive remarks or threats in a public place.

In contrast, over three-fifths of visible minority individuals had experienced one or more of these incidents, and nearly half thought the motivation in one or more instances had been racist. The worst affected by offensive remarks or threats were women in non-white categories. Four-fifths had experienced offensive remarks or threats. Interestingly, the one-fifth who said they had not experienced these were also the only ones in this group not to have always lived in the UK.

2.49   Men in non-white categories were most likely to have experienced physical assault (a quarter, as compared to a seventh among majority and minority white men). Most of these men were from Asian backgrounds. Whether they had always lived in the UK was not a significant factor.

2.50   Five of the majority white participants (the white Scottish census category), all men, said they had experienced racist remarks from a visible minority individual.

2.51   Not all the participants answered the question about whether they were experiencing more racism nowadays, less racism nowadays or about the same. Of those who did, women in the non-white categories were the most likely to say that they were experiencing more racism. Overall, two-thirds of those answering in the non-white categories said that they were experiencing more. Both men and women added that they had experienced more since September 11th.

2.52   Some results were noticeably different from those in the ethnic minority booster sample of the Scottish Crime Survey. Visible minority women were much more likely than majority white men or women to experience offensive remarks or threats, while visible minority men were considerably more likely to experience physical assault than majority white men or women. Levels of verbal abuse overall were far higher than the estimates that our focus group and other participants offered, for both majority and minority ethnic groups. The racist incident rate per head

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[16] We did not ask the majority ethnic participants to categorise themselves further, to indicate if they were, for instance, Catholic or Protestant, or third or later generation Irish, Italian or Polish. A survey operating at this level of subtlety would require a very much larger number of participants.

[17] Individuals such as gypsy travellers may also be visibly members of minority groups, but none took part in this component of the research.

of minority ethnic population as recorded by Strathclyde Police is very much lower than that suggested by the survey.[18] There are several possible explanations, other than the usual statistical anomalies which bedevil all but the largest surveys. It may be that when asked to estimate the extent of unreported racist incidents, even in settings such as our focus groups, people have not heard about everyday incidents which happen to others in their communities, or are filtering their recall of incidents so that they estimate only the occurrence of certain types of incident. It may be that those who chose to take part in the street poll were atypical and more likely to experience racist incidents of this kind.

2.53   The results do however fit well with our focus group and interview findings, in which racist incidents were felt to be very prevalent and women were not generally thought to suffer less racist victimisation than men did.

Differing conceptions of racism

2.54   Participants offered differing conceptions of racism. People from all ethnic backgrounds focused on intention as central. When this excluded "unwitting" actions, it was a narrower focus than the Stephen Lawrence definition used by all police forces. However, people often distinguished between those who might be expected to know how to behave (police officers and other public officials) and those who might "justifiably" remain ignorant (such as members of the public living and working in areas where they encountered few people from minority ethnic backgrounds). Young people said that they were more willing to name racism and speak about their experiences than were their elders, particularly those elders who were the first generation to live in Scotland.

"Younger people don't take it in our stride… we're more open in dealing with it. I think we sometimes take it more seriously because we're born and brought up here. Whereas, our elders came from another country and they just put up with it. … I think we see ourselves as part of this community, whereas people that have lived elsewhere sort of view themselves as outsiders, and say "OK, well this is just a natural thing." We were born and brought up here and we don't see that. I mean the younger generation doesn't see that and if somebody is being racist, it becomes sort of an issue then." (participant in focus group of young women from minority ethnic backgrounds)

2.55   This does not mean that all participants thought that racism was less prevalent than records suggest; rather, they viewed it differently. In addition, the estimates are likely only to have focused on the types of racist incidents which individuals saw as "suitable" to report to the police. Subtle implicit hostility, indirect discrimination in public services or at work – all these were described as problems, sometimes serious problems, which do not appear in police records. Socio-economic differences may also influence what people do and do not see as police work.

2.56   It is important for officers to be aware of how people may perceive racism. Without an understanding of this, they may be less likely to pick up on the context and seriousness of an incident, and fail to tag an incident as potentially racist. This then weakens the value of official records in picking up on local perceptions, patterns and problems. One participant explained:

"I am not sure whether the police actually asked the right questions to these young lads who are saying 'this is what happened to us'. Now, I am not sure whether they asked, you know, if we were attacked. And they were two clearly visible Asian kids, you know. Did they ask "was there

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[18] The racially motivated incident rate for the whole population of the Force in 2001/02 was .7 per 1000. If we adjust the Force's racist incident statistics to include only those first complainers who were non-white by the force's records and relate that to the minority ethnic population of Strathclyde in the most recent census we reach a rough figure of around 40 incidents per 1000 in the most recent financial year. The figure should be treated with caution, as although this is a device which has been used by the CRE, it is a procedure which requires comparison between sets of statistics which are not compiled using identical indices.

any banter in terms of 'black B'" and all of that? You know, none of that." (woman participating in focus group of minority ethnic agency representatives)

A woman taking part in a focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds also remarked: *"sometimes they say it is just an argument, it is not their boundary, so they won't take up the case."*

2.57   Participants in the majority ethnic focus groups, including police officers, sometimes mentioned violence and property damage when asked what words and images they associated with racism, but they tended to focus on overt verbal abuse. For participants in the minority ethnic focus groups, though, expressly racist verbal abuse was only one part of the experience of victimisation regularly mentioned, albeit the most common of the overt forms. Associating racism with overtly hostile behaviour such as that displayed by abusive youths, or even more narrowly, the BNP, meant that some participants in majority ethnic focus groups, including police officers, saw racism as the preserve of *"a tiny minority".*

2.58   These perceptions expressed by many officers were linked to dissatisfaction with the Stephen Lawrence definition of racism and its focus on any person's perceptions. Some officers felt that recording such incidents "skewed" official statistics. Only a few officers spoke positively about the official procedures, or felt that the records have the potential to give a broader picture of victims' perceptions, a picture which could be valuable to understanding patterns of racism in local contexts.

2.59   A major difference emerged over the significance of stereotyping language, terms like "Chinky" or "Paki". People who said they had personally experienced racism were much more likely to identify these terms as being intentionally racist. Police officers, and members of the public who said they had not personally experienced racism, were much more likely to dismiss these as geographic nicknames which were only offensive when coupled with swear words or other abusive remarks. Those who took this view were usually people from majority ethnic backgrounds. So while most participants saw intention as being pivotal to racism, there was no consensus on what actions would typically be seen as intentionally racist.

2.60   At first glance this may not seem relevant, given that the Stephen Lawrence definition encompasses the perception of any person. In practice it mattered a great deal, because officers frequently expressed the view both that the Stephen Lawrence definition required them to record incidents which they felt were not "really" racist, and that claims of widespread unreported racism were exaggerated. One officer for instance said:

"I had a time before once with a young Asian boy… [details removed]…they said "Well you Pakis have always got [details removed]". Right, when he reported it to me it didn't even cross my mind that this was a racist incident. And he didn't say that it was a racial element to it. And after I put the crime report in and it came back to the crime management and obviously they picked up on it and I got a note from [a senior officer] and he asked me to put a racial incident form in." (some details have been removed to hide the participant's identity)

These officers also said this diminished their sympathy towards complainers. As we will see later, sympathy or the lack of it was seen by the victims as a central factor in whether or not police response to reports of incidents was satisfactory.

2.61   Some officers did emphasise stereotyping language. One officer remarked in a focus group:

"More often than not you are in a house when someone says they are 'going out to the Chinky' or 'down to the Pakis to pick up a loaf of bread.' You are teaching your kids that and the kids go out and repeat it. That's basic stuff. You have no idea how dangerous that is."

More often, however, officers felt that stereotyping language was not in itself racist.

2.62   These differing conceptions of racism, among many other reasons we have mentioned, make it impossible to make assured estimates of the proportion or prevalence of unreported racist incidents. Nevertheless, given the seriousness with which our minority ethnic participants

viewed the problems of racism, it is worth making qualified estimates based on perceptions of how many incidents occur, and to whom.

2.63 Awareness of possibly racist hostility appears to be low among majority ethnic groups, including most police officers. This is a serious problem. All officers must be fully aware of the most common types of incident which appear in police records (offences against frontline staff in small retail businesses). They should also be fully aware of the range - and very high prevalence - of incidents which are never reported.

2.64   It appears that only a tiny fraction of experiences experienced as racism ever come to the notice of the police, and that the prevalence of such experiences is extremely high. One of our greatest difficulties in carrying out the research was in finding participants from minority ethnic backgrounds (particularly visible minority) who stated that they had never experienced racism.

2.65   Officers who wanted to decide what is or is not "really" racist, without taking full account of the perceptions in their local area, were resentful of official procedures and hostile to the restrictions placed on their discretion. As we will see later, victims from all ethnic backgrounds measured their satisfaction with the police not simply in terms of whether a problem was "solved", but also very much by how they felt they were treated by the police as individuals. If officers implement policies reluctantly, the effectiveness of the policies may be diminished. Officers' personal views about the nature and prevalence of racism then become central to the effective implementation of anti-racist policies. The question is not only whether or not procedures are carried out, but whether they are carried out in a sympathetic and informed manner.

CHAPTER THREE:
PERCEPTIONS OF THE WILLINGNESS OF THE FORCE TO INVESTIGATE RACIST INCIDENTS

3.1 There were many reasons offered as to why people would not report incidents. To begin with, we will consider views about the willingness of the Force to investigate reports of racist incidents.

3.2 Participants in minority ethnic focus groups were more likely than their majority ethnic comparators to express negative views of the Force. These views were often based on the experiences of relatives and friends. A major problem was negative expectations regarding the police response. Lack of confidence in the Force was quite widespread, particularly among people living in deprived areas, and among minority ethnic participants generally. A substantial group felt however that the Force was becoming increasingly willing to investigate and that the situation had much improved over the last few years.

3.3 Among minority ethnic participants, the fear of racism from individual officers, or institutional racism within the Force, was also a widespread deterrent to reporting. People felt that they had experienced cultural insensitivity from officers, and that there was harsh policing of young Asian living in the large towns and cities.

3.4 At the same time, there was a widely-held perception that only proactive policing in the form of a greater police presence would protect victims from further incidents. Many felt their areas to be under-policed.

3.5 Many did feel the Force were willing to investigate racist incidents, but their perception of a successful outcome had more to do with a feeling of being treated with respect than whether someone was taken to court. This was related to a perception that many negative experiences with police officers have a racist element. These issues are major ones for the Force. As these perceptions were said to be a major deterrent to reporting, we will look at them in detail.

Poor "customer service attitude"

3.6 Some participants were deterred from reporting by perceptions that they would not get a friendly response. These views were mostly drawn from personal experience. Some participants from both majority and minority ethnic backgrounds felt that officers were generally unfriendly. Many felt that response varied from officer to officer.

""You get a fed-up kind of reply." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

"… you know - the way their faces are, tripping them, looking miserable or really stern or serious or that, you can't always feel able to approach them. I would like to think that I could just say hello to them or have a conversation with them without feeling that there is this kind of huge barrier between us, you know, like - there is this hostility from them." (woman participant in majority white focus group, living in deprived area)

"I think policewomen are more sympathetic than men, specifically to the Asian women, 'cause they see they're scared, and I think just, being like a woman they can relate to that, but police men are just - you get some men that are really, really helpful and sympathetic. It's in the tone of voice, at the end of the day: if you show them that you're indifferent, that totally puts the person off." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

The lack of a rapid police response

3.7 Many took the view that the police would be too slow to respond to a report of a racist incident, or that even a sympathetic and supportive response would be insufficient to deal with an ongoing problem. Again, this tended to be drawn from personal experience.

"So this time we are so frightened, if we call the police, later on they will put something even worse in your shop. But even though the police will come but they won't come instantly when it happens, so by the time they come everything will be destroyed, we will get hurt and it will be too late. I think it is better that the police - they have to go around and get more patrols on the street to prevent all this. All the racism, whatever. All this research they do, but they need some action. To prevent all this." (older woman participant in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds, speaking about her experiences in running a takeaway)

"I have just thought to myself, 'Well, how long is this incident realistically going to last?' If there is a fight or something like that and I assess it and see whether it is worth actually phoning the police, because on occasions it's not worth phoning them because you know that in 20 minutes it's going to be over and they are going to move on, so you have got to just decide whether it's worthwhile phoning the police because you know the response time is so poor. Unless you actually phone 999 whereby they have to kind of come and respond to it because it's an emergency." (woman participant in majority white focus group, living in deprived area)

The lack of a constant police presence

3.8   Even where officers took reports particularly seriously and endeavoured to help victims, the threat to some still remained, leaving victims vulnerable and unwilling to report future incidents. Those victims, although appreciative of individual officers' efforts, felt that sustained high-profile policing was the only means of controlling the problem. This was seen as a problem across the board, not only for people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

"Going back to the actual night that the window was broken, the police reaction then was quite quick because they came right away, and they actually helped clear up the mess outside. They came back the following night … they actually patrolled the area during, overnight till the next morning to make sure there were no other disturbances. What generally happens is, they [the perpetrators] *will maybe break one window in one area and then the group move on to another area and do some more damage elsewhere. The police really need to be active, continually going round the area."* (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds, speaking about an incident involving her mother)

3.9   The need for more high-visibility policing came up again and again among all ethnic groups (majority and minority), particularly from those living in high-crime areas. Many individuals felt that their ethnic communities or their neighbourhoods were not so much well policed or badly policed, but unpoliced. While many participants were unsure about whether to trust the police, most nevertheless wanted to see more, better policing, rather than rejecting policing entirely. They hoped the police would detect incidents themselves, or prevent some of them happening, so victims would not need to report incidents and face the risks of retaliation.

3.10   The Force's statistical analysis indicated that more than 1 in 4 reported racist incidents were carried out by young people. Youth agencies and some other agencies working with ethnic minorities suggested that a greater, and precisely targeted, street presence of individuals such as detached youth workers, in partnership with policing services, would reduce such incidents. Several initiatives on youth offending are currently being undertaken in Glasgow.[19] The results of evaluation will be valuable.

3.11   This shortage of officers on foot on the beat was very widely regarded as an urgent matter, and an indication of the Force's commitment to reducing crime. Front-line officers agreed

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[19] These include the two-year pilot Restorative Justice System involving Youth Offenders, in which Strathclyde Police is a partner, a new Youth Court and the "Includem" project which will provide additional youth support outwith normal office hours. There are also several innovative schemes being implemented across the UK, for instance in the Metropolitan Police which is introducing civilian Police Community Support Workers on visible patrol. See also Rae Sibbitt (1997) *The perpetrators of racial harassment and racial violence* Home Office Research Study 176 London: Home Office pp.86-92.

and many felt that this was a crucial first step in changing perceptions of the police. They often mentioned the lack of opportunity to counter negative impressions of the police, because they were seldom on the street where they could be approached by passers-by.

General lack of trust or confidence in the police

3.12   Another major deterrent was a lack of trust or confidence in the police. When asked why they thought people did not report racist incidents, this came up repeatedly in minority ethnic focus groups. Four women from Asian backgrounds agreed that that they felt they would not get a sympathetic reception.

"I think there's just a general feeling you get from people that there's no point. I mean, you feel that the Force is trying to involve a lot of the ethnic minorities, but it's still not making a difference: they still do make you feel like, reporting an incident is wrong."

3.13   Asked the same question, one young Asian woman said *"they might not take us seriously"*, while a young Chinese woman said "*It's a kind of attitude. They don't treat it as a priority, then you get to a point where, you're doing it again and you are kind of seen as, oh you're being a nuisance because you are phoning all the time."* A young Asian man explained: *"Because, like, the police will just write it down and say 'OK'. They won't bother looking into it.*"

3.14   Some participants from all backgrounds expressed confidence in the police, and we will look in detail later at positive experiences of police response and police work.

