OpenLearn - FBL EDIA seminar
Fostering anti-racism in Policing

Devendra Kodwani, Chris Excell, Lurraine Jones, Dennis Murray, Emma Williams:

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Good afternoon, friends from within OU and outside Open University. Very warm welcome to The Open University and into this webinar on very important issue of fostering antiracism in policing. This is a Faculty of Business and Law webinar and seminar that we are delighted to host.

Many of you would know that Faculty of Business and Law has two schools, Business and Law. And within business school, we have Centre for Policing Research and Learning. My colleagues are doing a lot of work with the police forces. And we do a lot of research development work as well as apprenticeship in policing program. It's my absolute pleasure and privilege to introduce the panel, who will discuss various issues as we go through this seminar. And also thank you for choosing to attend this seminar.

So, my name is Devendra Kodwani. I am executive dean of the Faculty of Business and Law and a professor in finance. I'm delighted to present this wonderful panel. We have Chris Excell, chair of the Black Police Association; and Dr Emma Williams, director of Research Centre and Strategic Partnerships within Centre for Policing Research and Learning; Lurraine Jones, our deputy dean for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at The Open University; Dennis Murray, assistant chief constable for crime and justice at Thames Valley.

Thank you all for joining and sparing your precious time this afternoon. The running order of the seminar is we will have soon Chris talking about his perspective on fostering antiracism in metropolitan police context but also more widely. Thank you very much. So, without further ado, may I introduce Chris as chair of Black Police Association in Met and take over and talk about some of his views and perspective on this important issue of antiracism in policing. So, Chris, thank you for joining and sparing your time. Over to you, Chris. Thank you.

CHRIS EXCELL: My absolute pleasure. And thank you very much, Dev, for the introduction. Yes, so good afternoon, everyone. I'll say thank you to The Open University for inviting me to attend. It's a real honour to be able to speak to so many of you. And I wanted to spend a really short time putting you all in the picture as to what the Met Black Police Association does

and a little bit about the National as well, an organization that I'm proud to be the current chair of. That is the Met Black Police Association.

So, in essence-- and forgive me for not looking at the camera. I'm just on a screen here while I'm on some notes. The reason I need to focus on the notes is because probably an hour and a half is not enough time to talk about everything that encapsulates the argument for fostering antiracism in policing, et cetera. And having discussed this beforehand, I just want to talk about a brief bit about my background and then what the Black Police Association's role and remit is to then go on from there and just offer up in terms of panel questions and answers because I think that's probably better, is that we can essentially follow the steer from what actually people want to hear because I could spend a lot of time on this stuff.

So, essentially, that's me on the front page. I've been a police officer for almost 15 years. I've always been a street cop at heart. And I continue to perform a number of duties not limited to public order policing, response team, custody officer, et cetera. And that's all on top of my full-time role as chair of the Black Police Association in the Met. That photograph is a proud moment for me.

Last year, the National Police Memorial for fallen officers was fully committed to the National Arboretum up in Staffordshire. And upon that committal, there was a representative from each force who was asked to represent the force's colours, i.e., the flag. And they asked me to do it. So that's my photograph there. Very proud. There's a lot of things I'm very proud of by way of being a police officer.

I've also been Chris for no less than 38 years, and I've been a Londoner for the same amount of time. I'm passionate about my home and the people that make it home for me. So that's where my sense of duty and service to others comes from. I've also experienced my fair share of injustices, some because of how I look, others for the principles that I choose to stand for essentially. And indeed, the institution of policing, it can be really strongly cultured in places. And if you haven't seen today's IOPC report, that's just one of the examples about culture in places and what can happen when it goes unchecked.

In some parts, I guess culture brings out the very best of my self and colleagues, but as we know, in other parts, we continue to see the worst behaviours, including disproportionality. It's this disproportionality that's resulted in the somewhat over policing and under protection of some of those with protected characteristics. And that's happened over a number of years.

So, I look forward to talking about this with yourselves and the panel in due course. And I'll ask for your forgiveness for not speaking on behalf of the Met because I sit as part of the BPA, which is a staff support association. I sit outside of it, so there's a degree of

independence when I speak because essentially what that means is I can speak out in a way that's critical of the Met and policing if I need to, if that's what I'm doing to represent my members and our communities.

But what I can't do depending on the question, it's more likely that I'm not going to answer questions from the position of a senior police officer within the organization because that's not what I'm here for. And I owe them that courtesy to answer. So, I'll appreciate your understanding for that from the off.

I'll start about the Met Black Police Association. You see the logo there? Essentially, we exist to represent the 3,500 Black, Asian, and minority ethnic officers, as well as their communities, as well as our communities within the metropolis. Our role is to safeguard interests against our-- I say safeguard interest against our employers, not necessarily against them. But we are the culturally competent. And we provide that additional lens with which to look through everything to do with policing and communities.

And as you can imagine, confidence and trust is always a big thing. That's always been a thing for us. So, we're talking about things, whether it's perceived or actual unfairness, disparity, overbearing behaviours. We represent the largest number of said officers in the UK, which allows us the-- allows us to hold a cabinet seat, a reserve seat in the National BPA Cabinet.

So, if you imagine, the Met has got a Black Police Association, all the other forces across the country do as well, all 43. I'm pretty sure it's all 43. So, they've all got local BPAs as well. And then there is a national one that has, I want to say oversight. There is a structure in place. And at National Police Chiefs Council, you have the National BPA operating. And so, by way of us being the size we are in the Met, we have a seat on that cabinet as well. So involved in the matters of national importance.

Really brief history about me. There are a few slides on this. Before I start at all, I have to show. I always show my presentations in this slide. It's to give you an idea of the back story. And it might help explain some of the discussion points later on if I just start with the service history. And it started with my role. First one was in North Westminster, and my line manager was this gentleman, Sergeant Matt Ratana.

You may know this name as Matt was murdered in Croydon custody about a year and a half ago. What I can say is that I wouldn't be the man nor the police officer I am without having someone like Matt around. He taught me about what matters. He always had the time for me and other people around him, which meant he was always about inclusion, genuinely about inclusion, justice, and selflessness.

Whilst being relentlessly hardworking, he was a man of compassion. He knew what counted when it came to making people feel heard and valued. And there are many of us that owe a great deal to him. And I wanted just to make you aware of all of that because I think from there, laying the foundations for me, that has emboldened me to be a man of principle and to stick to the principles that I had when I joined the organization.

There's a Chicago police chief. I forget his name, but I saw a video where he spoke to recruits on their first day in the job. And he said to them, your moral compass and your principles, we've hired you because those are what they need to be, and they are what they need to be right now. So do not change those or feel pressured to change those as you go along throughout your service because we've already recruited you because you are the right person, and your head is in the right place.

And yeah, having a supervisor, a leader like Matt just was able to give me that confidence to be who I want to be, who I am essentially. There's a lot of talk-- there's been a lot of talk of late. Who am I quoting? Gary Forsyth, chief constable of Bedfordshire Police, who said at our annual conference, "At the moment, it's almost like we're recruiting people for that which makes them an individual. But at the same time, we're asking them to leave that at the door when they walk in." And that was not the case for me thanks to Matt. So here come our Matt.

Half of my service has been in Pan-London policing, essentially working on a specialist unit going across different parts of town based on things like public order policing, counterterrorism, locating and arresting high risk offenders, and attending major and critical incidents. I was involved in the student protests and the riots back in 2011. They were possibly some of the scariest but proudest times I've been in the organization and been a police officer.

