

Criminal Justice Alliance Members Meeting

Friday 15 February

The Foundry, London SE11 5RR

Speech by Janet Hills, Chair of the Metropolitan Black Police Association

Good afternoon everyone and I haven't done a massive speech because I am more focused on having the conversation with you guys in the audience. So, there might be things I am not mentioning as I speak but if there is anything you want to pick me up on, feel free to do so. I am one of these people that wear their heart on their sleeve, so you will get the best political answer I can give you without getting myself in trouble. I basically want it to be a conversation. I thank Nina for inviting me. It was really good that you did get in touch with me. As my mum always says 'Things happen for a reason' so I am sure that everything you are doing is going to be a productive way of moving forward.

So, a little bit about the MBPA, with regards to what the Criminal Justice Alliance does around scrutiny; the Met BPA does a similar job internally and I think that is really key. From our perspective we were set up 25 years ago, so we are celebrating our 25th anniversary. It was the 26 September 1994 that we were set up. Prior to us being set up, in July 1990 they took about three hundred or so black and Asian police officers, as well as police staff, to Bristol Polytechnic. For us it's a key defining moment. We refer to it as the Bristol Seminar. This was about senior leaders wanting to hear first hand from officers and staff about the barriers to recruitment and progression within policing.

They were away for around three days, which was just before my time as I joined in 1991. The most defining thing for that group of officers and staff was that they were able to see each other because if you can imagine policing in London is quite a big area, so you can have say four thousand now that we have got in London and not see another black or Asian officer in your borough. So, bringing those officers together was a key defining moment in so much that it allowed them to see that they existed and have those conversations around experiences. It also formed a social network which then led to the Met BPA being formed.

In 1998 the National BPA was formed and they celebrated their 20th anniversary last year, again it was key figures from the Met that actually brought that about. We are now representative in forty-three constabularies, which is all of them in some shape or another. We are not all called BPAs. Some are called BAPAs or SPADES, but they all represent the diversity of the police service. We also have British Transport Police, and we have police Scotland and the police service of Northern Ireland as well to add to that. We represent both police officers and staff, unlike our federation the union body that only do rank and file police officers.

Our objectives are around... we call it REPS. R is for recruitment progression and retention, so a lot of my role is about scrutinising the recruitment drives that they have, the sort of process that people were being asked to be put through. Just to weed out some of the disproportionality around outcomes in relation to that. Similarly, that feeds into the progression piece. Currently we are not doing a good job on retention, in fact there is a 40% dismissal rate in the Met for African, Caribbean and Asian heritage officers and staff with regards to misconduct.

So, the E is around effective community engagement and again this meeting is hopefully effective community engagement where people get the opportunity to see me, young

people in particular. They rarely come across or have conversations with a police officer that looks like them. We try and get in where we can from a membership perspective into our communities. We are currently supporting one of our members Michael Wallace, who is running a 'Kick off at Three' initiative around football which we have taken nationally, and we would like to get it in every borough within the Met. So, again we are sort of always striving for that connection so people can see us in our space as police officers.

The P is around police powers, so the main thing around stop and search is that whole scrutiny piece, the internal comms piece around how that power is being used and similarly around the use of taser. So, again all these things are showing us disproportionality, where actually I sit around the table and I ask difficult questions to my boss and people in that space.

The S is for support of our colleagues and community. There is one thing about policing that could actually have you quite isolated, so as a black or Asian person within policing you want to be there based on the fact that you are talented, you've got all the right qualifications to be there and in that space. You don't really want it to be about your ethnicity, or your colour. So, what we find is that people won't necessarily be members of their BPAs in the Met or nationally and what happens is that they suffer in silence and even for those that are members, there is a lot of mental health problems that go with some of the issues that they face within their everyday working environment.

One of the most defining moments for the Met BPA was the Macpherson Inquiry in 1999, where officers and staff broke rank and gave evidence around their lived experience at that time within policing. Which again I think was key in that the panel needed to hear around the whole racism piece that they say that they experienced and subsequently spilled out into our communities.