"Recently the police have improved their attitude." (woman participating in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

"I think they are quite fair, I think they have improved quite a lot and I have found them very pleasant." (participant in focus group of people from African or Caribbean backgrounds)

Nevertheless, many people from minority ethnic backgrounds who were living or working in deprived areas described community alienation from policing, particularly among teenagers:

"But see, working with children especially from this area, you find that the confidence they have in the police is so low." (representative of minority ethnic youth agency working in deprived area)

3.15   It was felt by many living in Glasgow that young people from Asian backgrounds were singled out by police officers. They said that groups were moved on in the streets, and searches and questioning were said to be targeted at Asian young people more than at young people from majority white backgrounds. No evidence has been found of this in previous research, although that study was said to be inconclusive, and it did record similar perceptions of bias.[20] The Force does not yet keep ethnic monitoring records of its stop and search activities (it is required to do so under recent legislation, and will in the near future).

The following comes from a focus group discussion among Asian young women.

"Most young people feel intimidated by the police. Actually, they hate them."

[Focus group facilitator] *"Why?"*

"Because they are pulled up for no reason. To ask them, 'why are you out?', 'Do you carry a knife?'"

"They wouldn't have to carry a knife if the police were there."

3.16   This widespread lack of trust may be partly related to the fact that a high proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Strathclyde work or live in deprived areas. Majority white participants also expressed a lack of confidence in the police, and those living in affluent areas did not typically express the same intensity of feeling of community alienation.

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[20] Reid Howie Associates (2002) *Police Stop and Search among White and Minority Ethnic Young People in Scotland*, Scottish Executive Social Research.

Several also thought that policing of deprived areas was harsher and less tolerant.

"And also if people have witnessed an incident and they call the police or go forward to the police, very often people feel quite intimidated, as if they were the suspect rather than a witness. And this I think applies across the board. But I would also say that sometimes, living in this city as I do, that Asian people I know who this has happened to think this is because of racism, that they're getting treated in this way, but very often it's just the way that everyone gets treated, or a lot of people. And it may be that it's a class or area thing, maybe that sort of thing does not happen in Bearsden." (young adult man)

3.17   The feeling that the police were not serving ethnic minority groups was widespread among minority ethnic participants of all ages, whether or not they lived or worked in deprived areas. While views were mixed the feeling of alienation was pervasive, more so than among majority ethnic participants. There was however a quite widespread impression voiced among the minority ethnic participants that policing in Strathclyde had improved in recent years. While not all held this view, a significant proportion did. The typical view of the Force was critical, while also believing that change was possible and required a successful dialogue.

Racist incidents not taken seriously

3.18   A lack of confidence that the police would take racist incidents seriously was often cited as a deterrent.

"May I say … why I wouldn't report it. I might not have faith in the police as treating it as a racial incident. That they might just want to treat it as an attack or a violent attack, that's what everyone else was saying - that that's very off putting. You would need to have faith that they would treat it as a racial incident and they see it as reporting it as that." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

3.19   Sometimes this was based on recent personal experience, but often it was based on experiences in the more distant past or on a perception of what would happen if the person did report.

One young woman gave recent examples of racist incidents not being acted upon:

"When there's a football match it can be rife. And there's policemen standing about and hear these, I mean they're not young boys, they're grown men, you know like in their mid-forties, who are shouting racist abuse, and the policemen just stand there. I don't know if that's because it is some kind of mob rule situation where the police themselves are scared of these grown men, but…"
[Focus group facilitator] *"And is that during the football match or do you find this afterwards?"*
"Well, I've never attended a football match, but I've had to walk though some crowds to get to my place of work and that's what happened. And the police are there, and they can hear these racist comments but nothing's said. And you as, me as a female walking up the road myself, it was pretty terrifying, you know, and feeling even worse that there's the law there, but they're turning a blind eye on you."

3.20   Some interviewees had to point out evidence which should have been investigated by the police themselves, such as a CCTV recording. This could deter them from approaching the police again for many years after.

3.21   This lack of confidence in the police was a powerful deterrent:

"I think there's just a general feeling you get from people that there's no point. I mean, you feel that the Force is trying to involve a lot of the ethnic minorities, but it's still not making a difference: they still do make you feel, like, reporting an incident is wrong." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

3.22   People felt unable to articulate their experiences to a potentially hostile police audience. This was a combination of lack of confidence, sometimes language difficulties, and a feeling that

they would not be taken seriously. The lack of confidence is related to previous experiences, not only with the police but also in wider society, of not being fully heard.

"What can discourage people, is language barriers and confidence in actually coming forward and being able to actually explain yourself. Some people out there, I mean they go through so much that they kind of withdraw, and they don't want to talk about it. And it all comes down to - some officers are really sort of sympathetic and they'll sit down and talk to you; other ones won't even walk through the door."
…
"We feel like, we mostly fear the polis now, we have a fear from them because we know they are not going to listen to you."

This did not apply only to reporting racist incidents, but the feeling that racism might not be taken seriously made it all the more difficult to report those in particular.

"Crying wolf"

3.23   Several participants mentioned their concern that repeatedly reporting incidents would reduce police support and sympathy. This was not restricted to racist incidents although the perception that racist incidents would not be treated as seriously led to minority ethnic participants thinking that those in particular would not be worth reporting. Some had experienced this personally, while others anticipated it and so did not report.

"I think also that, you know, that we would feel that if you go and report something and if it is, it's almost like - it never gets, you never kind of get the impression that it's an <u>important</u> thing to them, it's like, the attitude is, "Oh, it's a racist incident". And if you do keep on reporting it it's almost like you're shouting "cry wolf" and it does kind of reinforce this kind of resentment in them that you are coming in continually, you know, you are causing, you know, wasting their time." (man participating in focus group of minority ethnic agency representatives)

3.24   This was also mentioned by a majority white participant in the context of non-racist incidents, who thought that it was a real problem, but saw it as less of a deterrent:

"I have only lived in ***** Road for three years but in that time I have probably been on the phone to the police God knows how many times, it's like "Oh Christ! It's that woman from ***** Road again - get her off" you know - it's like as soon as they hear my voice on the phone I know that they just switch off, you know, because I am probably a regular caller to them, you know." (woman participant in focus group of people from majority white backgrounds, living in a deprived area)

The sorts of questions asked by the police

3.25   Participants in both majority and minority ethnic focus groups mentioned their concerns about the procedures necessary to record any incident (not only racist incidents).

"I have had a few times that I have ended up calling the police because my house was broken and my car stolen. For a few times. And I found that the police were not very useful in responding to the incidents. Normally they took about say, 15 to 20 minutes to arrive after the incident, and when they arrived normally they would just take out a note book and ask you your name, your date of birth, address, whatever. They ask your details rather than taking the details of the incident.   Taking the details of my car or my house, more concern about the damage, that sort of thing." (man participating in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

"I think what puts a lot of people off the police is that they're always looking for information but they never give information. It's a one-way street. And what irritates a lot of people is, if they report something to the police or if they come forwards as a witness, many people feel that there are totally unnecessary questions asked of them.   … em it's like your whole list of personal

details, your date of birth and all sorts of things like this, which is actually totally unnecessary. All you're doing is reporting something." (man participating in focus group of young adults from majority white backgrounds)

"I think generally there is some concern about the way police handle these things and the way the police respond and even speak to people when you actually report something. Even the way the police approach you, and there is sometimes a fear that it can always be turned round so that the person feels they are being pushed into a corner and end up in some way that they are the guilty party. I know it is to do with police procedures: for example, one of the first questions they ask when taking down your details is your age and I think that can put people off - why is that relevant? Things like that can be a deterrent to people." (woman participating in focus group of people from majority white backgrounds, living in an affluent area)

Fear of racism from individual police officers or racism within the Force

3.26   A major element affecting confidence was the question of racism within the force.

"… you are not sure how racist they are themselves: you know, how can you report a racist incident to somebody when they might themselves be a racist in the police? And from all the findings so far it's just coming up that the police are pretty racist." (woman participating in focus group of minority ethnic agency representatives)

The following comments were made by young men of three different minority ethnic groups:

"I know of a Sikh guy that was hit on the head with a bottle for wearing a turban. He did not report the incident to the police as he would rather deal with it himself, with his friends. The younger generation will not tolerate it and will deal with it themselves with their friends. The police will not do much. The police are all white and there is institutional racism in the police so there is no point in reporting racist incidents to the police. The police cannot understand racism - they are all white and therefore will not take it seriously. It is essential to get more ethnic minority police offices on the streets. That is the only way people's perceptions will change."

"There is institutional racism in the police. It is a known fact. There is a glass ceiling in the armed services and the police that means ethnic minority recruits cannot go very far."

"Publicly they say they won't tolerate racism but privately they will…"

3.27   Some said that they had personally experienced racism from police officers.

"I think that it is the colour of your skin makes a difference - not all the time, it depends on the individual policeman." (older woman participant in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

3.28   The majority of minority ethnic participants did not state that they had personally experienced racism from officers. Rather there was a widespread fear that racism was present within the Force and that in reporting incidents they might encounter it. Some spoke of individual racist officers, while others addressed institutional racism. There also appeared to have been avoidable misunderstandings.

"It's a power thing for white policemen. A white female was getting hospitalised and there was an Asian doctor. And there was a policeman and a policewoman, both white. And the white policewoman asked the doctor: 'What's your qualifications?' It was not appropriate at all. She asked that, without a doubt, because he was Asian." (teenage girl participating in focus group of young women)

The police must record the qualifications of all medical personnel who feature as witnesses. Perhaps officers need to explain why they ask for certain types of information.

3.29   Some also described cultural insensitivity (which some chose to distinguish from "racism", as we saw in Chapter Two).

Differences by age-group and first as compared to second or later generation

3.30   There are notable differences between the generations, particularly in the established Asian communities. One officer thought that in the large established Asian communities, the older members of the community were supportive of the police, while the younger, second-or-third-generation people assumed officers would be racist.

3.31   We found marked differences between older and younger generations of ethnic minority groups who participated in the research for this report.   While there was clearly support for the police among the older generation, most of whom are first-generation, there was also a deep-seated fear of racism in the Force. Many in this group were reluctant to be openly critical of the police. Those who were privately critical sometimes preferred to express views through third parties or "off-the-record". Those who did report incidents to the police did not wish to jeopardise working relationships. Some had instead developed relationships with individual officers they regarded as sympathetic or "able to get things done".

Cultural insensitivity and stereotyping

3.32   One serious problem, expressed by the younger generation in Asian communities in Glasgow and the large towns in particular, was said to be officers' cultural insensitivity. Although minority ethnic participants generally expressed a forgiving attitude towards what they saw as unfortunate errors of etiquette, and saw these as at most a matter for training rather than the fault of the individual officer, they did express annoyance at officers' unwillingness to adapt policing to best fit local areas.

3.33   An issue which came up particularly often, cited by Glasgow Asian participants of all ages, was the perception that young Asian boys and men in Glasgow were "overpoliced". The importance of alcohol in Scottish culture means young Muslim men are excluded from one of the most popular social activities of the majority communities. Young Glasgow Asians stressed that the lack of attractive leisure options led them to gather in streets and parks. They also had a shared interest in cars and would spend evenings cruising around.   Their most common complaint was that police officers too often interpreted these innocent gatherings, or minor violations of motor regulations (such as altering external fixings to cars) as matters to be harshly policed. This led to feelings of resentment that they were being racially singled out. It was felt that the minor kinds of alcohol-fuelled behaviour expressed by young men from majority ethnic groups are accepted and policed with a degree of indulgence, while high-spirited behaviour by young men from Asian communities is cracked down upon.

3.34   Glasgow Muslim participants of both sexes and all ages mentioned Eid as the equivalent of New Year. While serious misbehaviour should be policed appropriately, they felt police did not demonstrate the kind of good-natured tolerance which they argued was shown to the majority ethnic groups on December 31st.

"I've never, I'm not the boy racer type, right, but loads of my friends have kitted up cars. At first it was like "why, why?" but it's what they enjoy, it's their hobby, exactly. But you see police pulling up these guys. Right, the perfect incident was at Eid: it was Eid at Pollokshields and Eid, we fasted for 30 days, you know, and it was a celebration so Pollokshields is packed, there was flags, everything was happening. See if it was Christmas day and white people were celebrating the way we do - well New Years Day, sorry - they have no curfew on New Years Day: they drink as much as they want, they stab as much as they want, it's OK, it's New Years Day. That one day, you know how many, so many Asians got booked in Pollokshields and stopped just because it was Eid. Right, they weren't even doing anything wrong. OK, they were blowing their horn. It's Eid, it's one day in the year, you know? They [the police] *are not culturally aware of issues relating to ethnic minorities and that is where the big problem is."*
"Yeah. Yeah. Huge problem."
"Or they are culturally aware and it's just racist."

(group discussion among men and women of different ages)

3.35   Officers were felt to interpret their behaviour as criminal, stereotyping them as part of a group without viewing them as individuals, and failing to realise the implications of cultural background. In majority white communities, mixed groups of young people are seen as less threatening. In the Asian communities, however, participants pointed out that groups of young men are not unusual and are not a sign of criminal activity.

"I mean the police should realise that when there is a group of Asians standing there, four or six of them, it doesn't mean that they are causing trouble. It just means they have got nothing to do. They are not going to go out to the pub and go for a drink or something, because that's not what they do." (young Asian man)

3.36   It was recognised that these boys could appear challenging and even threatening, and could be a social nuisance, and it is also true that a minority of young men from Asian backgrounds do engage in criminality. But participants said that most Asian men did not seek conflict. They said that the police had not tried to understand the cultures of young Asian people, or to make the kind of compromises which have been reached with young majority ethnic people.

3.37   One young man described how local officers had previously been tolerant, while newer officers enforced rules harshly. It was not that he and his friends were not committing minor offences – they were - but rather that he felt the police operated in a racially discriminatory way, tolerating majority ethnic cultural traditions while allowing no laxity with minority ethnic cultural traditions. This is a clear expression of how many young people from Asian backgrounds feel unfairly targeted.

"I think it's the police officers that know the area, that have been in the area a while [who work best with the community]. *There is a new police officer now who's come into my area, starts all his – I'll give you an example. Our Christmas is coming up. If there was a group of white people in the area celebrating Christmas having a laugh and a joke, driving about in cars, right, would the police come and stop every single one of them and give them a ticket?   I think not. Right, and even it they did stop them and nearly give them a ticket and the person says to them "you know it's Christmas, give us a break", I think the police would give them a break.   But it was our Christmas last weekend, we were celebrating it and like I say these police came in because there was a lot of Asians in the street and we were all having a laugh and a joke. I got stopped. He gave me a ticket for having blue lights at the front and I said to myself "give me a break - I could take them off right now, I could snip the wire, take it off". Because what he could have done was, he could have given me a slip. Because I have had the slip before. That gives you 28 days to fix the defect. He said "no, I am giving you a ticket". But what I am saying is like, it was Eid, it was our Christmas that day. Why did he do that?"*   (participant in focus group of young men from minority ethnic backgrounds)

3.38   Participants in a focus group of women from Asian backgrounds felt that officers had been heavy-handed and uncaring when responding to a complaint about noise from a family gathering following a funeral:

"Last year at Dad's funeral our neighbours kept on calling the polis because the house was noisy, and I find that ridiculous.   We were told we could be charged with breach of the peace… We did explain it was a funeral and it was friends and family coming. And instead of being sympathetic she was calling out the police. … they said "your family will be arrested and you will be charged with breach of the peace". I find that ridiculous, you know: that has completely put me off ever calling anyone for help.   But then to be sympathetic towards my neighbour who was just annoyed about people running in the close: they were more worried about her peace of mind than of someone who has just lost their father, and it <u>was</u> very annoying. I was very upset with them and everyone was there and when they saw the way the police acted they were all shocked. And that would be an ethnic problem, they just didn't seem to care maybe that the family, that they were disturbed, that wasn't an issue - the issue was that someone had complained about noise. I mean, that's ridiculous."
"You know you can't tell four, or six-year children, you know, not to run about. In their place."
"Because they were under ten, anyway. They were about seven or eight."
"They were all children."