But as you'd expect, specialist roles, well, they require teams to be highly efficient, which can mean-- it will mean that inherently they spend a lot of time together, behaviours that can become pervasive. The bond will be really strong, but there can be a risk of disparity because you get the us and them that can happen anywhere to be honest. But it can be compounded by the absence potentially of supervision and leadership.

And in policing, it's one of those places where we are at time expected to make our own decisions based on risk, discretion. There's that degree of autonomy that we're trusted with. But I think there need to be the checks and balances. And sometimes that doesn't always happen depending on the makeup of a team, a unit, and the working shift patterns, the supervision ratios, and et cetera.

So those disparities, they can form over time. Cultures can thrive. But I don't want to say it's exclusive to specialist units. I just use it as an example because in half of my service, I've seen things. And that's from dotting around different parts of the Met. And you see that there are these things that exist in pockets of different places. But those repeaters-- like I say, going back to the good stuff, the repeated habits of such units make us very good at what we do in terms of service delivery.

I keep changing slides on my screen and not yours. I apologize. Right. After that, I did a brief stint back at working in South London. I was on the Response Team in Brixton. That's where you see people running around answering calls, blue light runs, et cetera. It's where the rank and file of us are. It's where we are expected to be our own boss and go out and do the job. And you know what? The majority of us do it exceptionally well in the face of abuse, repeated exposure to trauma.

That photograph there, it's a proud moment of me and my cousin. Obviously, I'm the officer, but for commendations, you can have family come along. Those two commendations I got were for both London and Westminster Bridge because you know what? As first responders, that's what we're expected, the kind of stuff we're expected to go to.

Again, one of the few times in my career where I've thought to myself, you know what? This is it for me. Potentially where I'm going into this, I might not come out alive. It sounds dramatic. But that PTSD, that trauma, I highlight it because it requires a coping strategy. And that can be what some people call that black humour that comes along that essentially can become-- it can become other things.

And if it goes unchecked, again it becomes stuff that can be offensive. It can be comments that are made about stuff that's been dealt with or a community or an individual that's been dealt with. And that kind of stuff where actually it might get said in a room full of people. And you might be the only person who thinks that's not really OK or I'm not sure that's OK, but also, I don't know how other people would take it if I challenge it.

And so, you think that for half a second and you ponder. And then a second after that, some other people either echo that they agree with it or erupt into laughter. And then all of a sudden, you've just been made to feel like you don't belong. It's not right, but it is something that cops end up being exposed to by way of the constant exposure and the PTSD that can follow.

I must say, as organizations, we are getting better at looking after our members of staff. But in terms of the culture, the toxic masculinity, et cetera, where we're just expected to just take it on the chin and get on with it, I think that tide is turning where well-being is really significant

and important. So, we are doing more to look after our staff. But again, the culture, these are all these different things that get thrown into the mix and creates an issue like where we are having a discussion like we are.

That's my promotions journey. It's been a hard slog. I've kind of not taken this out because it's another presentation for elsewhere, but this just shows for me, for yourselves really. It ties in with the disparity that we know is shown in black and white in terms of figures, why we have fewer Black, Asian, minority ethnic officers at senior ranks. It is a hard slog. It's a hard slog for all of us, but you couple this with some of the cultural stuff. And you look at such a journey, and you just think to yourself, do you know what? I give up. I don't think this is for me.

In my case, I choose to be here and to keep on going because you might just be-- one might just be the inspiration for other people. And I get that actually. If we're not here making representations from within, then the change is going to be even slower. But there are plenty of other people who would just say, do you know what? This isn't for me, and I can just go other places. I don't feel like I belong essentially. So, I put that in there. I don't want to talk about it too much.

Some of the jobs that I do. I'm very proud to do major incidents and manage them and go out and about. For me, it's about the visibility because you get a number of officers, different officers on each occasion. And hopefully if they see it, they can be it. And so, for me, very proudly looked after some of these events and still do on a regular basis. And I put there I'm a child of drum and bass because there's just something about me that not a lot of people know.

So Black Police Association, we exist for this. This is our, not quite the mission statement, but these are some sort of guiding objectives for us. We support our members. We support our communities. We try our best to be the voice. A lot of people will trust us and come to us before they will go to other places to have safe space conversations. It's a way for us to communicate up.

So, you can imagine, I operate generally at management board level. I'm a sergeant, but you take the rank out of my name, and I am Chris Joe, the BPA who gets consulted with and has that two-way communication between the police and communities, which on that note, you don't have to be a police officer. You don't have to be Black, Asian, or minority ethnic to be a BPA member. So shameless plug there. But if any of you are interested, I think my email address is at the end of this.

We help with all of these things which I've put in here, recruitment, retention, provide social network. And I've put the date in there, 1994. We were created after the Bristol Seminars. I

think it was in 1991 when essentially Black and Asian officers were all put in one place in a conference centre to talk about and try and help police to understand why we can't recruit and retain Black and Asian officers. 1994. The question is still being asked this year. Why are we struggling? Why can't we recruit and then retain people?

And you know what? A lot of us sit here and say, look, for 40 years, we've been talking about this and telling you what the issues are. But unfortunately, there has to be some significant tragedy enough that you then want to come and speak to us. So, when I talk about that, that's reactive diversity thing where the more significant the tragedy, then the greater the knee-jerk response in that. And for which of late it's been the abhorrent murder of George Floyd.

So, yes, that's why I put the date there in brackets and yet our job, we are definitely still required by our community and our members. And going back to the fostering antiracism bit, I go back to the bit I said at the start, under protected and overpoliced. There are some communities where they feel like they can't approach police because the police to them are a force, whilst there are some others which believe actually that the police are a service because actually there's a disparity in the enforcement or the perceived necessity to enforce in certain areas.

The bit where I talk about community, they are a very significant portion of our members. And what they have to say must translate into that which we pass up the chain for the betterment of policing essentially, which answers-- I'll let you answer that after what I've just said. So, has much changed?

Again, we're still here asking similar questions. You've got film club, I think, next week and watching to discuss the Small Axe video by Leroy Logan. It'll be an interesting chat. I know Leroy is going to attend. And actually, I remember speaking to him afterwards. It's a sliding scale, but there are things that still go on. People will try and say, oh, well, even if that did happen, it's historic. And I said, no.

What we're not doing here is stepping up and challenging this stuff. We're still not doing it. We have that sort of open-door mentality where it's like, if there's an issue, come and see us. We'll fast-track your complaint, et cetera, et cetera, and throw everything at it. What's being missed is actually that people don't feel the confidence to come and report in the first place. We don't feel like things will be taken seriously because for you, you don't see it. If you're not part of my reality, I don't see you.

A long time ago before I got into staff association stuff, I even had to challenge myself because we're at City Hall and a disabled woman asked a question about what the mayor's office was doing to accommodate disabled people in relation to what we were talking about.

And it was a lightbulb moment for me because I just thought to myself, do you know what? I had never considered that because this woman had an invisible disability. If you're not part of my reality, I don't see you. So definitely it changed my thought process up after that.

And that's why we can be seen as a thorn in the side to people sometimes because all that we're doing is sitting there and saying, boss, sir, madam, friend, have you looked at it through this lens instead? Because actually through this lens, it looks totally different, or it lands totally differently because that's the bit where we've got-- that's the bit where the risk is posed really. Silence can be permission.

Yeah, sometimes when we sit and just ignore or think, oh, that wasn't all right. That was a bit close. Maybe that was below the belt or a bit close to the line, but you know what? I don't want the unnecessary smoke, so I'm not going to say anything. And I just walk on by. Well, actually, for the person, there might be someone else who's really aggrieved there. But by way of silence, you've just given somebody permission. And you've taught them actually that something was acceptable.