Some of our top people now... so you have got Leroy Logan whom some of you may know is pushing that agenda, Bevan Powell my predecessor and Mike Fuller. Some of you may know Mike Fuller he is our one and only Chief Constable of colour and he was out in Kent but is also our initial Chair when it all started off.

They are the ones that put themselves out there to give evidence at that inquiry, which actually led to the Met being labelled as institutionally racist. The association itself has been involved in a number of inquiries. Sir Bill Morris did an inquiry into the Met around professional standards complaints, again that was around 2004 where he made a number of recommendations and I do despair sometimes that we get all these inquiries, recommendation after recommendation and yet we still see very little change. He did one around professional standards piece including complaints and grievances. In 2014 we had probably one of the biggest cases around Carol Howard. A black female police officer who experienced racism and sexism in policing. So, again I do sometimes wonder how effective some of these inquiries are. We were also involved in the Metropolitan Police Authority's inquiry into race and faith, which looked at the relationship between policing and our communities.

I like to talk about cultural competencies. As well as what we can bring to the table as African, Caribbean and Asian officers, there is also a cultural element around our culture and language and that can break down a lot of barriers for communities. The murder of Damilola Taylor in 2000 and what we found in that investigation was that the community (North Peckham estate) were not opening their doors. A key part of any murder investigation is the house to house inquiry, where you need to account for everyone that

is living there to see where they were on that day and whether they can help as witnesses. The police came across basically nobody opening their doors and the Met BPA (I was part of that team) went and worked alongside our murder squad colleagues knocking on people's doors (it was really cold I remember) and getting people to answer who were not afraid to answer based on who was standing on the other side.

As a result of that we managed to find the fourteen-year old witness who actually was able to give evidence that convicted the Preddie brothers of Damilola's murder. So, throughout the 25 years of the Met BPA we basically strived to make that sort of change within policing, which I think is key. Sometimes people see it as us being sort of a bit too obstinate in the way in which we are dealing with things, but I see it as being a critical friend for the organisation and also trying to bridge the gaps that we have between our communities and the police.

So, as you will probably know the 24 February 2019 is going to be the 20th anniversary of the Macpherson report and from my perspective, at the time I was grateful for the recommendations that came through. I think out of the seventy they managed to do sixty-seven. The thing is, that label of institutional racism.

The report gave us some operational things. So, we have got the fact that it gave us family liaison officers. Even though family liaison officers were there, they hadn't been developed into a real key role for policing. It gave us best practice around crime scene preservation and it made every officer a mandatory requirement for us to do First Aid because up until that point we weren't and again that was a key thing.

At the Home Affairs select committee which I was at last week they were asking the question about how far we have come? Having been in 28 years, I have to say that it feels like we are pedalling faster backwards than we are making progress forwards. Even though we work really hard. The organisation works hard around the recruitment aspect, they are trying to get the recruitment out, advertising it were ever they can, in the lesser known community radio stations and papers that are out there.

To be fair, if I am going to be genuinely honest, I think they do a fairly good job. We are now at 14% so even though we are unlikely to make what is the demography of London which is around 40% anytime soon. I think someone worked it out to 53 years before we get to 40% so it going to take a really long time. What I like is the fact that they keep pushing for it. A lot of the time what has happened in the past is that we have taken our foot off the pedal and then we've said Oh. It is imperative that we push this. I think that with the whole diversity agenda it's something that you have to keep your foot on the pedal and consistently work your way at it.

So, one of my biggest gripes I guess with the organisation is actually, when I look around; there aren't many women that look like me, so there aren't any black women or indeed Asian women within policing. With policing at the minute, they have really pushed hard around representation, we know that 50% of our communities are women. Currently nationally they are at 30% which is fantastic because it is at the tipping point for change, cultural change within the organisation. They are doing really, really well, but then when I look where I am and the women that look like me, we are at the bottom of the pile.