"You know, eight- year-old children just can't keep sitting in one place."
"The mourning process goes on for about a week."
"They weren't sympathetic to the cultural issue, you know - it's just human nature, you know - they could have been a bit more humane about it. That put me off for a while."

3.39   Again, the feeling is not that the established Asian communities should get preferential treatment, but that tolerance is an important part of policing and the tolerance of moderate drunkenness at Christmas and New Year should be extended to minor disruptions at Eid. Many felt that this gesture would encourage trust and co-operation, which would then encourage greater reporting. Awareness is part of this and it would be helpful if the Force were to inform all officers about upcoming major cultural holidays and what celebrations to expect.

3.40   A related problem was the stereotyping of individuals. The representative of an anti-racist agency was invited to a police office. The desk officer asked to see his papers – he assumed that he was an asylum-seeker. This was not an isolated incident, and it damages relationships. While many of the problems we discuss in this report are the result of a huge workload and are not easy to tackle, others such as unnecessary stereotyping can be prevented.

CHAPTER FOUR:
OTHER DETERRENTS AND BARRIERS TO REPORTING

Racism too diffuse and widespread to report

4.1   For many, their greatest concern was a perception of hostility or discrimination which was too all-pervasive to approach as if it were made up of isolated incidents. One asylum-seeker explained "*it is much, much broader and deeper than just assaulting you, just abusing you. That's the very low level of it."*

4.2   The way in which this was conveyed was often felt to be too subtle to amount to a fully-fledged "incident" which they could report. Yet it was this which frequently came to mind when participants were asked to describe the words and images they associated with "racism": micro-aggression (hostile looks; a resentful attitude; an aggressive tone of voice; passers-by spitting on the pavement as they walked past). Others talked of reduced social interaction in the many brief contacts people make each day (being ignored; having less rich conversational exchanges; having to try harder to be invited to join a social group of colleagues). Others described strong and persistent stereotyping, where powerfully stereotypical assumptions persisted about them as an individual, even when people knew them well.

4.3   These experiences of micro-aggression and micro-exclusion (being left out of social interaction and being viewed in stereotypical ways) were mentioned most often by individuals who were seen to have a different skin colour and/or distinctive appearance, such as dress or a beard signifying religious observance. In contrast one participant in a focus group of people from East European backgrounds said that she and others had the good fortune to be treated as a *"privileged group - white, Christian community, hard-working"*. She said that they felt generally accepted, and that those who were established in Scotland saw their experiences as very different from those of asylum-seekers or those who were identified by others as non-white.

4.4   Being seen as white was not always a protection against racism. English accents marked some participants out as recognisably different and could make them the target of both subtle and virulent anti-Englishness which some said was trivialised and seen as humorous by others: *"English people are seen as 'fair game', even by the police."* One participant describing anti-Semitism said that many people were unaware that it did still exist. People living in Gypsy Traveller communities suffered regular abuse and discrimination. Asylum-seekers were easily identified by "clues" such as where they lived and their use of special bus passes and vouchers[21].

4.5   Sometimes the context, not just a particular incident itself, made a single incident serious enough for participants to report it. It is essential that officers are aware of these experiences so that they understand the seriousness which victims may attach to a single incident. Some officers were alert to this, while others were not.

A sense of not having full citizenship

4.6   It was widely thought that older people from minority ethnic backgrounds (most of whom were first-generation migrants) did not report racist incidents to the police because they felt isolated and not fully part of society. Both middle-aged and young people said their elders sometimes believed either that they did not have the "right to complain" or that there was no point in causing trouble in "someone else's" country. A sense of not being viewed or welcomed as part of Scottish society seemed to have prompted these beliefs.

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[21] These are now no longer issued to asylum-seekers in the UK, following widespread criticism of the practice.

The "unstoppability" of the criminal justice process

4.7   For some participants, reporting an incident may lead to a formal investigation and perhaps also prosecution: this is not fully within their own control but rather is governed by requirements of the wider criminal justice system. It is also affected by policing policy, in addition to the discretion of the individual investigating officer.

4.8   Fear of not being able to direct the process led some participants to be reluctant to initiate it. This is the case for police investigations of crime generally, although racist incidents are governed by strict policies and procedure which we have discussed elsewhere.

Lack of confidence in the justice system

4.9   Many participants were deterred from reporting by the perception (often based on theirs or others' experiences) that perpetrators would not be dealt with effectively by the wider justice system. Where participants had reported an incident and seen it go to court, some felt that they had been victims of sufficiently serious crimes that those should have been referred to the sheriff court, rather than only to the district court. Others felt that sentences were too light.

"It's not the police, it's when they go to court: the policemen's hands are tied when they go to court if they get lifted, they are let out right away and it's …but their hands are tied because it's them above the police that makes the laws." (woman participating in focus group of people from majority ethnic backgrounds, living in mixed affluent and deprived area)

4.10   Unhappiness with the action taken to punish perpetrators was often cited by participants from all communities, particularly regarding youth perpetrators:

"…we told them most problems are usually the youths, children under 18. They make the trouble and you can't do <u>anything</u> with them, you can't put them in the custody, put them in prison, even if there is no way, if they <u>shoot</u> some people." (man participating in asylum-seeker focus group)

4.11   Police officers also pointed out that the Force was sometimes criticised for outcomes which were in fact the result of decisions taken by the prosecution and children's reporter services, rather than officers themselves.

4.12   There was a mistaken perception among some participants that there was no criminal penalty available for a racist attack or harassment. It was also said that officers had told complainers (apparently misleadingly) that there was nothing they could do, particularly when dealing with youth perpetrators.

All these experiences and perceptions were said to discourage reporting.

Speed of the criminal justice process

4.13   The length of time taken to bring cases to court was sometimes cited as a deterrent. This is a problem throughout the criminal justice system.

"It can be a lengthy procedure. One month ago was the incident with my brother and the investigation is still going on even though they found [an item identifying the perpetrator] at the place where he was attacked, so they know who the perpetrator is." (young woman participating in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

Lack of evidence/ unfamiliarity with evidential requirements

4.14   Many racist incidents which minority ethnic participants would have liked to report - verbal abuse by strangers in the street or graffiti or breaking the windows of shops and takeaways – lack witnesses or sufficient other evidence to enable them to be pursued through the justice system.

For young people facing repeat racist bullying by others their own age, it was often their word against their assailants'.

4.15   Some participants were not aware of what might amount to circumstantial evidence. Increased awareness of this could encourage reporting.

Reluctance "to add further fuel to the fire"

4.16   Because the term "racism" is one which is often angrily rejected, some participants in minority ethnic focus groups explained that they were reluctant to use it.

'When you do challenge it, if you use the word "racism" people kind of say "well, I don't want to go there". What the emphasis is, it's put on the person themselves: they will say "Oh you are too sensitive", "it's your fault," "there is no racism". Rather than saying, "right". It is almost that you put a lid on it, "I don't want to go there, this is too bad, it doesn't happen here."' (young woman participating in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

4.17   Identifying an incident as "racist" could also give it a trajectory of its own, elevating an incident to a formal level which left the victim vulnerable rather than protected.

"If you want to complain, it's accusing someone. It creates a hostile relationship. You want the problem dealt with, not a label attached to it." (young woman participating in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

4.18   Participants from a range of age-groups, particularly those in focus groups of people from Asian backgrounds, agreed that young adults were most likely to be unafraid to use the word "racist" to describe an experience. They were also most likely to challenge the perpetrator directly. This was especially so for young people who were not first-generation.

Accent and Language

4.19   Participants in two focus groups of people from Chinese backgrounds discussed their frequent experiences of people not understanding their accents. They found that they were not asked to repeat what they had said and instead were passed on to the wrong person, or were not phoned back. This happened with a wide range of organisations. One woman had experienced this when reporting a theft to police in England, and had had to make many repeat calls, finally reporting the incident back home in Scotland. The participants said that they were uncertain whether this was something which happened particularly to them because of racist hostility, or whether this was not unusual. It did however discourage some from reporting incidents in the future (not only racist incidents).

4.20   One man participating in a focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds summed up the main reasons why people in their Chinese communities would not report:

"The main reason of not reporting is the language difficulties we mentioned [both accent and language]. *The second thing is the lack of confidence of what the police or the court who is dealing with the case. And thirdly, is very important, is the fear of retribution. The fear that they will come back to do more damage. … This is what the Chinese fear about. Because they are isolated and so little in numbers that they fear retribution."*

4.21   Although the majority of the established communities in Strathclyde speak English fluently, there are groups of newer communities such as the various asylum-seeker communities who do not. There are also individuals within established communities, particularly women and the elderly, who are not confident of their ability to communicate fluently in English. Participants in Chinese focus groups in particular mentioned the varying ability in the quality of interpreters. One was given an interpreter who spoke Mandarin, although the police had already been informed that the interviewee spoke Cantonese.

Fear of retribution and retaliation

4.22   The fear of being punished for reporting an incident was a serious barrier. One shop-owner was threatened with a knife after giving evidence to the police. Retaliation was for racist incidents, but also general crime. It was also mentioned by some majority ethnic participants:

"They have tried to make it that it will be kept secret and won't be divulged, but again, if you have to go to court, then you are soon known to these criminals. You see them standing up in court - they have been to court dozens of times and they have no fear of the police or of society and this is when it becomes difficult for the public to speak out on these particular occasions." (woman participating in focus group of people from majority white backgrounds, living in an affluent area)

4.23   For members of minority ethnic groups there is the added problem that individuals, particularly isolated individuals, may be more easily identified and remembered by perpetrators. One participant in a minority ethnic focus group mentioned that a police officer came to her house although she had specified that they were not to, and she was worried that her abusive neighbour would work out that she had reported him. Participants in a majority ethnic focus group also discussed their fear of officers being seen to come to their door.

4.24   In contrast, one under-16 girl from an Asian background expressed her gratitude that the police had carried out their enquiries discreetly, leaving her feeling protected while they found and charged the perpetrators. Victim Support were also praised by one interviewee for offering the option of meeting somewhere other than at the victim's house.

4.25   A small number of participants also mentioned a fear of reporting organised crime which was happening within their own ethnic group because of the risk of retribution. This was mentioned by participants in two focus groups of people from Chinese backgrounds, although it was not thought to account for the bulk of non-reporting.

4.26   While fear of retribution led many not to report incidents, it was also mentioned that the decision not to report to the police could lead to worsened behaviour on the part of repeat perpetrators.

Not wanting to be tainted as a "victim"

4.27   Several interviewees stated that they were reluctant to report, or went to a police station rather than report from home, so that their families would not find out that they had been a victim of a racist incident. Some participants feared being labelled as a victim of racism, feeling that it would single them out further. For many, the fear of being conspicuous was greater than the fear of the victimisation, sometimes even where this involved serious violence or intense psychological maltreatment. This was particularly so for young school students, and it was encouraging to hear that the Force's provision of school liaison officers and additional patrolling at some schools had at least partially alleviated this. One young participant noted that this had benefited many students at his school, and not only those from ethnic minorities.

Psychological consequences

4.28   Having to go over what they have experienced is obviously unpleasant for some victims. Some participants were nervous about making a formal report. Others were reluctant to relive their experiences. Of those who had to repeat their story to different officers, some found it frustrating while others found it painful and uncomfortable.

4.29   The Force is now moving to a system where all calls to local police offices will be answered at a central exchange: this will relieve pressure on local police offices and will enable greater monitoring. Unusually among police forces, 999 telephone calls to Strathclyde Police are currently answered entirely by trained and experienced police officers and are recorded for monitoring purposes. This is more costly, but in view of our respondents' statements regarding

the importance of the initial call and initial visit in creating or losing trust in the police (which we will examine later), it seems worthwhile.

4.30   Others felt that reporting an incident without being helped or taken seriously had an emotional cost which made unsuccessful reporting a damaging experience. One asylum-seeker said:

"A lot of frustration was caused as the whole system is against you. The police are racist too. What's the point in reporting racist incidents to the police only to become a statistic? My life is not a statistic. If you report an issue to the police then the sense of frustration is increased as the feeling builds that no one cares: the whole system is against you."

Not regarded as serious enough by the victim

4.31   Participants often mentioned that they did not think incidents were serious enough to justify reporting, or would take up police time which could better be spent on other things. Other interviewees stated that they did not want "to be a nuisance".

"We'd be wasting police time [reporting name calling].*"* (man participating in focus group of people from African or Caribbean backgrounds)

 "[They might take the view that] they are wasting the police's time when they should be doing more serious things." (woman participating in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

Practicality of reporting

4.32   Some stated that there was "too much else going on in their lives" to take the time to report, and some small business owners mentioned that the expense of taking time out of work to attend court made it impractical to report.

People with disabilities

4.33   There are many different barriers to reporting faced by this group, most of which are not specific to any ethnic group (although a recent study has found that parents of young disabled people from minority ethnic families have difficulty obtaining material about what facilities are provided by public authorities).[22] The most obvious is physical access. Newer, larger police offices are generally wheelchair accessible but may not be convenient for public transport. Access to information also requires that it be in an appropriate format, such as computer disc, large print or audio tape. The Force has facilities to do this and provides materials in this form: it is also important that sufficient external funding be made available to the Force to expand this into new languages where required.

4.34   The Force also provides Minicom for telephone reporting for people with hearing difficulties. The problem of language barriers is particularly serious with this group. Persons with a hearing disability may require an interpreter with not only more than one language for the deaf but also a minority ethnic spoken language. There are 43 qualified interpreters for deaf languages for the whole of Scotland and it is not currently known how many of them also speak minority ethnic languages.

4.35   These concerns are some of the most pertinent to those with mobility and sensory disabilities, but attention also needs to be paid to barriers faced by individuals with learning disabilities.

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[22] Kirsten Stalker (2002) "Young disabled people moving into adulthood in Scotland", Joseph Rowntree Foundation http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/foundations/n42.asp

Gay and transgendered people

4.36   Previous research has highlighted the varying experiences of lesbians and gay men who belong to minority ethnic groups and the need to ensure that policymaking takes these individuals into account.[23] The Force has an "LGBT" liaison officer in the Community Safety Department at Force HQ based alongside the staff dealing with racist incidents and community relations. Gay and transgender issues are briefly introduced in national training for officers although not for force support staff. The Force has developed third-party reporting initiatives and also provides a special helpline for reporting homophobic incidents. It will record and monitor homophobic incidents in its forthcoming Vulnerable Persons Database.

4.37   Representatives of gay and transgender organisations in Strathclyde were appreciative of the new initiatives being put in place by the force. They felt the Force was well ahead of local authorities in taking matters seriously, although they also took the view that it will take some time for gay and transgendered people to place trust in the police.

4.38   The experiences of gay men and lesbians are quite different, and any initiatives addressed at minority ethnic groups will also need to take this into account. The problems of vulnerable young male street workers were particularly highlighted by one representative, as was the need to publicise specific initiatives, an issue which the Force is currently examining.

4.39   The level of reporting of all homophobic incidents by members of the LGBT communities was said by agency representatives to be extremely low. Very few incidents were reported through the special helpline service. We mentioned earlier that Positive Action in Housing found that people coming to them did not always identify their experiences of racism as reportable incidents. Likewise, it was mentioned that many gay and transgendered people do not see low-level homophobic abuse as an incident and do not perceive themselves as a victim of crime or social disorder, but rather see harassment and abuse as part of being gay in Scotland.

Fear of problems coming to the attention of licensing authorities

4.40   Participants in minority ethnic focus groups who owned food service premises mentioned that that they were reluctant to report incidents, because they were fearful that when their license came up for review, the police would object to renewal on the grounds that the premises attracted trouble.