So, the other quote is, "The standard we walk past is the standard we accept." And this is Chris's opinion here. We need to understand that as police that there are some societal issues. It's really serious societal issues that are just not acceptable in this day and age. There are traits in us as humans that translate into unconscious bias. But as paid professionals, we need to be aware of that, acknowledge it, and adjust accordingly because as long as we're paid professionals, we can't rest on our laurels and just say, oh, it's just a human thing or a societal thing. It's not our problem. It most definitely is.

So, again, I jumped ahead before changing the slide. My experiences have just allowed me that lens that I talk about through a couple of the quotes in there. The broken windows theory for me, I'd be seen as what people call in the organization weary because I nit-pick up all the minor things. But I think of it like broken windows because if you get the minor stuff right, first of all, I can trust you with this, like with the bigger things as we go along. Because this is policing, some of the stuff we deal with is life and death. I must be able to trust you and stuff because the public needs to be able to trust you.

But you know what? If we take care of the smaller things, the larger things, we don't have to worry about because actually we won't get to that. If me as a supervisor, if you're the one person-- if I'm the one person that you are, I'd say afraid of in terms of inspecting and challenging quality of work, then you've actually got nothing to worry about because it's when someone else comes in higher up that you should have an issue.

But sometimes people will say behind your back, oh, so-and-so Chris this, that, or the other, but you know what? The other bit of it is-- in terms of disparity is that if I make a mistake or if I'm responsible for you and you make a mistake because of how I look, they're twice as likely to come looking for me because in 2019, we've got the National Police Chiefs Council document, which reported-- it's Deputy Chief Constable Phil Cain, who's recently retired, which his report highlighted that there is disparity in that you are more likely as a Black, Asian, or minority ethnic officer to be subject to gross misconduct. You're also more likely to be dismissed from service.

So those are just the bits there which for me as a result means that there's learning for me. I have to watch my back. I have to protect other people. Sad to say, but that is what it is.

Feelings and actions of inclusion. This is another slide that I put on more for-- this is what I put on for the HR Conference. I was invited to go and speak to the Met's HR Conference. And I said, look, the issue sometimes is that we focus so much on diversity that we sacrifice inclusion. Sometimes we focus so much on it that we're doing a lot of work that just seems to be a tick box exercise. If something gets reported, yes, we'll deal with it. We'll streamline it, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

I don't want you to sit there and have the open door. I want you to call it out. I want you to go and say, that's not OK. And there's a fine balance because we have instances where people, unfortunately, the whole discussion about race and religion is a politically charged one that is often met with hostility. We can talk about the other strands.

And I'm not saying any one of them is more or less important. But the whole thing about race, sadly for me, I'll put stuff out on Twitter. And I just get no traction in terms of likes, replies, or anything if it's to do with race. It's a real challenge. And you know what? OK, fine. If the feedback has been from my white counterparts, you know what, Chris? Honestly, speaking with you in a safe space, I am terrified that if I have a conversation with my Black member of staff that maybe there's going to be the reprisal or the counter allegation of racism, bullying, et cetera, et cetera. And so, I make the decision not to engage.

And then we talked about that some more. And the problem is that after that, you have a number of intervention points that you miss, where you can actually coach somebody and develop them and make them feel included. And then later on actually, you've got to put pen to paper. And this is the gross misconduct stuff I'm talking about. You allow something to fester and become the broken windows theory. Something really big happens, and you've got to do all the right things at that point later on.

What we want is people to feel the confidence to have a conversation. But people are already saying it's no secret that people are in a place where they don't think they are able to do that.

And then if we can't get that right in-house, then what's happening in terms of policing communities? What's the way that we talk to people? Do we only go and speak to them in a certain way? Because actually the severity of what we're dealing with has gotten to that point.

I mentioned discretion, I think, here. The pitfalls of discretion very quickly. Discretion for me is one that I've never received any training on, but essentially as the officer, it's your decision to make. So, when dealing with somebody, it could be-- let's take a speeding ticket for example.

You might look at someone and say, you know what? I can identify with you, and you seem all right. So, I can remember when-- I can see you in me when I was sat there, and I was just driving for the first time in new car whatever. So, on this occasion, words of advice.

You might sit there and look at somebody who is not like you, and you can't identify with them. And you know what? Straight away ticket. There's a study in America. I think the book is called Biased. I think it's Dr Jennifer Eberhardt-- and I'll share it in the text box in a bit-- who talks about a study she did in America where they just look at actually the words, the wording that's used during interactions with people for traffic stops.

White member of public, hello, sir, madam, do you have any idea why I've stopped you? But straight away if it's a Black person, license and registration. And that can set off a whole dialogue after that. For example, you have somebody, then the person challenges that which they think might be a procedural injustice. I'm sitting here thinking as driver, well, I'm not sure you can speak to me like that. I wonder what else you would not be able to get away with if your supervisor was sat there. What's even worse might be actually their supervisor is stood there or they are the supervisor.

But there's those kind of disparities where actually we have nothing in the way of discretion training. Discretion should be to earn. Thanks, Ann, for that. Discretion for me-- again, this Chicago officer, he said, we use discretion to earn people's trust. That doesn't mean people get off with stuff or get away with it. It's where we sit there and say, actually on balance on this occasion, et cetera, et cetera, and what is proportionate and what is proportionate in terms of what meets the misdemeanour or the offense or the situation. But we know that doesn't always happen.

And again, police cars go out with paired officers. So, you might hear that and just see-- you might hear that, and what we don't want essentially, we're in a place where maybe you say, OK, it's your call. It's your Stop. You're dealing with it. So, whatever you want to do, I might

have done it differently, but it's yours. It's not mine. It's kind of like burying your head in the sand. The place we need to be is where we have people say, can we just have a conversation about it? Or do you know what? I'm not sure how that went. I just want to understand. Tell me where you're going with that.

Something I always advocate, especially because I'm expected to as a supervisor. But as Chris and with my experiences, there's that gap between walking on by and having thoughts to yourself and actually calling stuff out, the antiracism bit, the anti any of the protected characteristics. Again, refer to the IOPC report earlier today. You'll see that there is a culture where potentially we fear reprisals. We're getting to a place where we know that stuff is not right, but we don't feel that confidence to challenge just yet.

So, if we're talking about the sliding scale of fostering antiracism, then I think we're somewhere along that. But we need to be in a better place. It's something that we say about a lot of stuff in policing, especially race and religion. So, it's not a get-out clause. It's not resting on laurels, but we'll get there eventually.

So lastly, my email address, which I'll paste into the chat box. I'd I plan to only go for 30 minutes. I've gone 3 minutes over. So, I will thank you very much for your time, and I'm more than happy to answer any of your questions. Dev?

DEVENDRA KODWANI: That's brilliant, Chris. Down-to-earth approach you have taken to describe the situation. And indeed, your personal journey is inspiration in itself.
So, we will pick a few questions, Chris, if you don't mind, from the chat before we then open up further conversation with the rest of the panel.

So, I'm trying to now go back to the first one I saw. Was it from Laura? Chris, to what extent do you think the issues you see raised to you in the BPA cut across other characteristics such as LGBT+? Do you think there are some core traits which would contribute to better environment? I think it's a very useful question because it talks about discrimination can happen in many ways and how we check that sensitivity and potential common threads that might be relevant from your experience of dealing with race-related issues.

