

Tackling Disproportionality

Police and Crime Panel

March 2025

DCI Ayesha Giles



Tackling Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide members of Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel with oversight of the identifying disproportionality recommendations, and partnership activities across the Criminal Justice system to answer the recommendations and create an anti-racist Avon and Somerset.

Background

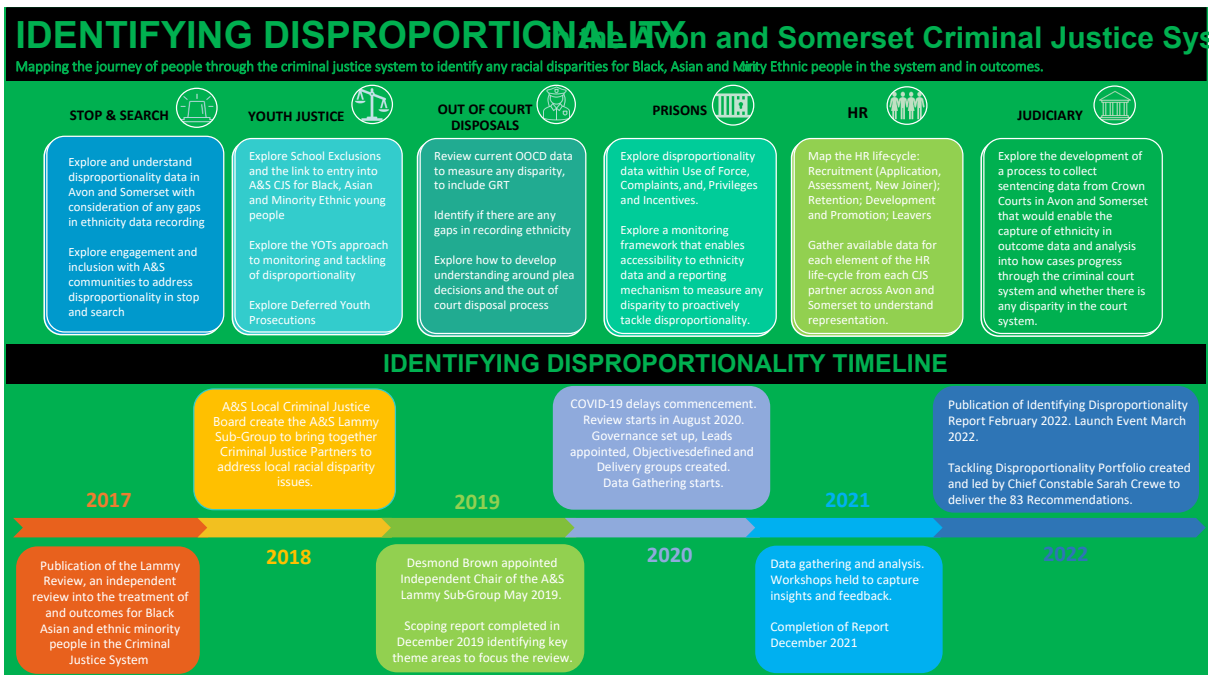
In 2017 The Lammy Report was published following a national review, led by David Lammy MP, into the treatment of and outcomes for Black, Asian and other minoritised individuals in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). In 2019, following the publication of that report, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable in Avon and Somerset at the time, Sue Mountstevens OBE and Sir Andy Marsh QPM, commissioned a local independent review, chaired by Desmond Brown MBE, a person who had been at the forefront of racial inequality activism and campaigning in our area. Desmond Brown led the local deep dive into the statistics, policies and processes of CJS agencies in relation to racial disproportionality.

<https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Identifying-Disproportionality-Report.pdf>

The local review used a data focused investigation to identify disproportionality in order to take the approach of *explain or reform* of CJS processes impacting race disparity across the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board partners.

Research strongly indicates that unequal treatment early in the CJS accumulates into larger disparities downstream. Evidence further suggests that youth diversion is beneficial for the children who go through it and has been shown to reduce re-offending, however, inequality in access and engagement for BAME children is still likely to have material impact on disparities later on in the CJS.