Lack of minority ethnic officers and other frontline support staff

4.41   Participants in several focus groups stated that a higher proportion of minority ethnic officers in the Force would encourage more reporting of racist incidents. This is also the case for other Force staff: participants in the Chinese focus groups emphasised that members of their communities would be more keen to report all incidents if they knew that when making a phone call, they would be able to speak to a person who understood Chinese languages, and was experienced in Chinese-accented English.

4.42   The Force has worked hard to recruit minority ethnic officers. It issued 50,000 copies of an information package designed to look like a police notebook, which contained advice specifically intended to encourage recruitment from the minority ethnic communities. It has also experimented with placing recruiting material in gyms, community newspapers, community centres and schools and has promoted recruitment through links with community organisations. This has had some success, and the Force now has 66 minority ethnic officers. It also has 19

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[23] Sue John and Adele Patrick (1999) "Poverty and Social Exclusion of Lesbians and Gay Men in Glasgow", Glasgow Women's Library.

minority ethnic Force Support Officers whose work does not necessarily involve any direct contact with the public.

4.43 The Force specifically monitors their recruitment and career paths and offers a confidential exit interview to all resigning officers (not only minority ethnic). It has also lent support to Strathclyde officers who are now part of SEMPERScotland, the new association for minority ethnic police officers. None of Strathclyde's minority ethnic officers are however at a level above inspector, so role models are limited.

4.44 Several participants in minority ethnic focus groups said that they feared that others of their ethnic background would encounter harassment and discrimination, both by other officers and the public, were they to become police officers.[24] This can be seen in the following extracts. The first comes from a discussion among participants in a group of people from Chinese backgrounds on what would put members of their community off joining the Force:

"Racism. You are the Chinese policeman: people will be racist to you. When you go all the kids are calling you names and throwing stones, all the kids will call you something: it is even worse for the policeman." (older woman)

" If that is already how the public will treat them, I think within the force as well there is discrimination, so I think, then why put yourself in that situation, it is not attractive at all. Because you would be experiencing both sides, you're putting yourself into that situation. It'd be even worse!" [Laughing] (younger woman)

"No - my brother, I told him, I said 'don't do it': I said 'no way'. And he says 'you know the abuse that you'd get from your mates, you know the policemen, mainly 'cause you are a black policeman'." [Laughs] *"And he said, 'no way'."* (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

4.45 Majority ethnic police officers pointed out that their minority ethnic colleagues were suffering increased racial harassment from members of the public, and that violence towards all officers had increased in the last two years.

4.46 There was a feeling among some minority ethnic participants that minority ethnic officers had "sold out", although it was more common for participants to express confidence in the existing minority ethnic officers and to hope that others would join them.

"See I think the police should [change] the way they employ their people. Being a policeman is actually a no bad job, right: they get good money, right, they get good everything else, right - I wish there was some sort of encouragement, right, ethnic minorities would go into the police, right. And see here? They've been treating us like this for a while now. Let's get in there and see if we can make a difference if we go in there." (young man)

4.47 Not all minority ethnic participants saw extending the ethnic base of the Force as an unalloyed good: participants in a group of people from Chinese backgrounds discussed whether Chinese officers would be pressurised by Chinese members of the public to favour them. There were mixed views on this question. Some argued that such officers should also not be marginalized by being given only the work of policing Chinese communities. In general there was a feeling that more minority officers would raise confidence among people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

4.48 It is not just that the Force's genuine attempts at recruitment have met with limited success. It may not be enough just to reach the level where the proportion of minority ethnic officers mirrors the proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Strathclyde. First, there are many separate groups to represent. Second, minority ethnic officers are least likely to reside and be deployed in rural or mainly majority ethnic areas where isolation may be felt most keenly by minority ethnic residents. Third, as Nigel Fielding has pointed out, the proportion of

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[24] See also Daniel Onifade (2002) *The Experience of Black/Minority Ethnic Police Officers, Support Staff, Special Constables and Resigners in Scotland* Scottish Executive Social Research.

minority ethnic officers will probably have to cross a large threshold before this group starts to strongly influence the mainstream occupational culture among the police.[25] The issue is not merely matching the composition of Strathclyde society, but bringing in enough of a minority to make a difference. Fourth, the need is not simply for more minority ethnic constables but for ethnic minorities to be represented at senior policymaking levels.

Self-help

"…now I know where those children live and I usually go straight over to their parents. I find that way works better." (older woman participating in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

4.49   It was quite common for participants in minority ethnic focus groups to observe that the best method of dealing with incidents was informal, by responding forcefully to aggression or by taking up the problem with employers, friends or relatives of the perpetrators. There was an interesting distinction between younger women and men, with the young men talking about being openly challenging, while the young women appeared to favour considered verbal retorts.

4.50   Some individuals belonging to large ethnic minority communities said that they could avoid victimisation by living in community groups:

"I think a larger community where no-one group's a minority - I think it is security. Plus it does show, even when a white person is walking through a sort of Asian couple of streets, they won't pick on them. In the same way, if an Asian person is walking through a white area, it doesn't matter who is going to give problems they won't argue back. They won't stick up for themselves at the time. I think it does, I think the minority gets a sense of security initially and I think it does, sort of. And it's less provoking for other people sort of to pick on, to be racist." (young woman)

4.51   Younger people living in urban minority ethnic communities were most likely of all the participants to speak about open conflicts, and what did or did not make the encounters racist. They often spoke about how their peers' own behaviour could be seen as racist. They also emphasised their own part in managing or exacerbating these conflicts.

Alternatives to reporting to the police

4.52   Some of the interviewees who had reported racist incidents to the police also reported them to other authorities. Others did not report them to the police: instead they reported them to no-one, to other authorities or to informal social networks.

4.53   Some informally reported incidents to community leaders or activists, either within their own minority ethnic community or their general local community. School students sometimes went to a teacher from a minority ethnic background, while some spoke regularly and informally to the Force's local School Liaison Officer. GPs, lawyers, employers, counsellors and local and national government representatives were also mentioned.

4.54   There is a third-party reporting scheme which is supported by the Force, and most of those who had used it spoke very positively of it. They felt that the police took the third-party reports seriously, and that the organisations offered a great deal of effective help.

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[25] Nigel Fielding (1999) "Policing's Dark Secret: the Career Paths of Ethnic Minority Officers" *Sociological Research Online* 4(1) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/4/lawrence/fielding.html

CHAPTER FIVE: EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WHO HAD REPORTED RACIST INCIDENTS

Having examined the reasons why people say they would not report incidents, we turn now to people's experiences of what happened when they did, and also their wider experiences of encountering police officers.

5.1   While socio-economic background and place of residence appeared to be an important indicator of whether or not the majority ethnic and to a lesser extent minority ethnic participants spoke positively about their experiences of reporting incidents, we received considerable critical feedback from minority ethnic participants across social classes and locations.

5.2   In general, the affluent minority ethnic participants living in Glasgow and the larger towns were among those who said they were most likely to be pleased with the police response they got, and to rate policing more highly. People living in rural deprived areas spoke of either very good or very bad experiences. Those living in deprived areas of Glasgow and the larger towns had varied experiences. Overall, though, minority ethnic participants were more likely than their majority ethnic comparators to offer negative views. These views were often but by no means always based on stories heard from others in their ethnic community. Many participants from the larger established ethnic communities had family and friendship links which crossed classes, so the experiences of those living in deprived high-crime areas were told to others living in more affluent areas. The result was that affluent minority ethnic participants had heard more stories about policing of deprived areas than their majority ethnic comparators had, and these were likely to be negative.

Factors which were perceived as reducing satisfaction with actual police response

5.3   Of those who said they were least satisfied with the initial visit from an officer to investigate a racist incident, almost all expressed their dissatisfaction with the outcome and the conduct of the rest of the case. This group were mostly adults aged under 45, with greatest dissatisfaction being expressed by the under-35s.

Different types of officers

5.4   When different types of police officers were discussed, a strong differentiation was made. Most enthusiasm was expressed for community officers. Their tasks include informal community liaison, they have responsibility for a smaller area than ordinary officers do, and are more likely to be able to plan their work in advance. A few participants who had been visited by both ordinary and community officers described a very marked difference between the way they were treated.

5.5   A few criticisms were made of community officers. One participant said one particular community officer "thought he knew everything" and would not listen, while another felt that some could be "tokenistic". Some minority ethnic participants did not feel that they needed assistance and viewed unsolicited offers of help as patronising, or as drawing attention to their minority ethnicity in an unnecessary or unhelpful way. The fact that these officers do not work on nightshifts was also problematic for some participants.

"And the next thing you know that community guy, the police guy, comes up to ask you if there's anything he can do and you just don't want to speak to him. … They do come out on a nice sunny afternoon when everything's hunky-dory and just asking if everything's OK? [Laughs] I'm being a bit bitchy about it, but it's true." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

5.6   A few participants expressed scepticism about whether community policing would make a difference at times of serious hostility. One participant commented that community policing had not picked up on increasing tensions in Burnley and that community officers had not been present

on the scene when the worst events were happening. In general, though, community policing was highly regarded and many participants praised individual community officers very highly.

Officers' attitudes

5.7   It was officers' attitudes towards the complainer which caused most dissatisfaction. The most common complaints were that officers were unfriendly and dismissive, that they did not take the reports seriously enough and that they did not show signs of wanting to investigate the case. Several complained that officers had treated the case as trivial, and two majority ethnic interviewees maintained that the officers had laughed at their experiences.

5.8   Many of the problems were seen as relatively easy to resolve, as can be seen in this discussion between women of various ages participating in a focus group of women from Asian backgrounds:

"I think that it's more contact in a kind of human way, so you are getting past the actual uniform."
"If it even occurs to people to kind of ask how things were, if you have more problems, let us know, call us at this number."
" To get back and tell us what is going on. Even just a courtesy call. Not just take notes and say they will get in touch."
"I think that we need some policemen who should know a language like Urdu or Punjabi and things like that. Even a few words. So that they can speak to older people who don't know how to speak English. …I think they should learn just a little bit, you know, just like French and German, I think they should."

Follow-up takes place whenever an incident is tagged as racist, but people's impression of police attitudes were formed from their overall experience of police responses.

5.9   In contrast, some participants were fulsome in their praise for the dedication and support offered by officers, and there is no doubt that a good ordinary officer could provide as excellent a service as a community officer. Younger officers were also more likely to be praised than older ones, although this was not always the case, and some older officers were said to have been more experienced and sympathetic. In general, though, the service provided by ordinary officers came in for a great deal more criticism than did community and specialist officers, and criticism was almost always directed either at these officers in particular, or at the force as a whole.

5.10   Officers at the station desk are often the public's first contact with the police, yet not all civilian officers receive anti-racist training. They can also be under a great deal of pressure. One community officer observed:

*"If you look at [named police office], there is three telephones in there, a fax, two computers and one operator. That's five pieces of equipment he's to operate and it's no uncommon that three phones are ringing at once and there's somebody at the front saying "Ah want tae make a complaint regarding this" and someday else is in producing documents. And he's just running aboot like a fly wi a blue ****."*

5.11   It was also the case that officers responding to calls were sometimes extremely busy:

"On the other side of it if you're looking for figures, on average on a late shift, eh just in [named district] on its own, there's 50 calls put oot on average, just in a normal day. That's no in a busy weekend or an Old Firm weekend or something like that. On an average day there's 50 calls. Me and [colleague] got [x number of calls] yesterday in a whole day and that's why we've got time tae sit down and take them on too, and kind of "there, there, there" them. And, you know, take our time and we're not dogged by a radio or that, whereas the cops that are out in the panda are just in, get the details and out on to the next call. "Clear the screen, clear the screen", you know and then they're constantly hounded by the controller and then there's all sorts of other things, it's not just calls. They've got other enquiries from previous days to try and get on with that, so … they're just trying to … get through a day's work."

Incomplete communication within the force

5.12   A few minority ethnic participants expressed particular annoyance at a lack of communication within the force which meant that they had to repeat their stories in detail a second time. This did not appear to be a widespread problem, but it is worth mentioning as another potential deterrent to reporting a second time.

Being treated as the criminal

5.13   A few of the men among minority ethnic interviewees felt that they had been treated as the criminal rather than the victim, and that the police were less inclined to believe them than a white witness or someone who was demonstrably of higher status.

Response times

5.14   Some interviewees felt that the response time had been unacceptably slow: a view which was expressed by participants in all Strathclyde communities regarding all incidents, not only racist ones. What follows refers not only to racist incidents.

5.15   Some participants in majority white focus groups took the view that it was related to social class:

"…you find it very much depends on the area, how quickly the police respond to a call." (woman participant in focus group of people living in mixed deprived and affluent area)

"…because of the nature of the office we have – it is a firm of [professionals] *so they tend to respond pretty quickly. But although that is the case, it doesn't necessarily mean that they give us any better advice than anybody else, but just respond better."* (participant in focus group of young women professionals)

5.16   Others thought slow response time was due to lack of police commitment. Some participants in minority ethnic focus groups said they thought that the slow response was due to their ethnicity, and described examples of such incidents:

"The police station is right opposite the restaurant but sometimes they take 45 minutes to come across." (man participating in focus group of people from Chinese backgrounds)

"Or sometimes you're not going to report it because the police wouldn't do anything about it. There was a time not so long ago that my brother was racially assaulted a few weeks back. First of all the police took about 5 hours to come to the house.   By this time my dad had taken my brother to the hospital to get [the injury] checked out and everything. And I opened the door to the police and they walked in and I said 'Sorry you will just need to wait about five-ten minutes and my brother will be here any minute: my dad took him to the hospital. They were 'sorry, we don't have the time.' I says 'we waited 5 hours for you, you could have at least wait 10 minutes for us' and he just got up and left. I think he found what I said quite cheeky. I said 'Well, I don't think so sir, we waited a good five hours for you, the least you could do is sit down for 10 minutes we could make you tea or coffee, whatever, you know'. In ten minutes he was 'I have other reports to handle'. I went 'fair enough' and he just walked out and said 'sorry Miss we have to go'." (participant in focus group of young women from minority ethnic backgrounds)

5.17   It is not clear whether these responses were due to racism or high pressure upon officers. There were situations where it might have been possible for the officers to convey more effectively the pressure which they were under, thus reassuring individuals that their calls were being given appropriate priority.

Lack of feedback

5.18   Although the slow speed of response was often cited as a deterrent to reporting, it was not in fact the reason for dissatisfaction with the later investigation which came up most often among interviewees. Again, two reasons dominated the responses.

5.19   The most common reason was lack of feedback. Partly this refers to the progress of a case after it has been referred to the prosecution services, which is an area in which police themselves are not kept informed and which greatly undermines their ability to reassure and inform complainers. A few participants however said that they had heard no more and that no further contact had been made after the initial visit. One had been promised a follow-up visit from a community police officer, but this had never taken place. In some instances Force procedure for follow-up of racist incidents is not being followed.

5.20   People from minority ethnic backgrounds did not necessarily differentiate between police response to reports of racist incidents, for which the Force requires follow-up, and police response to reports of other incidents, in which follow-up is at officers' discretion. They are reporting non-racist incidents in the context of their general experience of victimisation which is more widespread and intense than that experienced by their nearest majority ethnic comparators. The fear and alarm experienced even from non-racist incidents may be more severe for minority ethnic individuals than for majority ethnic individuals. Follow-up may therefore be particularly highly valued by some minority ethnic individuals in all instances of victimisation, not just racist.

Perception that officers had not done all they could to investigate the incident

5.21   The other reason given for dissatisfaction later on was the feeling that police had not done enough to investigate or pursue charges. In some instances it appeared that there was insufficient evidence but in a few it appeared that there were grounds for taking the case further which had not been followed up. In one instance, officers witnessed an incident of racist abuse against a woman small business owner which they failed to investigate despite stating that they would. On other occasion, officers did not charge a violent neighbour until several reports of frightening threats had been made to them.

5.22   Many of the dissatisfied respondents felt that the police had not carried out further investigation because officers underestimated the seriousness of the racist incident. These views were also voiced by some participants from a wide range of backgrounds, including majority ethnic, in relation to incidents in general.

