



PRESS RELEASE Issued by the National Black Police Association

NBPA on Prime Minister Boris Johnson's pledge to fund an extra 20,000 police officers (02.08.19)

By Police Sergeant Tola Munro, Gwent Police, President of the National Black Police Association

“On behalf of the National Black Police Association and members we would like to thank the Prime Minister Boris Johnson for his pledge to fund an extra 20,000 police officers over the next three years. We welcome this news as a lack of resources along with a loss of funding to vital public services has created a spiralling rise in complex demand on policing across the country.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind the Prime Minister and Home Secretary that we are 20 years on from Sir Macpherson's Report on the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence and there has been inconsistent progress in areas such as Recruitment, Retention, Positive Action, Diversity Training and Stop & Search for BAME staff and communities.

There is a glaring lack of consistency from force to force in their approach to policing of BAME communities and this is evidenced by the disparities in Representation, Engagement, the application of Police powers and misconduct processes.

The UK continues to become more ethnically diverse which is reflected in a widening gap in how our BAME communities policed. Today there is a contrast from the Chancellor, Home Secretary and Mayor of London, who all reflect growing, confident BAME communities, to absence of BAME Chief Constables in the 48 UK police forces.

This speaks volumes about poor representation, discrimination in progression of BAME officers to specialist and senior positions, and reinforces a lack of community confidence in policing. It is important to note that as far back as 1981 Lord Scarman reported that **positive discrimination** was necessary and "*a price worth paying*" to tackle racial disadvantage and racial discrimination. Indeed Commissioner Cressida Dick acknowledged earlier this year that the Metropolitan Police Service would take a century to be fully representative based on current rates of recruitment (*The Guardian*



& *The Evening Standard*, 19 February 2019). Last month she told the Home Affairs Committee looking into implementing the recommendations of the Macpherson Report twenty years on that there were “some respectable arguments... for positive discrimination.” She confirmed that she was ‘prepared to keep it under consideration.’

We believe the drive to fund 20,000 more police officers is a perfect opportunity for the Prime Minister and Home Secretary to legalise the targeted recruitment and promotion of BAME officers and staff, and support our call for positive discrimination. This is in recognition that Positive Action strategies alone, however effective will take a lifetime to meet the shortfall in officers and staff who can connect with and provide legitimacy to BAME communities.

The latest figures show that only 7% of police officers are from a BAME background, compared to 14% of the population as a whole. None of the 43 police forces in England and Wales are representative or likely to be within the next 50 years.

The necessity to improve this situation via positive discrimination has been acknowledged by many senior police officers including former Met Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Sir Hugh Orde former President of ACPO, former Chief Superintendent Dal Babu, Alex Marshall former head of the College of Policing and most recently by Dame Sara Thornton, former chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council.

At the same time race hate crimes which is three quarters of all hate crime has increased from 36,000pa in 2011/12 to 71,500pa now (*The Evening Standard* 16 October 2018). Although these have doubled in London BAME communities lack confidence in policing and an estimated 40% of potential witnesses and victims of crime are not engaged with the police. This includes young, vulnerable black men who are both the greatest victims of knife crime and the least confident in policing.

Similarly, black people were more than 9 times as likely to be Stopped and Searched as White people in 2017/18 (*The Government’s Ethnicity facts & figures website*), peaking at over x25 for drug stop and searches in Dorset (LSE study – *The Guardian & The Observer*, 13 October 2018). Again, the support of BAME communities is imperative to make this work - a representative force that polices all its communities with trust, confidence and their consent has a much better chance to address this historic area of contention.



It is accepted by many Police Chiefs that it is an absolute operational imperative to prioritise race because the current racial disparity in policing undermines legitimacy and threatens policing by consent; increasing the likelihood of adverse response or disorder relating to stop and search, violent crime, counter-terrorism policing and for critical incident. We can evidence time and again in police forces from Merseyside to the Met that BAME officers improve legitimacy, trust and confidence in policing in their communities.

We would also like to remind the Prime Minister that there is no legal recourse to put measures in place when a force demonstrates a lack of progression for its BAME workforce, disciplinary disproportionalities, disparity in Stop & Search processes, etc. There needs to be a mandated process for external bodies such as the Inspectorate of Policing, Independent Office of Police Complaints or Equality & Human Rights Council to implement action plans until the issues are resolved.

Whilst we are aware that the National Police Chiefs Council have introduced a workforce representation strategy and toolkits to all the forces to address issues in relation to race disparity, we fear that these documents will not offer the required accountability without appropriate checks or measures in place at senior level.

An application of 50:50 type positive discrimination to the additional 20,000 police officers, as successfully used by the Police Service of Northern Ireland could more than double the representation of BAME officers from the current 7% to 14% in three years, with the service matching the UK's current BAME population. From an operational perspective, this would increase links and engagement with those communities, improve intelligence flows leading to better targeted Stop and Searches, and profoundly improve counter-terrorism policing. A once off injection of 10,000 BAME officers would send a message to all our communities nationally that the Prime Minister is serious about the legitimacy of UK policing. The accompanying change in legislation to allow positive discrimination, which already exists when there is an occupational requirement such as gender, would also have to mandate that every local force should improve their officer representation to reflect their BAME communities within the three years.

In order to achieve sustainable change, the NBPA would monitor and act as a watchdog, and for this we request to be put on a statutory footing. We also hope the Home Secretary Priti Patel and Policing Minister Kit Malthouse will continue the race disparity round table discussions initiated by



their predecessors, Sajid Javed and Nick Hurd. These discussions created a safe space for us to air our legitimate and evidence based concerns and are a step in the right direction to address the concerns of both our members and our communities.

We look forward to receiving continued support from the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and Policing Minister to address inequality and discrimination in policing.”

Note to Editors:

Press Queries to 07432 629060 (by text) or @NBPAUK