So, we have got our first female commissioner in London, we got a female commissioner in the fire service, fantastic. Sarah Thornton is the head of the National Police Chiefs' Council, so we have got all of these women in that space, but then when I look for where we are, we are not thriving as well as our white counterparts. So, nationally we have 1

836 women, what I will say is that a third of forces do not have any women of colour in them. I will make the point that if you were to take out the women of colour bit and just say that they have no women in them, you would have it as a frontpage headline that policing has places where they have got no women, no representation around that. I think it's really key and I still continue to push that.

Just on that point, currently our highest ranking, man of colour is Neil Basu in the Met, he is the Assistant Commissioner, but then the nearest woman or women are at the superintendent rank. So, where Mr Basu sits, is as a Chief Officer in that area and we have nothing in the Met for women in that space. We did have Patricia Gallan who is now retired, but nothing now. The problem that we now have is that a lot of those women and people at that level are sort of at their thirty years, so they will be looking to sort of like, pack their bags and walk out the door, which I'll be doing in two years!

For me, I know we talk about Macpherson, but the real defining moment for me was Scarman. I think his recommendations and what he put out there in his report I think is key to the way the Sus laws have now been changed into section 1 the Criminal Evidence Act and then we have got the whole code of practice to go with that. So, I think for me that was the more defining... and I think Macpherson actually reinforces some of the earlier stuff.

Again, I think it's really key around the community involvement bit, I think both reports have said that is key. I think that external scrutiny is key, I think for, even when we are doing promotion places it's one of the things I pushed for when I first came in. Actually, I want to be confident that anyone of colour going for promotion is feeling confident in doing that. So, having external people come in and sit on the panels when we are doing all that I think it's helpful in that regard.

What that also does for the external scrutiny part, is that it allows for the communities to hold the police to account. I think, again when we look at our Peelian principles we really need to push that. I stand here as someone that gets paid to do a job that the community should be doing and that whole representation piece around community should be there. Body worn cameras, I think is a good thing, I feel that it offers communities some reassurance around the way police officers are behaving. Similarly, for police officers it safeguards what they are doing. So, I think that's a really good thing. Our position on stop and search, is one that we support the power, when it is used in an intelligence led way and with respect and courtesy.

Just in closing, I just want to say that I am one hundred percent behind what the Criminal Justice Alliance is doing around broadening the case for greater scrutiny within policing and as I said if mentioning you at the Home Affairs Select Committee actually gets that pushed forward then actually it was a job well done for me, but thank you. [Applause]

Questions

Q: If you had a smallish but nevertheless magic wand, if you could put a couple of things in place to reverse that trend (pedalling backwards) where do you think the new impetus for change ought to come from and in particular, thinking of the sorts of organisations that we have in membership. What can those of us who are deeply motivated to help the work you are doing within the police force... what might we be doing to be a force for change in that regard?

Janet: I think you have already started doing some of it from what you said around your strategy and part of that is about representation. It's about having the people in the right spaces, so currently we don't have anyone in the areas say for misconduct. So, to give a good decision around a complaint around racism you need a Chief Inspector rank but because we are so few in numbers and there are hardly any others, we don't have anyone in that space that has a lens, that kind of gets the whole racism piece. The thing about racism now... it's not where you're calling each other names, throwing sticks and whatever, it's very nuanced, it's very underground. It's understanding the sort of micro-aggressions that can come from racism now, in particular around performance. It's about having really good representation across all levels so that you have got a different lens, at the minute policing doesn't have that.

So, it's very much same old, same old and interestingly enough it was a point I wanted to make at the Home Affairs Select Committee, in so much that all of that panel there... I was like really? Do you know what I mean... they were all white and I just thought, no Janet just don't! Ultimately what I'd like to see is the fact that we've got different people, they talk about diversity of thought. I genuinely want people with cultural difference.