Identifying the causes of some of the problems

5.23   As we mentioned before, it was sometimes difficult to separate out incidences of poor policing which were experienced by participants from all ethnic groups and those which appeared to be experienced disproportionately by those of minority ethnic background.

That the force can provide large numbers of officers to deal with particular high-profile incidents, racist or otherwise, can be viewed by the public either as a dedicated response to a serious problem, or as evidence that there are officers who are normally underworked, and that failings in policing are due not to lack of resources but to lack of commitment to the work. Some participants from both minority and majority communities were suspicious that it was the latter.

5.24 It is extremely difficult to separate discriminatory policing from a general lack of resources. Understandably, those in the midst of a frightening incident are not likely to be impressed when told that the police are busy. There are varying perceptions which impact on communities' views of the police. Where poor service is due to resource problems not discrimination by ethnic group, it would be beneficial to tell the public this. If it was easier for individuals to identify discrimination, ethnicity-related problems could be tackled more rapidly.

5.25   There were a few stories told of what appeared to be overtly racist behaviour by officers. For instance, one English participant said that he did not wish to report racist incidents because, once in a Glasgow main street, he was laughing and chatting with friends when some passers-by started shouting racist abuse. Two police officers who were standing nearby did nothing to stop this and instead joined in by laughing. An Asian interviewee said that he had called the police when he and friends were being assaulted, and had found themselves being arrested without the investigating officer seeking any evidence from people who had witnessed the attack. He said that it took the intervention of character witnesses and a lawyer to have the incident recorded as racist. He added that he had generally been supportive of the Force before the incident but that his experience of this officer had since made him very frightened of the police and reluctant to have any contact with them at all.

5.26   People spoke of experiencing unjustified differentiations made between majority and minority ethnic suspects of crime, use of racially abusive language, or unjustified presumptions that the victim of an incident was the perpetrator. Some formal complaints had been investigated by the Force to the satisfaction of the complainers. Others had not. Although personal experiences of racist behaviour by officers were relatively rare, it was common for participants to say that they had heard of this happening to others, and that it deterred people from their ethnic background from reporting racist incidents.

5.27   No complaint by a member of the public of racially-discriminatory behaviour by an officer in the Force has yet been recorded as substantiated after formal investigation. Since lack of confidence was widespread among minority ethnic and some majority white participants on this issue, some form of investigatory mechanism, seen by all ethnic groups to be independent and thorough, would help determine the extent of the problems and deal with them in a way which would inspire public confidence. Concerns about independence and public confidence were also emphasised in the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Steering Group.[26]

Factors which encouraged satisfaction with police response

"Unfortunately, we never hear when things are going well. It's only when something's happened… we only hear about the bad things …see, what we need is that feedback, on when we're doing a good job, so we know." (Woman community police officer)

5.28   Not surprisingly, where officers had gone out of their way to help, many people spoke approvingly of their efforts. Others were pleased with even quite minimal police responses. This gives an insight into best practice, even within limited resources.

5.29   Across all ethnic communities – majority and minority - it was clear that people wanted to establish local relationships with friendly, receptive officers who have a visible presence; who gather intelligence through informal social interaction; and who adapt policing techniques to the local neighbourhoods.

Satisfaction with the initial visit

5.30   Among the individual interviewees who had reported a racist incident and said they had been satisfied with the initial visit, three clear patterns emerged. Those who felt that there had been a satisfactory resolution to the case were most likely to say they felt the case had been handled well initially. This is what we might expect. The other two predominant patterns are interesting, though.

Positive attitudes from officers

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[26] *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Review of Scottish Executive Action Plan*, Recommendations 8 and 58 http://www.scotland.gov.uk/justice/lawrence/slir-00.asp

5.31   The second predominant pattern was that the majority of satisfied interviewees emphasised officers' positive attitudes. The officers had listened carefully and had taken them seriously, and had been understanding and sympathetic. Being informative also rated quite highly. Some of the participants who were markedly unhappy with the final outcome of the case nevertheless said that the initial visit had been handled particularly well.

> **Case 1:**   An isolated young mother belonging to a visible minority lives in a small village. She suffered repeat harassment, with victimisation such as written threats, damage to her home and a particularly unpleasant incident which we cannot describe in case we give a clue to the identity of the family. A man and a woman officer came to see her. She described them as very good and calming. They told her she could pick up the phone any time if there was a problem and immediately accepted that the incidents had taken place because of her ethnic origin. One man was later caught and prosecuted. The police also assisted her in applying for a housing transfer. Her problems are not over, but she feels supported by the police and says that they have been far more helpful than the local council.

> **Case 2:** A young takeaway owner working in a mixed (deprived and affluent) area of Glasgow was subjected to racist abuse from a group of youths. Two officers on the beat arrived promptly when called and they arrested and charged the perpetrators. The case was later dropped because of an occurrence which was outwith the police's control, but the officers kept him informed throughout. He says: "*they did a very efficient job: I was impressed.*" He describes the police in his area as open and straightforward, treating each case on its merits, regardless of ethnic origin. He adds that officers who come to the takeaway as customers are sociable and friendly. He believes that the Force has instilled an awareness of racism in its officers.

5.32   Some interviewees were effusive in their gratitude for the response provided and asked if particular officers could be named for praise in this report. Several who had had bad experiences in the past with the police emphasised the difference when officers were friendly and supportive.

> **Case 3:** The daughter of a family living in a moderately affluent area of Glasgow said that she experienced racist abuse regarding September 11th and suffered criminal damage to their home by a group of teenage white girls. She said a Pakistani officer visited the family with a white officer, which the family felt made a difference. Both officers were helpful and understanding, and took the incident seriously. The family were unhappy that the youth of the perpetrators meant that they were not held in custody, but they were pleased that the police acted quickly and kept them informed, and were very satisfied with how the police conducted the initial visit and the investigation. A community officer regularly attends their daughter's school, which they find encouraging. They would like to see more officers on foot patrol.

Confidence inspired by community officers

5.33   The other pattern which emerged strongly was that participants were most likely to be satisfied with the service they had received if it was provided by a community officer. Both ordinary and community officers were highly praised by some, but it was notable that the community officers were seen as providing a much more consistent service. Relatively few participants singled out community officers for criticism. Schools Liaison Officers were also praised by older teenage and under-16 interviewees as approachable, sympathetic and providing a continuity of service which and deterred trouble. They were able to notify local police offices of ongoing problems, so that police officers could provide a high-visibility presence when appropriate.

> **Case 4:** A teenage girl living in an ethnically mixed area of Glasgow was assaulted on her way home from school. Her headscarf was pulled off, racist remarks were made and she was injured with a weapon. She was visited by a beat officer and the local School Liaison Officer. She said that they were understanding and helpful, and explained things in a

straightforward manner. The matter was investigated sensitively and she was asked how she would like the case to be dealt with: by a headteacher's warning, a police warning or for the case to reported to the prosecution services. She opted for the case to be reported.

She said that although the police have not prevented all the problems outside school, they make an effort to patrol some areas nearby. The school officer is *"friendly and personal, yet professional."* There is always a male and a female officer that she can go to at the local police office. She said that the local police are fair and that she appreciates the consistency in having one recognisable school officer. She added that although there are minority ethnic officers, she would like to see a woman minority ethnic officer as at present they are all men. She would also like to see more officers on patrol.

5.34   These two factors, positive attitudes and the success of community policing, are significant because they came across so strongly in interviews that they cut across sex, occupation and indices of social class among both majority and minority ethnic individual interviewees. Officers' attitudes were cited approvingly more than fast response times or the total amount of time spent by officers in investigating the case or providing additional policing. Follow-up from the force was mentioned by many as an indicator of whether or not their case was taken seriously. Several satisfied interviewees mentioned that they had, for instance, received a follow-up letter in their own language, or a later visit or phone call to enquire after their welfare.

Case 5: A couple living in a large town suffered anti-English abuse and racist threats from a gang of majority ethnic youths in an incident at their home. The police were not able to trace the youths, but were "very encouraging and supportive". They gave the couple names and numbers to contact, and patrolled their area afterwards. The incident was treated as racist and the couple mentioned appreciatively that they received a follow-up letter from the police. They felt that the police had been sympathetic and had done all that they could in the circumstances.

5.35   One caveat to the discussion of positive comments about community officers is that many participants, from all backgrounds, were not aware of the existence of different types of operational officers. It may be that those who praised community officers were those who had developed closer (and perhaps more positive) relationships with the police. While community officers generally introduce themselves as community officers, these terms mean little to many people and it may be that some participants had bad experiences with officers whom they did not identify as community officers. Nevertheless, given the very positive feedback we received about community officers from many participants, it is useful to examine what criticisms they did attract and what it is about these officers which generated confidence and praise. What follows refers not only to racist incidents, but to reporting of incidents in general.

5.36   Getting to know individual officers was a large part of developing confidence in the local police. Two young men commented:

"It's easier to report to actual community police than walk into a station that you just don't know."

"[When I was younger] I wouldn't even speak to an officer. We played football and the police would stop our game. I hated them! It's one of those things. But it's good that they're bridging those things, that they're getting to know what activities we like and they're trying to act as a link." (focus group of young men from minority ethnic backgrounds)

5.37   Community officers themselves explained that they worked in a small area and were assigned there for longer periods, so they could get to know the community. Also, although they were busy, it was interactive work with local people: raising funds for community projects, working with groups, sports and other activities, visiting asylum-seekers and their new neighbours, and visiting shops and places of worships to chat to people informally.

5.38   Some officers had hugely successful events which had received extensive media coverage. An asylum-seeker representative mentioned that one retiring officer had been given a farewell party, arranged by thirty local refugees. Another senior officer was repeatedly singled out for praise as a "listening" officer who genuinely wanted to hear everyone's views and to root

out racism in the force. At minority ethnic community events he was friendly to everyone. He would give people his card and encourage people to report racism from officers directly to him so that he could investigate it.

> **Case 6:** Two representatives of a Glasgow community organization spoke in detail about problems they had had with the police but also about the positive contribution made a community officer who works extensively in their mixed ethnicity area.
>
> One described him as *"a ray of hope"*.   The other said:
>
> *"Once people have built up a trust with* [the officer] *they are keen to see him: he has gained respect and trust in the community. …We would like to see tribute paid to* [the officer] *in the report. He should be made an example of: he is someone who should be emulated. We would like him named as a positive example. Outside agencies appreciate his work. …He would be good at giving training and he should be given more support in his role. There should be a team doing his job, with* [the officer] *having the role of a key player."*

One of this officer's colleagues also received strong praise from a local agency, who said that his hard work and friendly attitude had encouraged confidence in the police among school students, older teenagers and the wider community alike.

5.39   Other officers were seen to be friendly and respectful by the young people who were most likely to be hostile to police attention. Two young men said:

"Like I say, when we were playing football and a police officer came first - I remember the first time they came: it was like 'aw no, it's a cop'. I didn't know him, but he was alright. I never spoke to him the first time. He came back again and he had his joggies on and that, and he was playing football and he was "gonnae get us that, gonnae get us that, gonnae get us that" – after that we were OK with it, he was a copper but it didn't matter because he is treating us with the same respect. Now I see him all the time, this cop. I see him all the time. I talk to him."

*"See, I know a police officer. I know him very well – his name's *****. I met him a lot of times. He's been like brand new to me. See if he's been brand new to us, we'll be brand new to him. … I treat him with respect. Some police officers don't do that."*   (focus group of young men from minority ethnic backgrounds)

5.40   On the other hand, one young man commented:

*"We used to get these talks at school, but then you grow up a little bit and one day it dawns on you and you finally start to realise that it's all bullshit. And you end up being more pissed off than you were to begin with, cos all this community bullshit, it stops all of a sudden, as soon as you get out of school. I feel sorry for these kids when they get a little bit older. The police ain't gonnae give a f*** about them."*

5.41   Some participants who had previously lacked faith in the police had changed their minds after positive encounters with community officers:

"Actually I never used to have any faith in the police force until quite recently. I didn't really like them at all and I thought I wouldn't go to them if I had a problem because I thought that they were just - just wouldn't really want to know because, like, a few times I had an incident, my car had been stolen and they had no interest whatsoever. … But then I have had police out to the house, community police and they were so nice and so helpful I just thought, I couldn't believe it how helpful they were and I have changed my mind about the police force, I was saying to this guy I just never really - all my life I never really had much time for the police - but you know I think that they do a good job."   (woman participant in focus group of people from majority ethnic backgrounds, living in deprived area)

5.42   We interviewed a small number of people from majority white backgrounds who had experienced hostility from boys from Asian backgrounds, while they were living in a predominantly Asian area. Their feelings about their experiences were largely related to how sympathetically the police had handled it. One woman whose family had received continued support and help from the police felt that this had contributed to good neighbourhood relations

and she bore no animosity towards the wider Asian community in her area. In contrast, one woman who had received no follow-up visits or other support from the police described her family as an unsupported and besieged minority. A man who had received a supportive initial visit from officers, but no follow-up, felt that there had been a deterioration in relations between the ethnic communities since September 11th. Again, police efforts after the event seem to have had wider consequences for relationships between the communities.

Quick response

5.43   Although participants in focus groups often mentioned slow police response as an ongoing problem, it was not often mentioned by interviewees as a particular reason for being pleased with police response. It was occasionally mentioned by these interviewees, however, and one Glasgow woman asylum-seeker participating in a focus group also expressed gratitude at a very fast response to her call:

"I have an individual experience about the police. It was OK for me, it was very nice, very good. I was living in ***** once, and at midnight I called police. I tried to call security downstairs but they didn't come up and I panicked. I phoned the police. For 5 minutes waiting you know, before the security they were there, that's why it is very good. I said, "oh hi", midnight, 12 o'clock I called them and I am trying to call security on the intercom but I did not get through on the intercom, then I called police. Police came before the security man was there! OK, they could not do anything really, but it was good for me that they came so quickly."

Satisfaction with the investigation and the outcome of the incident

5.44   By far the two most common reasons mentioned for satisfaction with the outcome of the investigation of a racist incident were feedback and the perception that the police had made an effort to take whatever action they could.

Feedback

5.45   Many interviewees appreciatively mentioned follow-up phone calls or letters, or officers popping by to ask how they were, or officers offering counselling (presumably contacts with Victim Support).

> **Case 7:** A Glasgow shop-owner suffered racist abuse and damage to his shop from a local man, who then attempted to assault him. His neighbours acted promptly to defend the shop-owner and call the police. The shop-owner says that police officers have not always been committed in the past and that he has had officers being racist towards him on occasion, but in this case, the most recent incident, he was very appreciative. He named the two officers, a community officer and a beat officer. He was angry about the legal outcome of the case, which did not result in a satisfactory outcome, but he said, approvingly: *"The police kept in touch; I wish other police officers were like that. The police were very good, absolutely fantastic. It makes a difference when the police are good."*

> **Case 8:** A retired man who lives in a deprived area of Glasgow reported racist harassment at his home. The police visited him and then sent a letter in both English and his first language, encouraging him to report any future incidents. They investigated the case and there has been no repeat of the problems. He says that the police are *"very good, very efficient"* and that they make efforts to patrol local areas when they are notified of trouble. He is pleased with their work and feels that people of his ethnic origin living in the area could do more to make officers welcome there.

Perceptions that police had striven to deal with the incident fully

5.46   Very often what participants said they most appreciated about feedback was that it acted as evidence that the police had done what they could. The most satisfied participants felt that the police had dealt with the incident fully - whether or not this had resulted in an ideal outcome.

Case 9: A professional man describing himself as Pakistani British, living in a small town, reported racist abuse in the street after becoming aware of a police campaign to report such incidents. The officer who answered his phone call took his report seriously and the police called him back a day or two later and investigated whether there were any CCTV recordings of the incident. The police kept him well-informed throughout the investigation. He says that he now regards racist incidents as something to report more often, following his experience of being taken seriously.