CHRIS EXCELL: Yeah, I agree. I think, again, it was that-- and thank you for the question. I think it was that same instance when I talk about City Hall, where I sat there and thought that actually is it about being Black? Is it about being LGBT? Actually, it's about being different. If you're not part of the in-group and you are different, then potentially you are made to feel like you are on the outside. And sometimes that can be more direct towards you. Sometimes it can be via the informal stuff or indirect rather.

I can think of times that I'll be sat in-- I don't want to say in the canteen because we haven't had those for quite a while now. But you might be sat on the policing van with a number of officers. You might have some things that are said. And I've heard stuff in the past. And we are talking a long time ago. And you might hear something said that is homophobic or is a slur of some kind. And you just sit there, and you think. yeah, that's not cool.

So, actually, I do think there is commonality. In terms of staff support associations in the Met, we've got-- I think we're up to 22 different staff support associations. Some of the ones that have full-time staff include the LGBTQ Network, the Network of Women, Sikh and Hindu associations. And a lot of the time we come together, and we talk about a lot of the different things.

One common threat right now is English is a foreign language. You see that because people speak a little bit different, you have people chuckling at them because they fail to-- what's the word? Because of the accent or they fail to-- the word will come back to me, but little things that they get wrong. And you're kind of being made to feel like you're an outsider straight away.

Pronounce, so how you pronounce certain words. And you're just made to feel, OK, I definitely feel like I'm the outsider here because you don't want to help me, but you're having a laugh and mocking my writing and stuff as if I'm less intelligent. But actually, for me, if you come across with a foreign accent, it means you speak one more language than me. So actually—

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah, absolutely.

CHRIS EXCELL: --you're ahead. So, yes, definitely commonality.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah, I think that issue just actually what you said about someone with different accent, that includes even me, that how you process that information of noticing somebody having a different accent to actually appreciate that person probably knows a different language. So, for them, English probably is their second language or for me, it is a fourth language.

So, it's the lens point that you made earlier on attracted my attention, that how do you help people put on different lens? Because your slides are very thought-provoking, that if you don't see it from that person's lens, it becomes very difficult to appreciate. I think it is captured in your statement about not-- you said, if you're not part of my reality, you don't see the issues.

So, it's actually helping people to put on or help clear those lenses frameworks. And how do you actually in practice do this? Tony addressed this question in the chat box around practical implications of helping deal with some of these issues. So, lens is one that perhaps you could throw light on. Do you have any examples of experience where you are able to help people switch the lens?

CHRIS EXCELL: I think, yeah, it's a really good question. And if I knew the answer, then I think we wouldn't need to exist. I mean, that is the goal for us really as an association. The dream, the utopia would be that we don't need to exist because actually people look through their own lenses or a number of different lenses or, in fact, that their own lens actually is a wide lens that they can see all these different perspectives.

We act in a-- by way of how we're set up, we kind of have-- I don't want to say mandate, but within our remit, part of the understanding is that management will come and speak to us. In terms of policy, we have for example equality impact assessments. Everything that gets done in the Met should have an equality impact assessment which goes to all this different staff associations. That is something on paper that when we send it back is like is us saying, here it is through our lens.

Then you have the other informal level of things where it's really, really encouraging to see more and more junior leaders, middle management who are coming to us and myself direct and asking for a little bit of informal advice. And that's when we provide the lens because a lot of the time people have plans and they say, we've got a plan for A, B, C, D, E. What do you think? Have we missed anything? And I'll come along and say, well, here's F, G, and H. Just the bits that you might have not thought of.

And it is a penny drop moment for people to say, I never thought of it like that. Thank you so much. And the more of that that happens, the better off we will be. Some people see that as us being a thorn in the side sometimes. Me personally definitely because we'll sit in a room. People will discuss a plan. And I'll throw a spanner in the works and say, have you considered that bit?

But operationally as a cop, the reason I do that is because I've got the lived experience where I say, look, have you actually thought about how that's going to land with a Black person? Because I just got offended by that. So, I think it's one-- in answer to the question, allowing people to have that. You need to give people permission to look through that lens. So, there will have been a time when a degree of militant reaction to things was necessary.

And I'm going down the lines of Mr Logan here because we've had this chat when I became chair. And he said, Chris, back in the day, I needed to be like that. We had to roll like that because of what we were fighting for. And when I say fighting, I mean, it's fighting to survive.

If you're a person who looks like us, Dev, every single day we often have to justify our existence because if I don't sit here and be the angry Black man talking in the corner, you're never going to see me or listen to me. So, you perceive me as that. I use that loosely. It's not how I describe myself. There's the other bit where our cultures, we are energetic and flamboyant and all sorts of stuff. People see that as threats and whatever.

But you know what? It's about offering people the lens. It's about how you-- it segues into allyship because again this discussion is often met with hostility. So, we can be leaders ourselves by inviting people into our reality. And if that then means that you over there, the majority, feel safe to look through things through our lens, then we will happily offer that to you.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Right. So, Francis has just put a very important big question. But, Francis, if you just bear with me, I would introduce other panel members also here so that collectively we can take as many questions as we can rather than put everything on Chris's aid. So, Chris, bear with me. I'll bring in here other members.

We have Dennis and Lurraine and Emma. Could you kindly bring your videos on and unmute yourselves? And in that order, if you could just briefly introduce yourself. And then we can pick up some of the questions from the chat box but also those that have come up before the seminar. So, Dennis and then Lurraine and Emma, please.

DENNIS MURRAY: Thank you. Hi, everybody. Dennis Murray. So just to give you a bit of my background. So, I've been 30 years as a police officer. Most of my career was in Northamptonshire. And then I went out to chief superintendent on secondment to the British Transport Police, where I've done lots of work with The Open University in relation to looking at the trust legitimacy and the internal diversity and inclusion.

And last week was successful at securing a post as the assistant chief constable at Thames Valley Police. So, we'll be moving there in the next few weeks to take up the crime and justice portfolio. I chair and set up the National Diversity and Inclusion consortium, which is now the strategic stakeholder advisor to Carl Foulkes, the DEI lead for the NPCC.

And I work with various forces in relation to diversity and inclusion, use of powers, and lots to do with trust and legitimacy, and the effect on how we represent internally and the effect that has on the external community. So that's very much my overall experience. Heritage-wise, I'm

from an Anglo-Indian background. And I'm married to an Italian. So, my kids have got a good old mix of cultures in there. And happy to answer your questions when we've been through all of the introductions.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you, Dennis. I'll come back to you with questions also but before that, Lurraine, please.

LURRAINE JONES: Hi, everyone. My name's Lurraine Jones. I am very new to the OU as some of you know. I've only been here about three months. I'm the deputy dean for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. So, I work with Professor Marcia Wilson and the EDI team. Previously to my role, I was at the University of East London as an academic for many years, teaching modules on race.

I'm interested in Black Britishness. I've written about Blackness, whiteness, race. I'm really interested in that kind of-- I worked with the police. I don't know you, Chris, personally, but I know people who do know you. I'm a good friend of Leroy. And I have several friends who have done their 35 years or so in the Met. So, I'm really familiar with-- I started a PhD many years ago in the Met. It didn't quite work out, but I know lots of stuff around the Met.

And there's a lot of parallels because it's an institution. And it's very similar in many ways to higher education and indeed the many other institutions that exist in this country. The Open University is a very different university to my previous institution, University of East London.

That was approximately 80%-ish Black and brown students, a campus-based university as well. So very, very different to the OU. A very different audience in every meeting. And I'm not seeing students as well. Of course, the OU is a distance learning institution. So, I'm sort of working my way around things but very glad to be here today and look forward to the questions and speaking on the panel. Thank you.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you, Lurraine. And then before we go to questions, Emma, please.