The aim is to effect changes in processes in five key areas including stop and search, youth offending, out of court disposals, prisons and HR recruitment, retention and progression as well as a focus on the separate work of the judiciary.

In February 2022 the Identifying Disproportionality report was published. Within Avon and Somerset criminal justice system our findings closely parallel the eight thematic areas identified within the Stuart Hall Foundation Race Report.

The key findings of this review are:

- The disconnect between legislation and policy and their implementation and enforcement. - The need for a more holistic approach and greater collaboration across different agencies to tackle disproportionality within the CJS.
- The need to improve and standardise quantitative and statistical data collection mechanisms in order to establish consistency in how different ethnic and racial categories are defined. Qualitative data should have an equal weighting to capture 'lived experience' to comprehensively quantify impact and outcomes within the CJS.
- Partner agencies across Avon and Somerset have communicated their commitment to equality and diversity, however, there are issues around disclosure and transparency of data. Therefore, this poses challenges when trying to measure, monitor and evaluate the effective of policies and actions to address disproportionality.

- Overall improvements are required in the recruitment, retention and career progression of BAME people across the CJS in Avon and Somerset. There is a lack of BAME representation in senior leadership positions across the A&S CJS which must be addressed.
- All CJS partners need to develop mandatory training and education around racial awareness, cultural competency and anti-racism which is monitored and outcomes measured.
- Targets and key performance indicators around tackling disproportionality need to be established, routinely monitored and published to ensure transparency to evaluate the performance of A&S partners and ensure accountability.
- Independent scrutiny panels need to be set up to scrutinise disproportionality within A&S CJS to ensure reporting and actions taken to tackle disproportionality are effective. Where reporting and actions are absent or ineffective the principle of 'explain or reform' be adopted to ensure accountability by CJS partners.

The Identifying Disproportionality report set 83 recommendations for local agencies: 14 relating to stop and search, 14 for youth justice, 11 for out of court disposals, 24 for prisons, 18 for HR and 2 for the judiciary.

The Tackling Racial Disproportionality Steering Committee (SteerCo) was set up in March 2023. It is chaired by Sarah Crew, the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police and Asher Craig, who are leading delivery of the recommendations through the group, to drive the changes needed in culture and leadership in relation to racial disproportionality across all agencies.

An independent public scrutiny board was formed at the end of 2023, to monitor and support progress – Tackling Racial Disproportionality Independent Scrutiny Board (ISB). It's made up of nine influential individuals from across the Avon and Somerset area, who bring their professional expertise and personal lived experiences to helping make sure lasting change and equity are achieved in the criminal justice system.

National context and Avon and Somerset Police specific delivery

In May 2020 George Floyd died after being arrested in Minneapolis, US. After his death, protests broke out across the US, and there were demonstrations in other parts of the world. This was called the "Black Lives Matter Movement" and triggered worldwide support of action against Police brutality against black people. Police forces across the United Kingdom undertook individual activities but a joined-up approach collective was needed to tackle disproportionality against black people by the police.