His personal experience of the police generally is that they are very helpful, although he thinks that they are best in affluent areas such as his own, while less helpful in deprived communities. He feels that minor and isolated racist incidents would best be dealt with by an organisation other than the police, as they take up a lot of police time.

Case 10: A small business owner living in a large town regularly acted as an informal third-party representative, reporting incidents to the police. He said that local officers regularly kept people informed, kept in touch with the communities and organised meetings to listen to local problems. In his view they act effectively and take all action necessary to investigate and charge perpetrators.

Additional police presence after reports of repeat incidents

5.47   This was cited by several under-16 participants and their parents as an excellent initiative, as was the provision of Schools Liaison Officers, mentioned above. Racist bullying was in some cases considerably reduced by the police presence at appropriate times. Patrolling of public parks and high-crime areas were also mentioned, and some interviewees expressed for patrols outside their homes following some incidents.

5.48   Sadly, one interviewee had chosen to leave Strathclyde, despite this police support, because she had found that the racist harassment was so extensive that even regular patrolling outside her home was insufficient.

Additional patrolling of areas

5.49   This was regularly mentioned with approval. Regardless of the problems in the area, participants felt that officers on foot had a connection with the local area which was absent when patrolling was carried out in vehicles, or when police work was perceived as being mainly reactive. Officers on foot were also seen to be interacting and building up an understanding of local communities, which was often seen as the key to successful policing.

Informal visits and organising events

5.50   Informal and regular short visits from community officers (to community meetings, shops, takeaways, community centres and places of worship) were cited as reassuring and as a sign of commitment, although there were one or two asides about what appear to have become known as the "tea-drinking officers". Unsolicited visits were occasionally perceived as rather patronising. Nevertheless, the general view was that these were useful and, like other friendly and informal interaction, were thought to contribute greatly to building trust and confidence. There seems to be variation in the extent to which these take place in different areas, and it would be useful for the Force to monitor this.

5.51   Police participation in, or organisation of, local events such as the Sighthill Multicultural Festival and the Race Awareness Week was mentioned regularly. The difference between events that were perceived to be valuable and those which were not was whether the officers had spoken or listened. Officers who sought out and listened to "ordinary" people, youths and others who were not prominent individuals were regularly cited as exemplary. Officers whose informal interaction with people at an event was largely presentational (albeit that they may have gone to considerable effort to prepare materials), or which involved taking part in activity but not chatting with people outside the activity, were more likely to be seen as "just doing it for PR".

Working well with community representatives

5.52   Dealing with community leaders and representatives was sometimes valued but was also often described as having limited value in reaching the views of the most marginalized individuals. Some praised local officers for working with individuals who acted as informal third-party reporters, ensuring that issues were taken seriously and that cases were appropriately investigated.

5.53   The force has put considerable effort into MARIM (multi-agency racial incident monitoring) groups in divisions and some sub-divisions, which meet to discuss local problems. Police members said that these were hampered by the lack of information from the prosecution services which would enable officers to keep local communities updated on the progress of prosecutions. Representatives of the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration told us that they were looking into providing aggregate information which would be useful to the public while not breaching individual privacy.

5.54   One community officer suggested constituting a separate MARIM to deal with asylum-seeker issues, as these are often unique to these groups.

Having officers available to the community at specified places and specified times

5.55   Several interviewees mentioned officers holding surgeries at libraries and other public places at set times each week or month. Views were generally positive. One mentioned that having an officer at the local library meant that people could report incidents face-to-face without having an officer visit their homes.

Asylum-seekers were particularly keen:

"There is a lot of reporting now, you know, to the police but now all the time police is going around dealing with them. Every week, going to representative, one of them. Every week they are coming to his house asking about is there any problem, and now there is a surgery at the Victim Support where, once a week, police is going to be there for two hours and everybody, they have a problem, they can come to this. They have taken it seriously now." (Interpreter for asylum-seeker at focus group. This individual had previously been an asylum-seeker and was chosen by the participants as their trusted interpreter for the research)

Interpreting services

5.56   Many participants were unaware that the Force provides interpreting services, both by telephone and in person. This was often mentioned as a facility which minority ethnic participants would like.

"I think we're not made aware that these services are available.   That's what one of the problems is. Like, a lot of people think maybe it is not available and we don't have a right to have these services. If the police promote that these services are available I think that people would use them more often and people would report more incidents." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

5.57   The Force has a Language Identification Card with messages in 49 languages which officers can use to identify which language a person speaks. The officer can then obtain an interpreter by telephone through the National Interpreting Service or in person through a local interpreting service.

5.58   Those who had benefited from the services, particularly asylum-seekers, usually praised them highly. They and their representatives appreciated the provision of interpreters who walked around Sighthill with beat officers and visited asylum-seekers at home. This was seen to be an excellent and innovative initiative which could serve as a model for other forces. The Force deserves to be commended for its efforts in this work.

5.59   There were criticisms of the quality of interpreting, as discussed earlier in the report, and also of the practice of communicating through bilingual family members instead of official interpreters until the formal statement.

5.60   Officers mentioned that it could feel tactless to ask if a person with some English-language ability needed an interpreter. The delay in arranging interpreting also deterred them from contacting the services. Nevertheless, although they found it time-consuming, no officers expressed negative views about these responsibilities. In general officers were very sympathetic towards asylum-seekers and many clearly found their work with asylum-seekers rewarding.

5.61   We did receive some critical comments about police responses to calls from asylum-seekers. People were left feeling bereft when officers did not follow up initial visits after reports of serious incidents or repeat harassment. Overall however the Force was highly praised for its work with asylum-seekers.

5.62   Some officers expressed concern that this relationship would be undermined if they had in future to provide back-up for forced asylum removals. As one said, *"it would tarnish the whole Force"*. These relationships will come under additional strain from the new anti-terrorism legislation.

CHAPTER SIX: THE IMPACT OF FORCE PROCEDURES ON OFFICER AWARENESS

6.1 We were asked to investigate the impact the Force's procedures for receiving, recording and witnessing racist incidents have on awareness, both among police officers and among the public. We have seen that members of the public were largely unaware of many of the services offered by the Force. Few people seemed to understand the remit the police were working to, and few were aware of Force initiatives.

6.2 The more that participants knew about police work, the more likely they said they were to report. Participants wanted more visible policing, sympathetic policing in their local context, and more basic information. When they came into contact with officers, they wanted the officers to explain their role and the way they function.

6.3 We found that Force procedures did not always have the most desirable effect on officer awareness. Many police officers expressed resentment at the workload imposed by the policies and procedures, which some saw as unjustified "special treatment" for one sector of the public. Officers also felt apprehensive about their responsibilities, and insufficiently supported within the Force.

The racist incident form

6.4 Racist incidents are currently recorded on Form 5:41:1 "Report of a Racially Motivated Incident".[27] This is currently a carbon-copy in triplicate which is completed by hand by the investigating officer, who retains one copy and sends one to a senior officer in the subdivision and one to the Community Safety Department at Force headquarters. The form records details of the incident, the victims, the perpetrators and the Force's response.

6.5 Officers' views about the form were mixed. Some thought that the details it recorded were mostly appropriate. Some felt that there was insufficient space for officers' and others' perceptions of the incident. Most were agreed that there was a time-consuming duplication of work, recording a crime with the help of a civilian assistant by phone and then recording many of the same details on the racist incident form.

6.6 The force's forthcoming Vulnerable Persons Database will address many of the problems discussed above. Data on racist incidents, homophobic incidents and incidents of domestic abuse will be entered immediately into a networked database. This should make the recording process quicker, data analysis more practicable, and show current patterns Force-wide. It will give rapid and easily accessible information on repeat offenders and repeat targets (people or locations). This will assist the Force in complying with an aim identified as desirable in the HMIC *Without Prejudice?* Report[28] and the Lord Advocate's Guidelines on racist crime.[29]

6.7 It is perhaps worth observing that the term "vulnerable persons" may be irritating to some individuals who resist being identified as victims. The Metropolitan Police and others use terms such as "targeted policing" and "hate crime"[30] but both of these have their own flaws: "targeted" is

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[27] The Force also uses a separate form, "Notification of a Racially Motivated Incident", where a case is being reported to the Procurator Fiscal. This form also applies to cases which do not involve a statutory racial offence or aggravation but where the victim or witness perceives racist motivation.

[28] HMIC (2001) *Without Prejudice? a*s cited above. See also the ACPOS Racial Diversity Strategy and ACPOS Racial Diversity Guidance Manual (2000) and ch.3 of *Pride and Prejudice: A Review of Police Race Relations in Scotland* (2003).

[29] See footnote 7 above.

[30] See for instance the Metropolitan Police "Understanding and Responding to Hate Crime Project" at http://www.met.police.uk/urhc/index.htm.

too unspecific a term and "hate crime" implies the narrower category of organised racism or overtly racist violence.[31]

6.8　　Each victim will be assigned a unique number, as will each incident and each offender. The system will have the capacity to record incidents involving multiple victims and offenders. This will be linked to the Command & Control system (which records the details of current incidents and initial calls to the police), so that information about previous incidents can be accessed rapidly for officers on their way to a call or visit.　There will also be a tracking system which will automatically alert specialist officers where repeat victims or repeat offenders are involved. This should not only reduce work for investigating officers but also further reduce the likelihood of individuals having to repeat details of racist incidents to different officers.

6.9　　It would be useful to explore linking the records to a multi-agency monitoring system such as that piloted by ERIMP in Edinburgh.　Agencies participating in this pilot project have been recording, through a standardised questionnaire, racist incidents which have been reported to them. The records are anonymized and contain data such as ethnicity, age, locus, type of incident and victim and suspect profiles. These can then be aggregated or searched to find detailed information.　Anonymity is protected by a mechanism which refuses to answer a query to the system if it would yield data precise enough to identify an individual.　This will enable agencies to build incident profiles which will allow them to identify where resources are needed.

Identifying incidents as racist

6.10　　Several officers also complained about the national definition of a racist incident, which empowers "any person" who perceives the incident as racist to designate it as such, overriding officers' discretion. Many officers were resentful of interference with their discretion, both by victims whom they felt could misuse this power to raise the policing priority assigned to their case, and by senior officers whom they felt could "wrongly" reclassify incidents as racist and so exaggerate the prevalence of racist incidents in the local area. Rather than seeing the racist incident procedures as the most appropriate approach to the problem, officers sometimes viewed them as a "punishment" imposed on all police forces in response to the failings of the Metropolitan Police.

6.11　　The issue of discretion had two elements which were particularly emphasised: discretion as to recording and discretion as to follow-up enquiries.

- ### discretion as to recording

6.12　　The records of incidents have a dual function, gathering useful provisional impressions which help to build up a picture of local problems, and meeting monitoring requirements set by police policymakers and external agencies.　Officers complained that the records do not differentiate between those incidents which investigating officers themselves identified as possibly racist and those which the investigating officers thought were probably not.

6.13　　There also was a possible problem with reports by people from Chinese backgrounds. The 2001-02 Force records show only 23 racist incidents recorded for this group throughout Strathclyde. It is clear that this is a tiny fraction of what is taking place. Yet participants in Chinese focus groups described to us a number of incidents which could have been classified as racist, and which they had reported. It may be that people from this ethnic background are reporting incidents, but that the investigating officers are not eliciting information about the possible element of racism.

6.14　　There was also disagreement over whether officers themselves - particularly majority ethnic officers who were accused of being racist by minority ethnic individuals - should classify any of their own experiences as "racist incidents".

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[31] For a contrasting opinion, see Elizabeth Stanko (2001) "Re-Conceptualising the Policing of Hatred: Confessions and Worrying Dilemmas of a Consultant" *Law and Critique* 12(3) 309.

- ***discretion as to follow-up***

6.18   Another removal of discretion which some operational officers felt inappropriate was the requirement to follow up all reports of racist incidents with calls or visits. Some officers said that this was "special treatment" which should be given to all incidents or none, rather than to a designated class of incidents which included in their view those which were minor as well as those which were extremely serious. It was also said that some victims did not need or want follow-up. In addition, where there were multiple victims, the work involved in providing two follow-ups to each victim was very substantial.

6.19   Others felt that the additional effort was worthwhile in building good relationships. They suggested a simple automated follow-up, perhaps a standard letter, for all members of minority ethnic groups reporting incidents (not only those reporting racist incidents) to increase confidence among a social group who at present felt alienated from policing. Reported racist incidents appear to be the tip of an iceberg, so vulnerable groups may benefit particularly from the diversion of additional support resources.

6.20   It is not clear how this resentment should best be tackled. We got the impression that the lines of communication are poor between senior policymakers and immediate supervisors of front-line officers. A mandatory procedure is far from ideal, but if it was removed then there would need to be much greater monitoring of local handling of racist incident investigations to ensure that the seriousness of these incidents is appreciated.

Complaints and counter-complaints of racism

The point at 6.14 regarding officers' experiences was linked to another problem. Several operational officers said that they were insufficiently supported by the Force when dealing with incidents which could lead to them being accused of being racist, and felt at risk of damage to their careers when encountering ethnic minorities in the course of their work. This was enough to make some "hearts sink" when officers were sent to incidents reported by individuals who appeared to be from minority ethnic backgrounds. Some felt that they could cause offence inadvertently through errors of "protocol", while others feared what they saw as malicious accusations of racism. While some officers, particularly community officers with special responsibilities, greatly enjoyed working with various communities, others were nervous of this.

6.15   On the other hand, as we saw above at 5.16-5.18, some non-police participants in the research (both majority and minority ethnic) felt strongly that the police took inadequate action to investigate and tackle racism by individual officers, and a few cited examples to illustrate this.

6.16   The onus is on the Force to show that it has robust systems and a proactive approach, not a reactive one. Operational officers who are committed to policing effectively on behalf of ethnic minorities also need greater support, not least because these officers bear the responsibility for performing much of the work which is measured by standards of public service promised by the Force. These are in many cases statutory responsibilities, so the Force must ensure sufficient resources for this work to be done effectively.

6.17   It would perhaps be useful for each division to have its own full-time Ethnic Liaison Officer to identify what resources are required where in each division. This is likely to be a long-term task for the Force because the work involves not simply making real improvements where needed, but also informing the public of what services are already available and acting to change public perceptions. A full-time officer for each division would also assist the Force in complying with HMIC requirements that Scottish forces have rigorous case management systems and a rigorous and verifiable process of compliance audit for their "race relations" policies and procedures.[32]

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[32] See HMIC (2001) *Without Prejudice? A thematic inspection of police race relations in Scotland* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Justice Department, Recommendations 3 + 9, p.10.

"Arbitrary" distinctions

6.21   A point frequently made, particularly by police officers and other participants in majority ethnic focus groups, was that it was inequitable to focus on racism without also addressing sectarianism. Part of the reason for this may be that the majority ethnic participants were unaware of the extent of racism in Strathclyde. Nevertheless, sectarianism was widely said to be also a serious problem.[33]

6.22   While it is clear from our research that racism is extensive in Strathclyde and needs more resources than have so far being forthcoming from central and local government to tackle it, the Force also needs to address the perception among officers that sectarianism is being "neglected" in favour of racism. Minority ethnic participants were aware of the belief among some officers and members of the public that they were being given "special treatment", and this made some reluctant to report racist incidents for fear that they would be seen to be exploiting this.

6.23   It was also observed by some participants that the focus on sectarianism underplayed the problem of other forms of religious intolerance:

"If people talk about sectarianism being a problem, rather than religious hatred being a problem, they're focusing solely on an internal Christian problem and they're not thinking about Muslims or Jews, or Hindus or whatever. …if the vast majority of population identify themselves as (loosely speaking) Christian, then they will see it as a problem for them and obviously focus on it. I'm not saying they're deliberately malicious: rather, that would be the one that would be at the front of their minds. For most people it probably doesn't enter their minds…" (participant from a smaller ethnic community)

6.24   Both minority and majority ethnic participants felt that the legitimacy of anti-racist initiatives would be enhanced if the Force was clearly seen to be tackling these problems. Section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 now provides for heavier sentencing where an offence is proved to have been aggravated by religious prejudice. Increased recording and monitoring will accompany this and may go some way to addressing concerns about sectarianism. It will also add to officers' workloads: support for frontline officers will be necessary. Nevertheless, the perception that sectarian and racist incidents are now regarded as serious may help reduce the fears of minority ethnic individuals that they are being singled out as complaint-prone victims who demand better treatment than others. This could reduce one deterrent to reporting.