EMMA WILLIAMS: Thank you. Hi, everybody. My name is Emma Williams. And I'm the director of research and strategic partnerships in the Centre for Police Research and Learning. I've been in the OU for about a year. Prior to that, I was at Canterbury Christ Church University. And prior to that, I worked in the Met Police for about 12 years as a researcher, principal researcher.

I did a lot of work while I was there, looking at police legitimacy and community confidence. And I was involved in the evaluation of what was then the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in

London. And a lot of the work that we did focused on this area. I'm also very interested in the recruitment currently happening under uplift and how that's going to impact and the education that new recruits are going to get hopefully to change some of the cultural issues that Chris was talking about.

And I'm also very interested in, sorry, in inclusivity and organizational justice as well and how that kind of intersects with procedural justice and fairness in the community. So, I've worked quite closely with Dennis for a while when he was at BTP, looking at legitimacy. I also have done work with Chris. We set up together with others a Twitter debate forum called WeCops, which allows some of these kinds of debates to happen in a pretty public forum. And we've covered issues around race and policing quite a few times. So, yes, I look forward to the questions.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you. I feel very privileged to have this panel today with a real mix of experience, lived experience, practiced experience, as well as a lot of academic expertise around the panel. So hopefully we will get too many questions. We've got plenty of time under fire. So, I'll try my best to capture as many questions as we can.

But let me start first with a question that was submitted before. I'll keep alternating between submitted questions. And a lot of good questions coming up in the chat. I hope participants will respect that. So, one question we have-- and Denis and Lurraine, I'll value your response to that and, of course, if Emma and Chris want to say anything on that. Do you feel that Black police officers who may have witnessed racism from fellow officers are expected to play a greater role in challenging such behaviour, Dennis?

DENNIS MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, to start off with me, I think the answer to that has got to be yes, but actually I also believe-- and it comes back to what Chris said-- that this takes everybody to contribute to this. I've been on both ends of this where I've called things out. And I've been on the other end where I've seen something or heard something and chosen not to call it out. And part of that is that a lot of this stuff can detract from the direction the person's wanting to go in.

So, I'll give you an example. When I got onto the High Potential Scheme, I was shown an email that somebody sent to another person saying, Dennis has only got that because he's Black. And I had that choice at that point, do I want to do anything with that, or do I just choose to let it go? And actually, at that time, I chose to let it go because I didn't want to detract from the direction I was heading in and almost getting caught up in the battle of this to miss the opportunity to move forward and change things.

So, I think I've done both. And actually, do I regret not challenging that? Probably I do, if I'm honest, because that individual sent that email then went on to get dismissed some years down the road. And there was probably an opportunity for me to take some action that might prevent some further harm further down the line.

So, I think they should, but actually that's easier said than done because if you feel like you're standing alone, if you feel like the people around you aren't there supporting you and that actually this is going to create an even bigger problem, it's dead easy for me to sit here and say, yeah, call that out. Everyone should call it out depending on the environment you're in.

If you're in a force where you are potentially one of very few or even actually with BTP when I went there, it had a much denser population internally of minority officers and staff. But actually, that felt that you could feel the tension when there was something not right. So, each one has its own merits. And nine times out of 10 what happens is somebody will raise something, then they'll get some negativity. And then they'll go head down and just keep out of the way.

And actually, that's why I think, segueing this to what Chris was saying, there needs to be a safe space in the organization where we can draw some of these conversations out that have everybody talking about it because both this subject and some of those wider issues around intersectionality and all of those things, there are some really common themes. And Emma and I focused on this in BTP.

Actually, how do you look at things like fairness in systems, taking out some of that institutionalized behaviour that's there that applies to everybody? So, is there a absolutely fair process around temporary high responsibilities and promotions? Is there some fair procedures around positive action if you're going to do that?

So, I think this is all linked. And as we build on this debate, I think you'll find that all of this is linked. And then it links to the external as well because actually somebody who's not willing to challenge this probably won't challenge it if they see it being delivered in operational policing either. So, it's a very difficult space to be in, but do I think they should challenge it? Absolutely yes. Do I think it's that straightforward? Definitely no.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: All right, thank you. Lurraine, did you have a perspective on that?

LURRAINE JONES: I do because obviously this discussion is about policing but also about antiracism in institutions. So, I'm going to speak from a higher education perspective. But first of all, not going to lecture mode, but I do also-- when we talk about racism, I'm also keen to

point out that race, the idea of race is a concept. It's an idea. It's not real. It's a lived reality, but it is actually a 19th century outdated mode of how we divide people into white and Black.

So, racism, you must have an idea of what race is and what it does if you have an idea of racism is my first point.

So, do I feel that-- the question is about Black officers who witness racism, are they expected to play a bigger role in challenging this behaviour? So, in relation to higher education, I speak from my experience there, certainly my many years in higher education as an academic, there is an expectation from Black students that Black academics, of which there are very few and far between, will be the people to help them out or sort out their issue if they have witnessed racism or experienced it.

And Chris spoke earlier about being culturally competent police officers. And Black and brown staff do have an insight into culture in a different way of being to typically white dominated organization. So, a Black presence in a predominantly white space, I think serves to highlight the sort of synchronic relationship between racialized bodies. And I go back to my first point that we are all racialized as white and Black or whatever.

And there's a relationship with a Black body being in a white space. And many Black academics speak about this extra burden on their workload as Black students tend to seek them out to help them out. And there's a lot of emotional labour involved in that which is unseen generally by management. This is something that many-- my friends who are academics, and it's been written about. So, it's unseen and I'm catered for.

And there's a lot of emotional labour because it's somebody who looks like you. And Chris spoke a lot about that. You tend to want to help them out perhaps a little bit more because you yourself are negotiating that space or have negotiated that space. And you're trying to help, in my experience, the Black student to negotiate that space as well.

And also, in parallel with Chris and Dennis, the reluctance though sometimes to actually speak up, it depends on the culture that has been created within the institution or within the department as to whether you want to speak up or feel that you can. And there are stereotypes about the aggressive Black person or loud or troublemaker.

And Black and brown people absolutely understand how they are perceived in society. They've grown up in a white dominated society. So sometimes when you go to speak out, you think about how you're going to be perceived. And there is a reluctance sometimes to actually take a case on or speak up.

And some of those environments, again as Chris and Dennis have said, can be hostile or perhaps unsafe to speak up for people who were either the direct or indirect-- have experienced indirectly or directly. And for me, this is absolutely where white allyship is crucial because racism is everyone's problem. And speaking up is everybody's responsibility. And in maintaining silence, people are culpable in legitimizing and reproducing racism. Unless they are committed antiracists, one has to be not racist, one has to be antiracist.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Antiracist, yeah. I think Chris's point about silence is permission. So, Chris, I'm coming back to you with the question that Tracy had put a while ago. And it's all-encompassing, actually, question. And some of it, Lurraine has already started talking about.

So how are you able to know you are genuinely reaching significant numbers, individuals as probably as association? How are you confident about making impact movement and changing culture? So, it's a big question actually. How are you sure that environment is psychologically safe for the conversation that brings understanding? So, it's a bundle of questions, Chris, but it's around creating that safe environment where the discourse can take place and indeed action can follow kind of a question, Chris.

CHRIS EXCELL: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think in terms of the safe space bit if I work at it backwards, just before I took on my full-time time role, I sat in the deputy commissioner's delivery group. And one of the things we looked at was called listening circles. The ability to speak in a safe space. And had to navigate through that because we all know of people that we wouldn't send into a school to speak to children. And that's not different in our offices where we work. And so, it has to be the right person, if the facilitator, et cetera.

