



South Yorkshire

# **POLICE** Disproportionality Statement

South Yorkshire Police welcomes the Home Office's voluntary 'Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme' and has become a signatory to all of its requirements.

One of the areas highlighted as an area for improvement across the 43 UK Forces is the disproportionality ratios.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) defines 'Disproportionality ratios' as how much more likely black and Asian people are to be stopped and searched than white people.

The EHRC has worked with police forces to make their use of stop and search more efficient and to reduce unfair targeting of minority ethnic people as evidenced in its stop and search publication 'Stop and Think' (March 2010).

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/race-britain/stop-and-think>

This critical review suggests that some forces in England and Wales have exercised their powers on stereotypical assumptions instead of intelligence or reasonable suspicion.

Some police forces could not explain the reason why particular ethnic groups had been stopped and searched more often than others and despite years of debate and several initiatives aimed at tackling the problem, the ratios remained high.

At the time of publication, Asian people were stopped and searched about twice as often as white people, and black people about six times as often

'Stop and think' also identified geographical differences; for example, little race disproportionality in much of the north of England, and relatively high levels in some southern forces

The ratios for South Yorkshire at that time were, and are still, much lower than the above figures (1.3 times more likely for an Asian person; 2.0 times more likely for a black person). However, South Yorkshire Police recognizes that it still needs to work towards bringing about proportionate stop and search ratios or to be able to justifiably explain any disproportionality.

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This will involve a change in individual and organisational attitudes, which could influence unlawful, disproportionate, discriminatory and damaging practices resulting in negative impact on community relations.

Following a programme of work initiated by the EHRC, 'Stop and think Again' (the follow up report to 'Stop and Think'), it has been shown that forces have experienced reductions of up to 50 percent in overall usage of Stop and search with reductions in disproportionate usage

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/race-britain/stop-and-think-again>

Key steps taken to reduce disproportionality appeared to be the undertaking of:

- targets for reduction
- reducing negative drug searches
- training in 'reasonable grounds'
- pursuing proportionate use of the power
- steps to ensure intelligence-led practice rather than being based on 'hunches' or generalisations about identifiable groups;
- micro-monitoring to identify local or individual racially skewed patterns and challenging them
- senior level commitment and leadership.

Critically, it should be noted that the Commission initiated legal compliance action against two forces, which in each case was subsequently succeeded by a formal agreement detailing a programme of action over 18 months (spring 2011–autumn 2012).

In conclusion, the Home Office and the EHRC recognise that the police are guardians of the right to liberty and security supporting our ability to live free from violence, crime and fear by safeguarding the ultimate human right; the 'Right to Life'.

They also recognise that reducing the use of Stop and Search is not an impediment to continued reductions in crime.

The professional and ethical undertaking of stop and search is non-negotiable and the energy for promoting and maintaining standards is more successful and sustainable when transparent and open to public scrutiny. This eliminating the potential for prejudice, institutional mindsets and stereotypes, which could have a lasting, and damaging affect on the professional face of SYP.

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