Playing the "race card"

6.25   Several minority ethnic participants expressed the fear that they might be seen to "play the race card" when reporting a racist incident; in other words, to make an allegation of racism which was untrue in order to obtain institutional advantages. They greatly feared the consequences of this "backlash".

6.26   Our discussions with majority ethnic focus groups, both police and non-police, indicate that this backlash does exist. It was raised often in discussion with these groups. Some criticised the "race card" allegations while others claimed them to be true, although only a few gave examples which they had encountered first-hand. It appears that a few instances, whether or not genuine, had been drawn on repeatedly.

6.27   Fear of being tagged as "playing the race card" was an aspect of the confidence barrier to reporting mentioned in a previous chapter. This fear appears to be deep and widespread,

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www.scotland.gov.uk/hmic

[33] See also Elinor Kelly (2003) "Challenging Sectarianism in Scotland. The Prism of Racism" 42 *Scottish Affairs* 32.

particularly among Glasgow Asian communities, with serious consequences. While participants in minority ethnic focus groups were sometimes not hesitant to mention anti-social or criminal behaviour among members of their own communities, there was very little impression given of a feeling that some members were "playing the race card" (a term which also seems to be used by some majority ethnic groups to refer to all sorts of conflicts between ethnic groups, not only those in which the minority group gains an "unfair" advantage).

This is another area in which there appeared to be a damaging gulf in perceptions between majority and minority ethnic groups, and not only in the context of policing.

General policing strategies

6.28   Most officers saw good policing as being neutral in dealing with incidents reported by people from minority ethnic backgrounds:

 'It doesn't matter whether they're black, white or Asian - all get treated the same'.

6.29   Officers tended not to appreciate that treating everyone the same might have discriminatory effects, as we have seen in the discussion of policing the social activities of young Asian men in Glasgow. Officers did however recognise the value of becoming involved with local communities and many expressed a desire to have more officers available to answer calls and to patrol on foot. Some busy beat officers who were forced to rush from call to call found that community officers could help with the work:

6.30   Typically, though, officers appeared not to be fully aware of the reasons for implementing particular procedures for recording and investigating racism. As we saw before, relatively subtle indicators of respect and commitment from police officers were valued particularly highly by people reporting incidents. Officers' dissatisfaction with racist incident procedures may well manifest itself implicitly in their responses to complaints, with deleterious effects on relationships between victims and police.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
WHERE FROM HERE?

"It's hard to suggest something. If my wallet was stolen it is easy to report to the police but not so for racist incidents, where confidence is needed in yourself <u>and</u> in the police." (young visiting student)

7.1 We will first examine participants' suggestions for ways forward, then conclude with our own recommendations.

Some problems have straightforward and affordable solutions; some are already being addressed by the police with prospects for improvement; while others are more intractable, or present dilemmas.

Participants proposed several changes, both to mainstream policing and to specific provision. Changes in mainstream policing were thought most likely to benefit majority and minority ethnic groups alike. In many cases the experiences and needs of minority ethnic participants were not specific to them and were shared across the board.

Friendly, "listening" officers

"Police officers should spend time in black people's houses, so that they can feel the actual cultural difference. They should engage more with blacks, have more contact, to become more aware." (participant in focus group of young women of minority ethnic origin)

"I think they should make themselves more approachable so that Asians can go up to them - I mean if they have a face that is screwed up, don't even look at me, no one is going to talk to them. If they have a smile on their face - a simple thing is a smile, honestly - it goes a long way." (participant in focus group of young men of minority ethnic origin)

7.2 It was widely thought that the most successful way to gain confidence, and gain public support in tackling many sorts of crime, not just racist incidents, was to increase friendly social interaction between officers and the general public. It was felt that officers should "get out of their cars and talk" to young people especially.

7.3 Participants argued that simply by talking to people, the police would become more approachable and people would feel that the Force was interested in what was happening to them. The police would become recognised friendly faces and people would have confidence in them.

7.4 The model of a good community officer - a model which already exists in the Force – was felt to be one that should be extended to all operational officers. This (like the requirement to have faster response times and more officers on foot patrol) has major resource implications, but it was widely seen as the major solution to all groups' alienation from the police.

More community involvement

"See, based on the area where we are, what the police are trying to do by getting involved with community projects and stuff, I think that's encouraging. By no means it's the answer but it's encouraging. I know, I know it's changed my opinion in some respects so, it's definitely worked in some way. (man participating in focus group of minority ethnic agency representatives)

7.5 Participants appreciated local officers' involvement in community projects, meetings and social events. School visits were also mentioned, with visits to secondary schools as important as visits to primary schools.

Training for officers

7.6   The Force offers anti-racism training in a two-day course on "Policing a Multi-Racial Society" which is an ongoing programme held with small groups of officers at different ranks. The course brings in members of a wide range of minority ethnic groups to participate in the training. Anti-racist training being rolled out to all staff is also incorporated in the package for the National Equal Opportunities Training Strategy, taught by designated officers within each Force. The Scottish police are far ahead of many other organisations, although national programmes are internally run and have been criticised for not increasing outside involvement.

7.7   Training by itself, however good, is insufficient to bring about the changes in mainstream policing which we have mentioned. Minority ethnic participants frequently stated that training could reduce cultural insensitivity or unhelpful manner.   Many were unaware that the Force already provides training for its officers. Some officers stated that in addition to anti-racist training, they needed cultural protocol training covering the needs and preferences of individuals.

Although this is in fact included in training and the Force regularly produces materials for all staff, this is the sort of skill perhaps best learnt in everyday interaction.

7.8   Minority ethnic participants agreed that some protocol training was needed:

"I think that the police, right, should be more aware of cultures and traditions of black and ethnic minorities. Because if they're aware of them, they are more educated." (participant in focus group of young men of minority ethnic origins)

7.9   The key to this is learning about local experiences rather than simply absorbing stereotypic abstract guidelines. Simon Holdaway[34] makes a useful distinction between stereotypes and typifications in policing. Stereotypes are rigid and one-dimensional, while typifications are more rounded. Typifications may be somewhat inaccurate, but they are part of everyday life. People need to use simplified notions, and police officers in particular need to act quickly in what may be complex situations.   It is reasonable for officers to use flexible typifications, because these can be altered and updated. It is problematic when they rely on more limited, rigid stereotypes. Training should enable officers to develop typifications rather than stereotypes.

"More at a local level, they should promote themselves into more culturally aware things that ethnic minorities get involved in. Right, I'm talking about getting to know about their cultures, getting to know what kind of habits they have, so they know that for Asian guys, if an Asian guy's got a new car, this is what Asian guys like. We don't like going out drinking and clubbing and stuff, right. We like to save up our money. …They're not aware of these things. There is a big, big divide. Asian guys like to do things that white guys might not want to do, and that involves hanging with our own cultures because we are a very close community - that's just the way we have been brought up, through our cultures and through back home, it's just the way we are. They need to be more aware of that." (participant in focus group of young men)

Some areas have established minority ethnic communities, while others contained relatively isolated members of smaller ethnic groups. Approaches need to be matched to the context.

7.10   It was also suggested that regular short spells spent accompanying community officers in mixed ethnicity areas would provide the everyday interaction which officers felt they lacked. Minority ethnic participants found that officers tended to stereotype people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Practical experience of social interaction during community policing could help overcome this.

7.11   This would need to be repeated regularly throughout officers' careers if it is to bring about changes in establishing policing cultures. It should be offered to all officers so that it becomes part of mainstream policing.

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[34] Simon Holdaway (1997) "Constructing and sustaining 'race' within the police workforce" 48 *British Journal of Sociology* pp.24-25.

7.12   The Force has provided an ongoing secondment to the West of Scotland Racial Equality Council since 2000: a sergeant is seconded for six months. Those who had heard about this thought it was an excellent initiative which should be extended to youth organisations. Reporting by young people has been low and the sense of alienation from policing is strongest among that age-group. Older teenage participants pointed out that community work involving officers has great potential to build confidence and increase reporting. For younger people, school liaison is beginning to encourage greater reporting by both school staff and students.

More officers on foot patrol and faster response times

7.13   These, particularly more officers on foot, came up time and again. People asked for a more visible presence in troubled spots at troubled times of day, or throughout mixed ethnicity areas following high-profile criticisms of minorities in the media. Instances where this had been provided were highly praised. Where there had been sensational or high-profile stories, there was often an increase in the levels of fear among minority individuals. They sought a rapid and visible police response, which would need to be based on accurate and up-to-date community intelligence.

Public relations work

"Maybe the police could do a bit more in the way of PR and telling people more about what they do. I think this happens in other walks of life. Certainly in my area of work and I'm sure a lot of others, there is a much bigger emphasis on describing the service you offer, whether that is in written format, or going out and speaking to people or whatever, about how roles are changing. I think a lot of professions have to do that."   (woman participant in focus group of people from majority white backgrounds, living in an affluent area)

7.14   Some of the facilities suggested were already provided. The Force does promote its specialist initiatives and has striven to place advertising material in publications read by minority ethnic groups, but it seems they are not yet reaching those they target. People wanted to know more about detection and solution rates of crime, what services were available, what different types of officers did, and who local police contacts were.

7.15   It may be that the Force has overestimated the amount of knowledge the public does possess: people from all communities were not aware of what a community officer was and did not know about the Force's interpreting services and third-party reporting schemes.

Particular suggestions included:

• Advertising services not only in community newspapers but also through other media, such as minority TV channels and Asian radio. The NHS 24 advertisements were praised in Chinese and Asian focus groups as effectively reaching ethnic minorities

• Holding more regular public meetings in local areas so people can ask questions and officers can explain what they are doing to combat local problems

• In mainstream TV appearances by senior officers, such as on news bulletins, informing the public about specific services, such as what the Ethnic Liaison Officer and the Asylum Support Officer do. Contact phone numbers could be publicised, enabling people to find out what the Force offered in their local area.

Follow-up

7.16   Follow-up calls and letters were greatly appreciated by the majority of those who had received them. One Division is about to a new Racist Incident package. Letters, available in 12 languages, will be sent to all persons who have reported a racist incident. The initial letter will explain the work of the police and the Crown Office. The follow-up letter at the end of the

investigation will be tailored to the outcome of the investigation, explaining what action the Force took, and why. Given the frequency with which participants in the research cited follow-up as an important element of building confidence, this sounds like an excellent initiative.

7.17   People particularly wanted feedback on the progress of cases which have been passed to the prosecution services, and some requested that communities be provided with disposal rates broken down into categories of action taken. Officers regularly mentioned that their work was hampered by lack of information about the progress of cases in the hands of the Crown Office or the Children's Reporter. There are privacy issues surrounding data about youth perpetrators, but the Crown Office could do more to provide data on cases involving adult perpetrators.

More minority ethnic officers

"I feel that the force are trying to pick up. We were pulled over the other day! [Laughs] And it was by a Sikh officer. He was very decent. My husband's English wasn't very good. And I found [the officer] was very helpful, whereas before I think they wanted everybody to speak in English and my husband has struggled with it and I've tried to answer for him. So I feel that's quite - it's good that they're trying to bring in the Asian community." (participant in focus group of women from Asian backgrounds)

7.18   Many wanted to see more people from minority ethnic backgrounds involved in operational policing. We have mentioned the difficulties of providing enough of a diverse range of officers at a variety of ranks to achieve significant change. Recruitment of senior minority ethnic officers from other forces may be one means of achieving this. The Force's first task is to build greater confidence among members of minority ethnic groups in Strathclyde: this is most likely to sustain more diverse recruitment.

Specialist telephone lines

7.19   Some participants, particularly those from Chinese backgrounds, thought that reporting could be encouraged by the provision of a separate telephone number staffed by someone familiar with main community languages and accents. A separate number, rather than an interpreting option within the main call system, was the ideal. Other participants, such as those in an African and Caribbean focus group, were worried that specialist provision could lead to minority ethnic issues being marginalized. The answer appears to be to tackle the issues on both fronts at once.

7.20   The Force is moving to a new call centre system next year. It will have two call centres and four area control rooms by 2005, which will take all calls (not only 999 calls) for the Force. This may make it more feasible to incorporate specialists. Any experiment with specialist staff or contact numbers should be a relatively long-term one, as confidence and public awareness will need to be established over a period of time before members of minority ethnic groups take the first step to make use of new services.

7.21   A review by the Scottish Executive Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Steering Group also recommended that a 24-hour telephone line be set up by the Scottish Executive for victims to report racist incidents.[35]

Local advocacy workers and related initiatives

7.22   Some participants felt that it would be valuable to have more local advocacy workers acting as a friendly interface between the public and the Force. This would give people the confidence to report more racist incidents. Rather than being available city-wide or region-wide,

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[35] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/justice/lawrence/slir-00.asp

as many excellent public services currently are, these would be placed in local areas. Interaction with community workers was also mentioned as an alternative to the Force working with organisations at a higher management level.

7.23   Some would like civilian advocacy workers, while others prefer local police officers holding regular community surgeries outwith police offices. A few mentioned a community network to deal with racist incidents along the lines of Neighbourhood Watch.

7.24   There is a serious problem with representing all the minority ethnic groups in each area. Some organisations were viewed as providing a service primarily for one ethnic group, and a representative of one organisation explained the efforts they had gone to in order to promote their services as available equally to all minority ethnic groups. A local advocacy worker would need to be viewed as there for all. Also, initiatives likely to attract second-generation young people may be quite different from those which will attract their elders. It would be resource-intensive to provide local staff in rural areas, and the delay involved in going through a third-party may make advocacy work unsuitable where people require an immediate police response.

7.25   Most local advocacy services are only available during weekday hours, yet the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommended that facilities to report at locations other than police offices be available 24 hours a day.[36] While local advocacy workers are an attractive and reassuring option and many minority ethnic participants said that the provision of third-party reporting is also valuable, the best option appears to be to make mainstream reporting to the police more welcoming and less daunting.

7.26   Focusing on the perpetrators as well as the victims is necessary. Where the roots of hostility lie in social disadvantage, even joint policing initiatives with other agencies will not provide a long-term solution. This point was frequently made by participants, along with solutions which go beyond policing and are the responsibility of local and central government.

Ethnic liaison officer, full-time, for each division

7.27   In order to monitor the policing of racist incidents and identify how best to use resources for ethnic minority communities in each Division, it would be valuable to create an Ethnic Liaison Officer in each division. The officer would need to be full-time in every division in order to focus on the primary work, and should be dedicated to interactive work as well as data monitoring. Each division has its own balance of groups and distinctive policing concerns. Resources could be saved by having an officer in each division to identify what needs to be done. It must be emphasised that an understanding of policing diverse communities is just as important in largely majority ethnic areas as in ethnically mixed areas, if mainstream policing is to change significantly.

Leaflets in minority languages explaining legal and evidential process

7.28   Although leaflets are not always particularly effective, small business owners in particular would appreciate leaflets available in the main languages explaining the law regarding typical racist incidents and how to assist the Force in obtaining evidence necessary for a prosecution. This is one example of how liaison between Community Safety and other specialist areas of the force could be enhanced.

7.29   It would also be useful to explain to small business owners the likely impact of reporting on renewal of licences. Small retail premises and staff are regularly targeted for racist incidents and crime, yet some fear that reporting incidents to the police will not be in their interests. Owners of food service premises were reluctant to report incidents because they were fearful that when their license came up for review, the police would object to renewal on the grounds that the premises attracted trouble.

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[36] Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, cited above at fn.1, Recommendation 16.