I want a different conversation and different challenge to happen at all levels. So, it's not just in policing, it's across society, across the criminal justice system around actually when you are sitting there talking about diversity you have got the right people around the table. What still drives the policing aspect is that we are rank and file, so you know I am the first rung Detective Sergeant. I know it sounds flash but I am the first rung of supervision. As you go up, you take on different levels of responsibility, so to have someone lower down, up at the top table having that discussion is not something that is done. But I think it needs to be done in order for you to get a balanced view and idea around what's going on in your environment.

Q: You talked about progression. Can you walk us through how you and in your role help your officers to progress and what support you give them?

Janet: So, we have got it in two levels. You have got police officer progression and you've got police staff progression. Police staff progression is not visible, so with regards to being promoted you could be a band D one day and then the next day they say you've been promoted to a band C which for me I am pushing on because actually a lot of our people are in that space where they are not being progressed. There is a network of your mates and whoever you are socialising with that allows for the progression of our white counterparts and not for black staff so there's that element. For policing it's slightly different, you will have a number of processes.

The first one, from constable to sergeant, you have to do a certain amount of study, so for me to have done my sergeants I would have had to have taken time out. The study period would be from late September through to March when the exam is, you have four books covering four different areas of business. From those four books you get one hundred and fifty questions multiple choice but you have to get a pass mark I think it's about 55%. So, from that perspective it is all down to your hard work. But if you think that, as a woman you've got the Christmas period, you're going to be doing family stuff, you're going to have to make all those sacrifices in order to study your books in order to then take the exam and pass. So that's your first ticket, okay!

My issue around the next aspect is that it is now down to my line manager to say whether I am ready to go for the next part. Which I am like, hold on a minute... I've just spent like six months or whatever studying to get my ticket to go on to the next part, now I have to go through you? Because if you say to me Janet, I don't think you are ready then that's me game over, I can't go anywhere. What I've asked for, is that people who are going for any kind of promotion have an expression of interest.

That expression of interest then demonstrates how many people want to go for it before the line manager says right. So, we look at how many people have gone for it or expressed an interest to then looking at how many people actually put in for it, because that's when I actually want some of the conversation. The difficult conversation to be had with managers around, why is it that people from your unit or whatever have not put in? We don't always get to hear but the data tells you a lot more, so I sit on that level.

I also sit on the level where in 2013 we had a Chief Super's process and at that time we had ten Superintendents that were eligible to go for that. They were all from African Caribbean minority backgrounds and they were all saying Janet we've not been put in for this process and I was like okay how does that work? There comes a point in the police force when you are being recommended to go for it. So, you don't have to do anymore exams, but now you're being recommended and none of them were recommended.

My challenge was to the commissioner at the time, Sir Bernard and MOPAC¹ was that, you want me to go out there and do work around recruiting and getting more people in, when there's a bit that you need to do internally around promoting those people. There should be an expectation when you are joining an organisation for a job that you can reach the very top of that. You can be commissioner if that can be the case. So, I do a lot of push back around the data that comes from processes and asking the difficult questions like why aren't we present?

Some of the processes that have been used - management aptitude tests, the bias that's built into that because it wasn't tested on black women or black people, saw us not do as well in that part of it. So again, it's like push, push, push and it's now been removed. It's not to say they were doing anything wrong but it's just that we need to understand that if we've got equivalent people, in particular if you've got people coming in who've been to university, they've got a 2:1 and one is black one is white and they both come in doing the same process, a white person gets through and a black person doesn't. We need to understand what is built into these processes that actually allows for that to happen.

¹ Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

So, I do a lot of that work and again we always 'Big up' our people when they get into that place. So, that's what we do for members, we let them know, I let them know what it is I am doing where I am sitting.

Q: One of the things we have never really understood with the police is, they have got a problem particularly in Suffolk. The problem is they need diverse backgrounds. Why don't they say explicitly, if you meet all the essential criteria; we will make that background a desirable element such that it gets weighted and then we can attract people from those different backgrounds?

Janet: I guess I support positive discrimination, I guess I kind of support it. In so much that we need some radical change to happen in order to get that shifting movement. But then there is another aspect of that, if we then build in the positive discrimination then I guess it could undermine that individual.