One of the really important bits is you have to act on what gets said, shared, reflected in these sessions. Otherwise, people won't have any confidence and won't see the point in coming and conversing. And I put that in further down in the chat. Dennis was talking about it where essentially; this is all about risk versus reward. So, if I'm someone who wants to challenge certain behaviours, the risk is that my reputation will suffer afterwards, that my daily existence at work will be made difficult.

But the chance actually-- the risk is that. And the chance of that happening is high. The chance of me flagging something or blowing the whistle, being heralded as a hero, maybe that's exaggerating, but being patted on the back for doing the right thing and seeing some serious changes, the chance of that reward is low. So, you look at that and just think, well, what's the point here? It's as simple as that. So, these listening circles, it's all about trust. You have to be able to act on that stuff as well. If anyone wants to email me, I'll just ask permission to share the document out because we've looked at this.

The other bit about having impact, we've got to have legitimacy. If you think of me as chair, I have a cabinet of executive members. And then we have a base of members. And then we have everybody else who we're expected to represent. So essentially to keep it concise as a result, we have time in significant people's diaries.

These people are decision makers. We're talking the deputy mayor, the home secretary, the commissioner, and other elements of management board so that actually when you come to us and consult with us before you are signing something off, you are ticking a box to say you've spoken to us. So that's how I know that we have some impact. And we see it by way of structures and programs, et cetera, et cetera.

Even if we don't get them right, at least they're being put out there. And we are making some forward steps. In terms of the other bit, member confidence, et cetera. That is one where, I guess that is just the feedback that we get and seek out that you'd expect with any sort of group or organization.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you, Chris. Dennis, there is an interesting question pre-submitted regarding-- in the Small Axe film, Red, White, and Blue. I haven't seen the film, but I read this question.

CHRIS EXCELL: You better watch it before next week. Leroy—

DEVENDRA KODWANI: All right. I'll look out for that. If it is on Netflix or Prime, I will look out for it. I'm always on the YouTube it might be. So, Leroy Logan's family are depicted as being shocked and angry when he wants to join the police force. Is this a common experience for police officers now?

DENNIS MURRAY: Yeah, I think it still is. It was, and I think it very much still is. And this comes back to, I think, the legitimacy sort of element of policing. If we haven't got trust in the community of the way we police in our relationship with them, that has a knock-on effect. Now I don't just say that as a senior officer in policing. That's been my lived experience.

So, my parents came to the UK in the '60s. They lived in a predominantly white town. My elder brother was found at the age of 7 under the stairs painting himself white and had a nervous breakdown because of bullying at school.

And when they went to the police at that time, and that was in the mid '70s, early '80s, the police said, it's school ground bullying. We can't do anything about it. Now, clearly that wouldn't be the case now, but my parents had absolutely no confidence or trust in the police.

They didn't see them as legitimate. So, when I said I'm going to join the police, my mom, first thing she said was, if you join the police, I'll disown you.

But I was one of those few people and I think you see it in the film where you say, no, well, actually, the only way we're going to change this is to change this from the inside, knowing what you're walking into but then you look at the experiences. I joined the police service on a residential course at the Police College at Brighton. My sister was racially attacked by a neighbour. They set fire to her front door. And my brothers went up there to see her. They were attacked. Police turned up, and they were all arrested. And the offenders weren't arrested.

So, they were charged. It went to court. All the charges were dropped. And the offenders were convicted of racial assault and arson. Now, you can imagine my family's view of that because they haven't got that trust and legitimacy in the policing services that they receive. Now then you've got some of the cultural elements of-- actually, a lot of these communities don't see policing as a profession that is something that they would want their children to do. When I go and speak to universities, they'll say, I'm convinced, but you've got to convince my mom and dad. They want me to be a doctor or a dentist or they don't see policing as a profession.

And one of the things I talk to them about is my example of somebody who came into this from a migrant family, no qualifications when they left school. Now a senior leader with a master's degree and QPM and all of those things of the art of the possible, but that is the small picture. And the scars that you get along the way to get here, it's a bit like what Chris said. Some people just go, this is too much for me, and give up.

For every success I've had, like Chris alluded to in his slides, there's probably 10 failures. And it's taken me 30 years to get here. But actually, that was because-- and it comes back to the point made about allyship-- I had some really good people take me under their wing and championed me. But for some people, they're not in that environment. So, I mean, eventually, my mom came round. And she came to my passing out parade, which was a real proud moment for me because I never thought I'd get her there. And it went on to good things.

But actually, I don't think that's changed that much in the 30 years that I've been in policing. And I still hear the same stories being told now. I think the absolute key to this is getting the external right. And if they look into the organization and don't see themselves reflected in it or they see a negative delivery of policing services to their community, why would they come and join us?

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah. Emma, you've been looking at this issue as well in your research and other reflections. What was your view on this question?

EMMA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, I totally agree with what Dennis was saying. I suppose I'm going off on a bit of a tangent about this. But the other area that I think we sometimes miss is how much we can learn from historical context in this space. And I remember doing some research in London in around 2005, '06, where the main KPI for policing was community confidence. And there were some real disparities across London boroughs with levels of confidence.

We went in and did some quite deep dive work around what was going on there. Without a shadow of a doubt, it was the boroughs with a fairly negative history of police race relations that had the lowest levels of confidence, but actually mapped onto that was some amazing work that was going on with community engagement amongst individuals Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

But despite that, no matter what they did, they didn't seem to be able to stop this negative perception of policing in that area. And I think sometimes we miss the trick with the way that we recruit officers and train them up because actually understanding the historical context of what's gone on over many years and how it's impacted on recruitment, how it's impacted on community relationships just sometimes seems to get missed in the way that we teach new officers coming in.

I really, really hope that some of that historical, that really important historical richness around these relationships start to get taught within the new curriculum for the recruits coming in now because without that understanding, I think there are so many nuances that are missed around why this is just so very important. So, I think there are ways that we can try and make a difference and stop the perpetuation of some of these problems. But we've got to sort of revisit some of our past as well, I think. Yeah, that's my sense.

CHRIS EXCELL: Dev, can I say just one bit that—

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yes, please.

CHRIS EXCELL: --I just don't want to go amissed? Is that actually we talk about that which we get internally. But actually, some of the abuse that we get, some of the worst abuse we get is from our own communities. I need to make that point because our personal experience when we go out there, it's difficult enough for all the things that Dennis and Emma have spoken about. It's difficult enough before we even leave the neck. When we go out into our

own community and get hounded, that is a real struggle. And that's the stuff for me that over penetrates the vest so to speak.

For all of those out there who are on the call, who are members of the public and not part of the police and environment, please celebrate your own people who are in the organization. Despite everything that's been talked about and everything that we've gone through, we're still here. We could run to the press and just tell everyone about so many different things.

It's not because we're afraid. It's because we want to get on and do the job because of what we believe in. That's why we're still here. So, we're some of the most trustworthy and hardest working people in policing. And it won't change unless we stay within. So, we need support. So please celebrate those of us who are here because we do it on your behalf. That's my piece.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Very helpful, Chris. Thank you. I want to go to a question that I mentioned earlier, Francis, because that's the organizational challenges I see in that question. And I'll first ask Lurraine to say something and then come back to ask you how you see the question is framed in the Met context. But I think it's a general challenge for our large organizations.

So, Francis refers to according to today's IOPC report the Met needs to address bullying, discrimination, racism, misogyny, and harassment. How can one organization successfully tackle all that at the same time? And I think this is compounded by the size of organization also. So, OU is 10,000 employees. Met is probably-- I don't know what size of Met is, but there's a size issue and also the conflation of several discrimination and other issues that we are facing. How can organizations simultaneously tackle all those things? So, it's a scale challenge, Chris, and how one could play that role.