Respecting privacy, particularly where the wider community is hostile

7.30   Some participants suggested that police officers could take a more individualised approach when working with members of minority ethnic groups, such as taking their testimonies in private, away from their homes, and keeping their privacy protected as far as possible during the conduct of the investigation. Where officers had done this, for instance with child participants, the sensitive approach was appreciated.

Encouraging anonymous reporting for statistical purposes

7.31   Members of geographically isolated ethnic groups, particularly those from Chinese backgrounds, said that the communities had little idea of the extent of racist incidents and that anonymous reporting could be encouraged for the purposes of building up a broader picture. This is already possible using Crimestoppers, but a specific racist incident initiative could be pegged to this. But as reporting can carry emotional costs, not all will want to report, even anonymously, if there is no obvious personal benefit.

More "heroes" and role models

7.32   Minority ethnic participants of various ages suggested that police advertising, and indeed media presentation of minority ethnic groups generally, make more use of role models such as minority ethnic footballers and musicians to encourage people to take up services or to join the Force. Participants from many different minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly Chinese, said that some people were reluctant to report racist incidents unless they were able to speak to police staff from the same ethnic background as themselves.

Holistic approach to intolerance

7.33   Many participants mentioned that a robust response was required to deal with sectarian intolerance and other forms of religious discrimination. It was felt by some that it would become more "legitimate" or less uncomfortable to report racist incidents if sectarianism was also as serious. The Force has also tried to protect smaller faith communities, with some financial assistance from the Scottish Executive, but there seems to be a widespread view that a holistic approach tackling all these problems would gain the support of all Strathclyde's communities.

Independent investigation of claims of police racism, or at least robust lay involvement

7.34   The burden of proof is on the Force, as a powerful and central organisation, to demonstrate that its policies are not racially discriminatory and that its individual officers do not act with racial bias. Many participants felt that an independent system of investigation of complaints and greater lay involvement in internal investigations could go a long way towards increasing confidence in the Force among all groups. The perception that racism in the Force would not be dealt with effectively was thought to be a deterrent stopping many minority ethnic people from reporting incidents.

Moving away from a solely "blame" culture

7.35   Several minority ethnic participants felt that although evidence of racism by individual officers should be tackled rapidly and decisively, it was very important to make the work of policing minority ethnic communities rewarding, and for excellence to be recognised and rewarded. It was felt that this would increase the proportion of officers who displayed a

sympathetic and informed manner when dealing with ethnic minority victims, and so encourage people to report more racist incidents.

7.36   They felt that all officers who excelled at this work should be identified and given career incentives. This should be promoted among officers and role model officers identified. Given that the kind of policing most valued by participants was frequently also that valued by minority ethnic participants, it was felt by many that everyone would benefit from a changed culture which rewarded such policing.

7.37   Much of the work which needs to be done to change policing requires additional resources and broader initiatives. With the arrival of asylum-seekers, Strathclyde now has a very wide range of people from minority ethnic backgrounds, requiring services such as interpreting and translating. The Force has so far absorbed the costs of this itself. Additional funding needs to be provided from elsewhere. Participants also felt that initiatives such as advertising could be carried out in conjunction with other forces and other agencies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, the West of Scotland Racial Equality Council and the Scottish Executive.

7.38   Again and again, participants from all backgrounds emphasised the importance of education, at school and afterwards, about all sorts of issues such as the reason why asylum-seekers were here and the history of Scottish involvement in the empire which first established relationships with many Commonwealth countries. They also emphasised the need to tackle social inequality affecting both minority and majority ethnic communities, from the lack of leisure provision in deprived areas to the problems of unemployment. It was felt that in order for it to be worthwhile reporting racist incidents, the wider problem of racism needed to be reduced. Many minority ethnic participants said they endured so much everyday racism that they felt forced to harden themselves against it, rather than repeatedly report incidents to the police.

7.39   This work extends far beyond the remit and the budget of policing, but as our success stories indicate, the police play a valuable part, particularly when they succeed in winning confidence and reducing fear. Safety and security are uppermost in the minds of many members of the public, and no agency has a greater influence on this than the police. While much work needs to be done, the Force has achieved a great deal at ground level, not only through changed Force policy but also through the commitment and insight of some of its most active frontline officers. Its best work in tackling racist incidents has benefited all of Strathclyde's communities.

- **Researchers' recommendations**

7.40   We recommend that:

1. The Force urgently focus training on interaction with the public. Brusque manner, rudeness and lack of knowledge have a negative effect on public trust and confidence.

2. Front-line officers be given additional on-the-job training, shadowing experienced community officers.

3. The Force raise confidence among minority ethnic groups by backing a national system of independent investigation or lay involvement in investigation of complaints against the police.

4. The Force offer and publicise a separate telephone service with a multilingual answering service. All front-line staff should also be encouraged to ask questions about spelling of names etc. and ask people to repeat what they have said, rather than guess at an approximation.

5. The Force increase its efforts in dialogue at ground level. Each Division should routinely seek out the views of ordinary people as well as their representatives.

6. The Force ensure sufficient resources for specialist officers to do this work effectively. Each Division could have its own full-time Ethnic Liaison Officer who would identify accurately what resources are required where.

7. These specialist officers act as channels of communication for operational officers to convey their views on the policing of racist incidents to senior management.

8. Officers be instructed to explain briefly to the public why they ask for certain types of information, such as ethnicity, personal details and the qualifications of personnel who may be witnesses to an incident.

9. When officers come into contact with the public, they also explain briefly their role and the way they function. This would include the role of specialist units and community officers and the hours they are available.

10. Officers find out whether victims of racist incidents want the investigation to be carried out discreetly.

11. The Force work to raise overall awareness of the many services the Force already provides, the remit of policing and the range of Force initiatives. This should focus on concrete examples of work already being done.

12. The Force distribute leaflets in a range of languages providing an introduction to criminal justice, court processes and the laws of evidence. Also it should send out standard letters in a range of languages to provide basic information and follow-up for people who have reported racist incidents.

13. Where poor service is due to resource problems not discrimination by ethnic group, the Force needs to ensure that this is made clear. Officers and call-handlers should routinely offer this information during calls and/or visits. This would make it easier to identify discriminatory incidents.

14. Procedures ensure that officers are precise, accurate and consistent in the detail that they record.

15. The Force back a more comprehensive system of third-party reporting, bringing together reports made to all agencies. This should draw attention to cases which are normally progressed as civil matters. Consistent training of agency staff would be needed.

16. The Crime Prevention Unit and Business Crime Unit make particular provision for racist incidents, such as a dedicated phone line and relevant information in several major languages.

17. The Force seek a way to publicise its successful specialist services for asylum-seekers to all those who have newly arrived.

18. The Force provide more effective mechanisms for recognising and helping operational officers who feel under pressure, resentful and unsupported.

APPENDIX: RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods included:

- 175 in-depth semi-structured interviews in urban, suburban and rural areas (143 of these participants were people who had reported racist incidents to the police during 2001-2002; 27 were representatives of agencies and 11 were police officers), analysed using NVivo (see below)
- 35 focus groups, most of which were taped and analysed using NVivo
- 157 street interviews in four areas of Glasgow comparing experiences of majority and minority ethnic individuals, resulting in 149 complete sets of responses
- Analysis on an Access database and an SPSS (statistics) database of anonymized records of racist incidents reported to Strathclyde police
- Analysis of Force policy and procedures and relevant external regulation of policing.

This selection of methods was chosen for the purposes of triangulation (checking results against each other by using different methods). A convergence of evidence suggests reliable results. A statistician was also brought in to oversee the SPSS analysis.

Racism is however a hugely complex concept, and people's views about it may change from time and time and from setting to setting. Certainty in this type of research can never be achieved, but research can nevertheless be done well or badly. Although space is limited, we have aimed here and there in the report to explain some of the techniques we used to minimise our own bias, to take account of people and factors which are easy to overlook, and to "listen" to participants rather than prematurely narrow the focus of what they contributed. This information should also enable others to comment on or develop the work.

The focus groups were usually tape-recorded and then transcribed. The interviews were usually transcribed by interviewers from notes taken during the interviews. We chose not to record most of the interviews in case this would be unsettling to interviewees, some of whom might have wished to express highly critical views about policing. Focus group participants took part anonymously without identifying themselves to us, so there were fewer concerns about having the discussion recorded, but focus group moderators did turn off the tape recorders in three focus groups at the request of participants who preferred the discussion to be recorded in written notes.

We gave all home-based interviewees the option of having a male or female interviewer and a bilingual interviewer or additional interpreter. These requests were met in all but two cases (in which an interpreter had to be provided instead of a bilingual interviewer). Two focus groups were conducted with the assistance of interpreters. Two bilingual researchers and two bilingual assistants also contributed to the street survey. Members of majority ethnic groups participated in each element of the fieldwork. One or more minority ethnic researchers had input into in research and decision-making at each stage of the fieldwork, analysis, and writing-up.

Analysis

The transcripts and notes from the majority of interviews and focus groups were entered into an NVivo qualitative text analysis database to make it easier to retrieve data and to code large quantities of text. A group of data analysts read through transcripts and drew up a thematic coding frame so that participants' responses could be grouped under a range of headings. An analyst was also employed with the specific task of problematising and revising codes. The data was coded by the project co-ordinator. The interviews were coded within 63 categories created in the text database while the focus groups were coded within 43 categories, some overlapping. Data analysis and writing-up was carried out by a team of researchers.

Interviews

The first part of the research involved Strathclyde Police writing to everyone they recorded as having reported a racist incident to them in the financial year 2001-02, inviting them to be interviewed by us for the research. The Force gave us a list of languages into which our letter would need to be translated. For data protection reasons, the Force sent the letter on our behalf so that we would not have access to identifying details of anyone who had reported an incident unless they chose to reply to our invitation. The replies were likewise sent to us, not the Force, so that the Force would not know who had chosen to participate. The letter included a stamped envelope addressed to the University, an invitation to take part, a description of the research and two copies of a consent form, one to sign and one to retain.

It is not possible to estimate exactly what proportion of this group replied because the number of complainers does not tally exactly with the number of separate racist incidents recorded by the Force as some complainers report more than one incident. Some letters were also returned to sender because complainers had moved without leaving a forwarding address. We calculate however that approximately a sixth of addressees responded saying that they would be willing to take part and we interviewed all whom we were able to contact. A few moved home during the research and a few changed their minds about participating; the rest were interviewed at their homes or another place of their choice.

A small team of committed interviewers followed a set of closed and open-ended questions and were encouraged to allow participants to add their own stories. Some interviews consequently lasted over two hours and as with our other interviews and focus groups, we are very grateful to all our participants for giving us so much of their time.

This method of approaching participants was intended to find people who had recent experience of reporting to the Force so that we could examine in detail people's perceptions of the Force response. We also hoped that this would be a means of reaching people who would be hard to reach by any other method other than a large regional survey, which would have cost hundreds of thousands. This approach succeeded in reaching a very wide range of participants, from all areas of Strathclyde and various socio-economic backgrounds. It also enabled people who were highly socially isolated to participate: they would be unlikely to have become aware of the research by other methods such as advertising or social networking.

We also interviewed representatives of community agencies and police officers, to obtain institutional perspectives.

Focus groups

Focus groups were chosen as a means of generating data as they have been shown to be particularly well-suited to uncovering shared meanings.[37] Since we wanted to investigate conceptions of racism and to explore differences between the various communities living within the Strathclyde Police area, we convened several focus groups with a view to making systematic comparisons. Focus groups were selected using purposive or theoretical sampling[38] which aims to reflect the diversity within a given population rather than striving for representativeness.

At the outset, we anticipated which dimensions were likely to be most important in influencing people's views or and responses to racist incidents. These included ethnicity, age, gender and locality. We sought to convene groups with members of all the ethnic groups living within the

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[37] M. Bloor et al. (2001) *Focus Groups in Social Research* London: Sage.

[38] A.J. Kuzel (1992) "Sampling in qualitative inquiry" in BF Crabtree and WI Miller. (eds) *Doing Qualitative Research*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp.31-44.

area, but recognized that there was likely to be important difference not just between these groups, but also within them – particularly with regard to age and gender. We further hypothesized that the locality involved was likely to affect perceptions and we attempted to recruit both majority and minority ethnic participants from affluent and deprived areas and from localities with a high density of ethnic minorities and those with low density. We also sought to talk with police officers working in differing areas with a variety of job remits.

We attempted, where possible, to match focus group moderators with the groups convened, in terms of ethnicity, gender, age and language spoken. This was not always possible, given the time constraints and the availability of researchers, but even "mismatches" afforded valuable insights. For example we held a group of people from African and Caribbean backgrounds co-facilitated by a moderator of African/Caribbean background and a moderator from an Asian background. The discussion in this group highlighted the importance of notions of a hierarchy of ethnic groups, with people from Asian backgrounds being viewed by other groups as enjoying a privileged position.

The use of common topic guides across groups and the use of the same stimulus materials – based on the Scottish Executive's current campaign - facilitated systematic comparison across groups, highlighting important differences in perceptions. In addition to making comparisons between groups, analysis also drew on differences within groups and the debates and distinctions sometimes made by participants.

The groups convened were as follows:
- Twelve single and mixed minority ethnic focus groups
- Fifteen police focus groups
- Eight majority ethnic focus groups

The groups of people from minority ethnic backgrounds involved both single ethnicity and mixed ethnicity groups. They included asylum-seekers and members of established Asian, Chinese, African, Caribbean and minority white groups. Separate Asian men's and women's groups were held. The other groups included international students from small ethnic groups; separate groups of young men and young women from all communities; and small business owners and representatives of ethnic minority community organisations. Some were drawn from outside Glasgow.

The police groups were held with operational police officers working in a variety of settings. These covered deprived and affluent areas, a small town, and areas with very few members of minority ethnic groups, areas with high representation of minority ethnic groups and an area with asylum-seekers. The officers were mainly at constable level with some sergeants. They included ordinary officers, community officers and force support officers. Most of these focus groups were held at police offices during the times of briefing and debriefing sessions and so consequently were often short - 30 minutes or so. Some groups were scheduled separately with community officers and were able to last an hour or more. There were also separate interviews with officers at operational and senior levels.

The majority ethnic focus groups covered: an affluent area with few minority ethnic residents, a deprived, mixed ethnicity area; and two areas of mixed ethnicity and mixed deprived and affluent residents. These last two included people involved in frontline work such as nursing where they came into contact with members of the public. The majority ethnic focus groups also included a group of young professional women; a group of young men from a range of backgrounds and a group of young adults with active involvement in anti-racist issues.

Survey

As a final source of data for the research, intended to capture the views of people who might otherwise be excluded because they were not willing or able to take part in longer interviews or

focus groups, we carried out an indicative survey in four areas of Glasgow. 157 people were polled. 8 forms were not fully completed, leaving 149, 68 of whom classified themselves in census categories as majority white Scottish and 81 as minority white or minority other ethnic group. We inquired about their experiences of various types of victimisation in the past year, whether or not they thought any of these had a racist motivation, and what ethnic background they belonged to and whether they had always lived in the UK.

Deprivation categories

References to "affluent" and "moderately affluent", "deprived" and "moderately deprived" areas have been based on the DEPCAT scores assigned to those areas. The term refers to "Deprivation Categories" and these are used to divide a population into groups based on the material affluence or deprivation of the area where they live. There are 7 deprivation categories: 1 being the most affluent (least deprived) and 7 the most deprived.[39] These official scores have been compiled from information drawn from the 1991 Census, and where possible we have used revised projected scores from the newly-available information in the 2001 Census.

Minority and majority white

We explain our use of these terms in Chapter One of the main report. We wished to explore the widest possible range of experiences and so we chose to bring in participants from white backgrounds outwith the UK, such as white people from Eastern Europe.

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[39] This helpful definition has been taken from an NHS website at:

http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/publications/annual_reports/public_health/2002/datasets/about_depcats.html