I've written a paper around intelligent deployment. We did a bit of a search and we identified that there were about ten boroughs in London in particular our key boroughs, including Lewisham, Lambeth and Haringey that didn't have any uniformed sergeants or inspectors from an African Caribbean or Asian background.

I sit there and scratch my head and ask, how is that even possible that you wouldn't have any first line sort of leadership in some of those key boroughs. That's because we don't look at the cultural competency aspect of that but in doing that you are then crossing the paths of well is it positive discrimination, is it fair for everyone and all this other stuff? That actually it becomes in the too difficult pile.

So, I am always thinking about how we can manage the systems and processes we have got in place to allow for more of that cultural competency because if you are white you can still have a culture. You can still have been born in the East End of London and you know your area. It's how we then extract that so that actually people are placed for their cultural strengths rather than we are just basing it on a colour. It's a really tough call because there is so much other HR stuff that gets in the way, but I am always constantly thinking of it. I think from your perspective it's something that you probably just need to keep, trying trialling stuff to see if it works. The organisation has been quite brave, they have done a couple of language complaints in the Met, which again we were pushing for. They have done a London living complaint, again we were pushing for that, because a lot of our members live in London. We don't move out to the leafy suburbs or some hamlet somewhere and then travel in to work. I think it's just something that you can't go down a set path, it's kind of got to be something that you can keep thinking about. It's just working the system to the best that you can.

Q: Reflecting on knowing that last year we had one of the biggest increases in terms of numbers of deaths and a disproportionate number are of people of colour. Do the association get pulled in to some of those discussions in terms of the use of force, which sort of touches on stop and search and the gang's matrix. Do you have a role or is there... are you sort of consulting on some of those things you know... around day to day policing?

Janet: We are and we are not, sometimes the call can be from communities. It can be from families actually knowing that we are here doing that internal scrutiny. Sometimes it's from the organisation to say look, we think we need a different lens here to understand some of the issues. It's a two-pronged way of doing it. I couldn't physically do all if I am honest. Where there is a request either way then I will have an input in that, so yeah that's how we try and manage it but it's a tough call.

I constantly see Marcia Rigg because she is at the inquest around her brother who died in police custody. It's almost like I just want to give her a big old hug every time I see her. I am one hundred percent behind families finding justice, if they feel that there is an injustice committed. Sometimes, twenty-eight years does leave you a bit institutionalised yourself so I am mindful that sometimes I could be on that sort of round-about, but I try and keep a sort of even keel on community interests versus policing interests.

Q: My question is about body worn cameras. A lot of times, drawing from personal experience and kind of people that I know, in particular BAME people, sometimes the police will like turn their body worn cameras off and things like that, during the process. I wondering if like... do you have kind of like a role in the scrutiny of that or like processes and how they work?

Janet: There is a policy around the whole use of body worn cameras, which says on those sorts of contacts, in particular stop and search, they need to be on. I had a conversation with one of my members that actually deals a lot with that, and it seems to be working out, so whether it is happening or has happened then that would definitely stand out from the crowd, because actually we know the policy says that. So, if someone is not doing that, then let's have that conversation around why and what's happened there. The other key thing that's happening now in policing, which I was on their pilot of it yesterday, is the whole facial recognition piece. That is proving a little controversial in so much that Liberty have a view on it and then there was another sort of like activist group that was there. Again, it's like because on my phone I have got that Google monster, that you know captures all my pictures and I want to search for an individual because I have tagged them, all of the pictures that I have ever taken, I love it, I absolutely love it. Then we talk about sort of like criminal justice world where actually I might think; do I love it as much because it's a new bit of technology which actually has not been honed in yet. In particular around the whole ethnicity piece, where I just think it needs really careful monitoring.

Q: The big stereotype that people have of young people, like the whole facial recognition thing. If they saw a young person that they know has been either stopped and searched a few times they are more inclined to stop and search that young person again, and put them back into that kind of cycle. Even though they might not have done anything wrong.