CHRIS EXCELL: Yeah, and I'll be keen to hear Dennis after me. But, I mean, if we're talking about the Met, look, there's 50,000 of us. So, it's 33,500 rank and file officers. And then we have the support staff that make it work on a daily basis. It's certainly not impossible, but when you compound everything, I think, where we can extract and separate bits, then, yeah, OK. And regardless of whether we can or can't do that, it's going to take time.

I talked about us being founded in 1994. Are we where we need to be? No. We should be a lot further along the way. But even if we were where we think we should be, we're still not going to be there. So, I think this is one where it's also important to manage one's own expectations about actually the timeline and how long this will take, et cetera.

We often use the analogy in policing of the super tanker and that you can't turn it on 90 degrees. It takes time to turn. I like to think of it. Someone else suggested you could add to that and say it's a super tanker with lots of little flotillas running off and doing other little things. And that's, I think, how we need to look at it just to manage expectations. It's not going to happen overnight.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah, it's interesting you use that analogy of tanker. We do that for OU sometimes. Lurraine, I'll come to you next.

CHRIS EXCELL: It's not a black pad that you can just turn around. Do you know what I mean? It's a massive thing. It would take a bit of time.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: I think it's a big challenge. So, Lurraine, first to you. And then I'll come back to Dennis. Maybe, Dennis, you want to reflect on this as well. So, Lurraine, what's your view on this sketch? Because we got this very large agenda around EDI plus AI also. Accessibility in OU context.

LURRAINE JONES: Yeah, I think as a someone new to the OU, it's a very, very-- I am discovering. And several people have said, also use that analogy, Chris and Dave. It is a tanker. And I've heard the flotilla. Everyone's gone in different directions. And I myself have made the analogy of before the United States became the United States. It seems that the OU is now the United States but all doing different things with different rules and different regulations. So, I think it's quite difficult.

I have joined as a deputy dean of EDI, but what I would say is that EDI is everyone's issue. It's everyone's lens. Everything that everybody does should look through an EDI lens. It's not to go across to the EDI team and say, can you do this? Have a look at this. Every policy, every practice must, must, must have EDI as its lens at its core. And it is a scale issue. Obviously, we're not as big as the police, but there's a lot of staff at the OU. And there is this disconnect between associate lecturers because they're teaching the materials that have almost been written for them.

So, I think that everybody should look through the EDI lens. Darren's on the call, I know. Darren and his team have done a lot of work on the inclusive curriculum tool. And that's certainly a start to try to when you're producing materials, when you're speaking to students, speaking to each other, is to think about inclusive language, inclusive practice.

And remember when you are including someone, you're excluding someone else. So really, really think about that. And Chris spoke about that at the very beginning as well, inclusion. But

remember, inclusion is also excluding. So, I will just say that. The EDI has to be-- it's not just the EDI team. It's everybody's responsibility.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah, thanks. I think that in a way is a response in itself, that if you take it as an organizational challenge, probably it is doable and effective as well rather than a bunch of people trying to champion the cause. Dennis, you want to add anything briefly on that before I go to next question.

DENNIS MURRAY: Yeah, I think there's a couple of bits with this. I think what Lurraine said around the sort of diversity as that common golden thread is absolutely right. There's a debate that's going to take place at Chief Constables' Council on Thursday in relation to whether or not the policing per se believe that they're institutionally racist. And actually, do I believe that we'll come to the conclusion that everyone's going to be on the same page to say that? Probably not.

However, I think they can come at this from the other end and say, actually, rather than come out and say that or some people say, some people don't, without a plan, it's worthless just saying it anyway. So, do you come at it from the point of we're going to put in place a plan so that the lens that we overlay health-checks that we are not institutionally racist, that we don't become institutionally racist? And just come at it from the other end, and rather than asking for this big declaration where there's no action at the end of it because some people don't buy into it, I don't think that's going to achieve anything. It's just going to cause more upset and let down.

But when you talk about the big tanker mentality, at some stage, somebody turned that big tanker around in the right way. And it needs that drip-drip effect of those role models and people that somebody can stay. I think the best phrase I ever heard was a chap called Antoine Allen, who's a newsreader. You may well know him. His mom is the chair of the stop and search working group in Northamptonshire. And he said, because those people existed, even if they didn't get very far, that made some ground so that I'm here. And I made ground. And the next person will make ground.

So, if you look back last year, there were six Black and minority ethnic chief officers out of all chief officers. This year that figure will have nearly doubled. So, all of a sudden, we've made some progress. In my intake, there was five of us from the UK, which nearly doubled the figures. Now that means you've got 10 people, 11 people starting to pull people up and put in place policies and procedures and various things that make sure that this is right and start to pen this forward.

And I think that's the bit that I would say. This drip-drip effect, it might feel like a tanker. It might feel slow. But at some point, that tanker gains traction. And I think that if ever there was a time where we gained traction, it's now. It kind of feels like people are in the right space. And whilst we might have missed the opportunity a little bit with uplift because of the government pressure to recruit and draw down your money, we're in that five-year window now where 30 years ago lots of people joined who will be leaving.

So, there's still an opportunity to change the diversity picture and actually learn from some of the things that we had through uplift to get this right as we move forward. So I think, yes, it is a tanker, but the more experienced you become, moving that tanker becomes easier and easier.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you. So, I'll come to Zara's one question. Actually, she has put two questions. I'll come back to those. But first, let me take this another question. Is the creation of association on ethnic, religious, sexual, or cultural lines something to be welcomed? Or is there a risk of division and fragmenting of the approach to authority on common issues?

So, are we dissipating energies and attention by having different groups around different lines of potential injustices or is it the right thing to do? May I go to Lurraine first? And then Chris or Dennis, Emma, please come in if you want to respond to that as well.

LURRAINE JONES: I think people can feel very isolated in organizations. And I think on the whole staff networks are a welcome addition. They can provide a safe space for discussion of issues. They can help to raise awareness of issues within the wider organization. They provide a source of support for individual staff who may be facing challenges at work. And I think lastly, they offer a collective voice for the workforce to management.

However, the most important thing about staff associations is to establish its role in the organizations. And I think without clear aims and objectives, networks like this could drift into irrelevance or they could be the cause of problems and workplace conflict as different people seek to use them for different purposes. So, I think that's where some of the antagonism could come at some point.

I think when creating an association, it should make it clear to everybody what the network is there for, what it exists to do, and also what it is not there to do. And it shows how it operates. And I think lastly, associations can appear to be divisive as sometimes it might appear there's almost a scramble for limited resources. And I think that can create some division.

And Chris made the point earlier. And I totally agree. And I'll end with that point that there's so much intersectionality with various staff associations and groups that really although there are particular issues that you might be fighting for, discussing, and supporting with, the main thing is to come together and discuss the intersectional issues as there's more that joins you together than puts you apart.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you. Who wants to come next? Chris, you want to say anything on that or Dennis?

CHRIS EXCELL: Yeah, I'll just echo what Lurraine said. First of all, when you put all of the staff associations together, you've got everybody. You've got everybody. If you had a room with 10 people in it and you went through all the protected characteristics, every single person would stand up on at least four occasions. Whilst I can sit and talk for light-skinned Black men, I cannot speak for dark-skinned Black women who will have significantly different experiences, difficulties, and challenges.