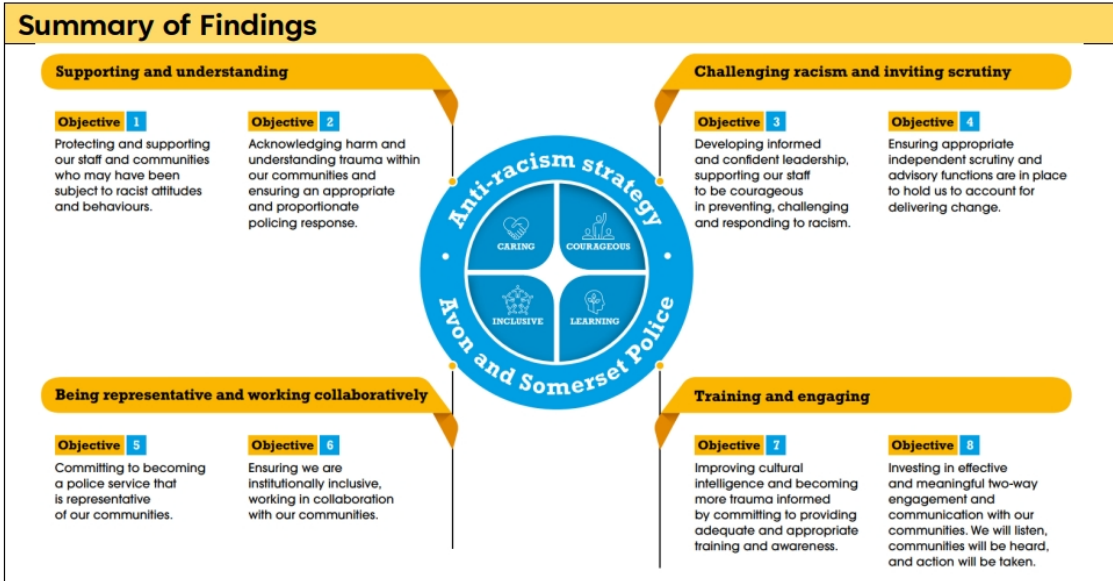
The Police Race Action Plan was developed jointly by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing in May 2022. This plan focusses on 4 workstreams of activity to support the vision for a police service that is anti-racist and trusted by Black people, these are:

- Workstream 1 - Represented Black people and communities are properly represented within policing, with an internal culture that promotes inclusivity and supports their development and progression
- Workstream 2 – Not over Policed Black people and communities are respected and treated in a fair and equitable way
- Workstream 3 – Involved Black people and communities are routinely involved in the governance of policing
- Workstream 4 – Not under Protected Black people are not ‘under-protected’ and are properly supported as victims of crime and as vulnerable groups.

Overall, the plan seeks to create an anti-racist culture, values, and behaviours within policing. This will inform all operational policing practice, improving the experience and outcomes for Black people. It will enable the experiences of our Black communities, officers, and staff to have a direct influence on our policies and practices going forward. Policing recognises that the racial disparities affecting Black people are most acute and the trust deficit presents a significant challenge to police legitimacy and effectiveness. This plan, therefore, focuses on improving policing for Black people. Black people have significantly lower than average rates of confidence in their police force, 64 per cent compared with an average of 74 per cent. Among Black Caribbean people the rate is 54 per cent. This is echoed in the Government’s Inclusive Britain Report. (PRAP 2022 figures given).

Avon and Somerset Police work to become an anti-racist police force, incorporating our response to the national Police Race Action Plan and local Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System, was brought together through the Race Matters programme. Strategic direction within this programme is provided through our anti-racism strategy which was developed in consultation with people from our local black communities and with our own staff. It supports the overarching force strategy and values and sets clear objectives.