Janet: The story that I was told yesterday, which does kind of infuriate me a little bit, was that some of the campaigners have been speaking to community members and this young black guy was walking into the area where they were doing facial recognition and he pulled up his hood. Now, that then alerted officers to think you are acting suspiciously.

So, they went and had that conversation with the young man. Who got a bit upset, which I can see why, and ended up being given a P&D ticket for section five. In my heart I am thinking if you really want this to work as something that you say is good for communities and policing. The whole thing about it is, wanting people for violent offences but if you really want that then why are we looking at someone for section five? I've had push back from officers that say 'But no, if he is doing that then he has got something to hide etc' but it isn't that, there is a whole, I guess community conscience that we have around that whole trust and confidence piece for policing. Where police officers need to know that actually if we are acting a bit off, then we are carrying all that stuff and there isn't that corporate memory around all of the race relation issues.

So, you will get people coming from outside London to police in London who have got no idea, other than what the media feeds them. There is a part of me that says that actually

what you guys do around scrutiny, is absolutely needed for everything that we do. So that people are reassured around our use of some of this new technology that will be coming our way.

Q: Are there any programs in the Metropolitan Black Police Association that are aimed at improving representation of BAME women or men in more senior leadership roles, basically or what work you are doing around that?

Janet: The conversation has been had by me, that actually we are declining in women of colour being in policing. The chair for the British Association of Women in Policing is a woman called Dee Collins the Chief Constable for West Yorkshire and we have convened a meeting to find out what the barriers are for black women because there were cultural things, multi-layers attached to why black women in particular aren't joining the police. We currently have that going, I am going to a meeting in Leeds on Monday and I think we've got a survey that we are going to be putting out.

So, we are driving it in that way on a national level and I think within the Met, we've had the conversations and it is really challenging in so much that out of the 1 836 nationally, the Met has 1 100 in some spaces so we've got over half. There is an element for me in the Met that says that actually a lot more of those women should be in those spaces. I am challenging around a lot of that in so much that the management aptitude test I spoke about earlier did impact on black women in particular. We challenged and we were successful with that, we managed to get a positive outcome.

I think it's just understanding from an organisational point that inter-sectionality that exists, not just for race and gender but for race and any other strand. I always think that I'm multi-faceted, I have got the gender, race, disability, faith and age. So, that's five out of the nine, do you know what I mean? Actually, it's really important that instead of just siloing race or gender, we should start to look at the inter-sections and some of the issues there that stop us from progressing.

I am driving all of that... they are like Inter-sectionality Janet what is that? [laughter]... Look it up!

Q: How would you as an individual engage with a young person, actually going into those spaces and say this is what I've done, this is my experience and I'm here this is how I have done it and you could do it. What is your individual responsibility in regards to that, are you mentoring any young people to even get into policing?

Janet: If someone asks to speak to me yeah, I'll do that. I got asked to go the Royal Holloway University, so in my tiny little mind I'm like North London, I'm good to go [laughter]. Yeah you know it's in Egham [laughter] So, I was there on Tuesday night, it's deepest darkest Surrey. I do the criminology course first, second and third-year students, and again having that conversation. I have put myself out in that public space of LinkedIn and Twitter and all that. A lot of people are contacting me. There is a young woman who has put in her application for direct entry detective, she has got an interview in March. What I have said to her is that come down pre-that to familiarise yourself with the area, so that on the day you are not stressing about missing your stop or running late because actually you know where everything is.

So, that's one of the aspects that I would do, that's I guess bordering on mentoring. There is a couple of girls out of that, that we are going to take on ride-alongs and do that sort of thing. I am forever trying to put myself in that space. We as a Met BPA have a young

people's section called Voyage [a CJA member] and we do a lot of work with those young people who are based at Hackney community college. So, whilst we get a lot of work done, it's not just about me it's about the membership. So, I want to get many of the membership involved in doing that additional voluntary bit around engaging in that way with our communities.