And so, actually, even within my group, we have Women's Forum and other different groups. They need to be there, first of all, because of the subject matter and who is the subject matter expert but then also whether or not people feel comfortable sitting in those safe spaces. So, would a Black female feel comfortable sat in a room with me talking about certain issues that are exclusive to Black females? Potentially not. The answer is go and ask that person. They'll tell you. But it's not for me to assume. And so actually, yeah, do you know what? We do have to have all of these groups.

As chairs, we come together, and we glue. We are the glue that holds everyone together. And we talk about this cross sexuality. I talked about English as a foreign language. That's come up because I'm sitting there chatting with the Slavic Police Association next door, talking about actually some commonality. So, I totally agree with what Lurraine said. But in answer to the question, I think, yeah, we do need to exist as we are. Yeah.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: And I think what you're saying is-- what I can see is a T-shaped movement that you have a breadth of connections at the chair or the group levels but also you have an in-depth vertical conversation around specific characteristics as a T-shaped model kind of engaging with multiple issues without diluting the impact of individual characteristic groups. Dennis, did you wanted to add anything?

DENNIS MURRAY: Yeah, just a couple of bits on that. I think there is a need to have them as separate groups. But actually, they all need to have a seat at the table of the decision makers so that actually they can feed in their issues. But then looking at those synergies, they have commonalities. So I know that-- I'm seeing Fiona Reynolds, which is online. Fiona, myself,

Karen Wilson are talking about some of the common issues around people with dyslexia taking exams, people with English as a second language taking exams.

The commonality is the taking of exams for people who don't fit into that normal-- I said normal. That's probably the wrong phrase, but that everyday English person taking that examination with no sort of intersectional issues. Actually, there's a synergy there that actually it's not right for them or they feel it's not right for them. So how do you identify them? The first thing I did when I went to BTP was whilst I was there for race, I met with all of the other support networks to say, what are your issues? How can I take forward a joint agenda to pick off the low-hanging fruit and get those quick wins? But then start to look at, actually, if an organization is inclusive, it's a level playing field. And it's a level playing field for everybody, not just the person that you happen to be fighting the corner for. So, I think we have to have that approach. But provided that they have all got an equal voice and a seat at the table, then I think having different groups for different needs is fine.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Thank you. Zara Alaboby's questions-- there are two questions. I'll read them out then panellists may please pick up if we want to respond to them. You have mentioned meeting someone-- I think this relates to what Chris you were saying probably. You had mentioned meeting someone with an invisible disability. In my research-- that's Zara's research-- I have found that when a disabled person from an ethnic minority approaches the police in, bracket example, harassment case, their case would most likely be documented as racial discrimination. Have you come across similar or different situations? So that's the first question.

CHRIS EXCELL: Yes. Read the second if you want.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah, second is, what is your perspective on the impact of cyber hate on combating racism in police practice?

CHRIS EXCELL: Just that one again. So, we're talking about cybercrime?

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Cyber hate on combating racism in police practice. So, I think your effort even Twitter that you hardly get response on some of the things when you post, for example.

CHRIS EXCELL: Yeah, I mean, social media is a difficult one when it comes to reporting crime. Every account says, do not report crime here because we don't warn it to them, et cetera. And actually, it gets murky with sub judice and stuff if we start discussing, et cetera. So, I know that it can be the perception that we don't wish to engage or aren't interested, if that makes sense. I can understand that.

I actually thought the question was leaning more towards things like, for example, the more high-profile racism in sports and the attacks that certain sports people receive by way of hate crime on social media. And I did speak briefly-- I think it was on Radio 5-- in relation to it. I know in the Met it's set up quite well in terms of reporting and tackling hate crime in sports, which leads into the cybercrime stuff. I think there were limitations on how-- there were limitations on actually who is responsible for the content, et cetera, et cetera.

And Dennis, please back me up after this for more of a senior perspective. But in terms of actually who's responsible for the content and who's going to release that stuff to us, et cetera, et cetera, a little bit like what's being said at the moment is the only thing I'll say on it in relation to this stuff at number 10. I think they said, look, let them deal with this bit for us because they all have access to stuff, whereas we might have to get warrants, or the law might just create a boundary where we can't actually get into that stuff.

The other part of it is actually the willingness for people to come and report once they know the full ins and outs of the process. We do have it sometimes where people get to a point where they just think, OK, you know what? I don't have the time for this, or even the confidence bit, I don't feel like you're going to see this through or I'm getting the vibe that you don't think that this is as serious as it is.

And that hopefully, that might relate to the first question, which it definitely is a thing almost like if you've got more than one protected characteristic when you come to police, it's like you have to report that you are one of them and not the other. So, if I report as a-- what was it? It was a footballing thing as well. A LGBT Black female who received a whole lot of abuse where the only place she could go was a pub to watch the game. She got all the abuse. And when she came to report it to police, she got the feeling that she had to either report it as LGBT or Black or female. She couldn't do it as all of them.

And so, yes, there is an issue with that as well. And yeah, so with multiple characteristics, that is definitely a thing. It is something that we see in other scenarios. There's some stuff on the horizon around hate crime offenses and who makes the decision that will come out in the future. But, yes, I'd defer to Dennis about the report bit I mentioned at the start.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: So, Dennis, briefly to you.

DENNIS MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, I agree with Chris. I think certainly from a senior level, there is a desire to have change in this space, but I'm not sure that there's necessarily the right knowledge there yet. And it was really-- I found out last Thursday that I've got the role at Thames Valley. And the chief asked me straight away, can you come and support me in

having this debate Chief Constables' Council? So actually, knowing who you've got within your organization and drawing that debate down to start to shape and change these policies and how we operate is absolutely key in senior leadership.

But you look at the people that are now starting to push this agenda, never before have we had diversity consortiums, other forces sharing information, sharing policy so that we've got the parity, the college health-checking this to make sure that we're all in the right space. Actually, that all needs to come. But if we don't understand it fully internally, how are we supposed to inform the public and make sure that they know what they're entitled to report? And how do they report it? And all of these things.

So, you will get someone coming and reporting it in a particular way because that's what they've been used to. This is starting to-- about changing the narrative now. And the community talk about especially-- and I hate the phrase, hard to reach. They're not hard to reach. We have to reach them in a way that works for them and get the information to them in a way that works for them. And that's regardless of whether it's disability, race, gender, et cetera, et cetera.

We need to start getting creative about how we're engaging with those members of the community to make sure that when we are changing things, that they do understand what they're entitled to, that they do understand that they can report one, the other, or both, and start to change the real narrative with the community. That's where the legitimacy piece comes in that Emma, and I talk about. When people start to understand the procedures and processes and the system works for them, that starts to take it away from institutional and starts to take it too inclusive.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: That's great, Dennis. Thank you, Chris and Dennis, for that response. I didn't realize we have been going so close to fire already. And the floor has been so good of the responses. Very thoughtful responses from all the panellists. And I am unable to take all the questions now that I have in front of me in the chat box and in the presubmitted couple of questions there.

But I think people have touched up on some of the questions that are there. One of them at least has touched upon how the relationship works between Met Federation and others that you talked about various groups working together as chairs, Chris, that, I think, connection there.

Colleagues, thank you very much for all that fantastic presentation. Chris, you really started provoking a lot of questions. And a great deal of appreciation from all the participants in the chat box and all your responses, all panellists. Thank you very much.

On behalf of The Open University and the Faculty of Business and Law, Chris, Dennis, I'm most grateful to both of you. And Lurraine and Emma, thank you very much for all your support as well. My big thanks and shout out to my colleagues in the background who are managing everything. Babette and other colleagues and all the participants, have a good evening.

Thank you for joining.