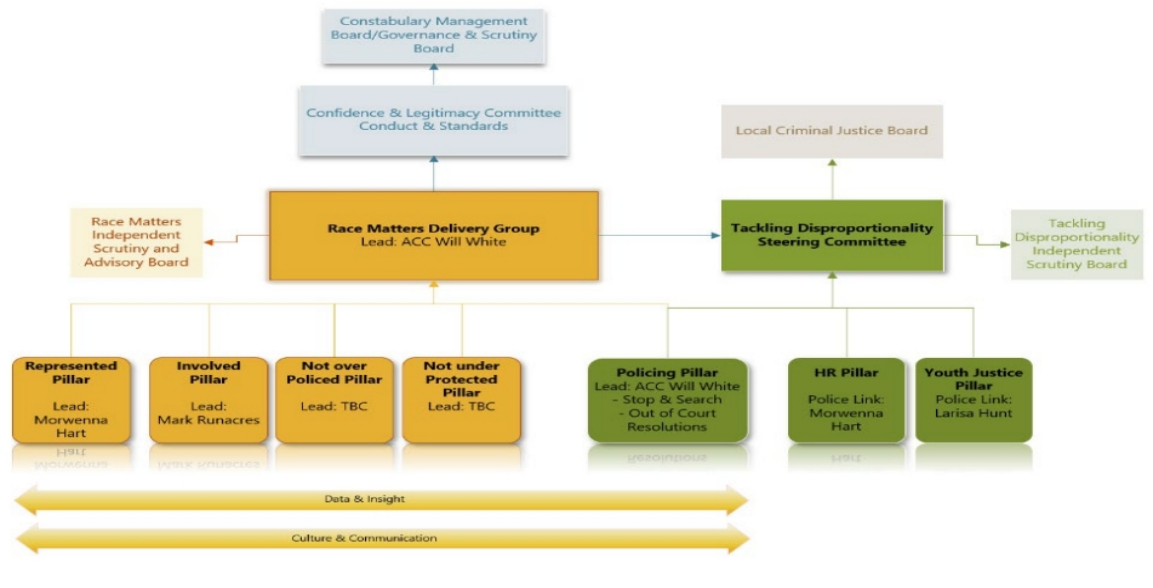




Governance

Governance

The governance structure that oversees this work is set out in the below graphic with the yellow areas highlighting the police focussed Race Matters work and the green areas highlighting the multi-agency Identifying Disproportionality programme.



Progress and next steps

Tackling Disproportionality within Criminal Justice System

A summary of the work undertaken to date is outlined below:

- Creation of Pillars (Youth Justice, Workforce representation, Policing and data and insights) with alignment of ISB members to add community voice and insight at all junctures of decision making and activity design.
- 2024 workshop bringing together strategic and tactical leads to co-create Anti-Racist action plan for Avon and Somerset.
- Communication and Engagement strategy with bespoke work packages to understand and map community sentiment and create feedback loop.
- Review of governance structures for recommendation sign off to ensure activities are sustainable and impact measured.
- Creation of a data dashboard utilising relative rate index to allow partners to conduct deep dive data analysis and shape activity based on insights.
- Aligned learning with disproportionality lens on all activities through learning café.
- Academic alignment.

Race Matters

As part of our commitment to local communities, on the anniversary of the declaration of institutional racism by the Chief Constable, Avon and Somerset Police produced a report to document to progress and work undertaken to becoming an anti-racist organisation, it is called Action After Words. A snapshot of the work undertaken to date is outlined below:

1. Represented:

- Supported the completion of Phase 1 and 2 of the Our Black Workforce survey and combined the results of this with our local staff survey to better understand the experiences of our staff from a Black heritage background.
- Undertaken a review of disproportionality across our recruitment processes for police officers and police staff.
- Our Diverse Outreach Team continue to work within our communities to identify and breakdown barriers to entering policing.
- Developing and delivering our Race Matters training programme to our frontline staff.
- Introducing a 6-month programme of development for a cohort of Race Influencers.



2. Not Over Policed:

- Introduced a bespoke stop and search policy, co-produced with our communities. Providing direction and support to officers in using their powers legitimately and sets clear expectations for which communities can hold us accountable.
- We have taken steps to make the recording of vehicle stops mandatory, in response to community concerns that this power was being used disproportionately.
- Worked with a local community group to develop a video for young people to better understand their rights in relation to stop and search.
- Introduced the chance to change deferred prosecution scheme to better divert individuals away from the criminal justice system specifically those who are overrepresented within the system.

3. Involved:

- We have worked hard to build new partnerships with local community radio stations in Bristol, namely BCFM and Ujima, enable us to better engage with targeted community groups.
- We have introduced a community engagement network for those community members who would like to be kept informed or involved in the work we are doing.
- Undertaken recruitment to introduce an Independent Scrutiny and Advisory Board to support us in our work moving forward and to hold us to account for delivery.

4. Not Under Protected:

- We have reviewed the 7 Point Promise that underpins the support provided to our staff when they face racial abuse or assault at work.
- Refining and improving the data we hold regarding the ethnicity of victims to ensure we can provide a trauma informed and appropriate response.
- Developed our network of Hate Crime champions across the organisation to better support investigative processes and outcomes for the public.

Next Steps

- Extending our Race Matters training to wider parts of the organisation.
- Continue to grow our network of allies and influencers.
- Work to make our procurement processes more institutionally inclusive.
- Improve our misconduct and early intervention processes to tackle disproportionality.

