# Crime, policing and stop and search: Black perspectives in context

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# Glossary

## Stop and search definitions:

**Stop and search:** The process whereby police officers stop an individual, ask them questions, and if reasonable grounds are present, initiate a search of the individual's outer clothing.

**Stop and search powers:** A range of pieces of legislation comprise 'stop and search powers'; officers may cite several powers as reasonable grounds to conduct a search, most commonly section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 for suspicion of illicit drug possession, section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act for suspicion of stolen goods and prohibited items, and section 47 of Firearms Act 1968 for suspicion of possessing firearms.

**Section 60:** A section of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, section 60 powers permit searches without reasonable grounds in a discrete geographical area for a limited period of time, based on immediate risk of serious violence.

**Reasonable grounds:** The legal test for suspicion that officers satisfy before conducting their stop and search; there must both be a genuine suspicion that the officer will find the object of interest, as well as objective grounds for the suspicion.

**Rights:** In the context of this report, rights refer to information that individuals who are being stopped and searched must be provided by the police officer. They should be told the grounds of the search, what the officer expects to find, the name and station of the officer, and that they are entitled to a record of the search and all paperwork.

**Strip search:** Any searches that take place out of public view, of which there are two types: where an individual removes more than an outer jacket, coat or gloves, (More thorough searches) or where an individual is required to remove all or most of their clothing (Searches Involving Intimate Parts of the Body).

**Use of force:** Searches which may involve a range of legal uses of force, most commonly non-compliant handcuffing, pinning an individual to the ground, or drawing (but not necessarily discharging) a Taser device.

**Positive outcome:** A stop that results in either an arrest or any on the street sanction such as caution, summons, or penalty notice.

## Other definitions:

**Adultification:** When ideas of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children, determined by people and institutions who hold power over them. Adultification is founded on discrimination and bias, relating to a child's personal characteristics or lived experiences.[1]

**Racial profiling:** The use of generalisations by the police based on race, ethnicity, religion or national origin, rather than individual behaviour, specific suspect descriptions or intelligence.[2]

**Racial disproportionality:** The overrepresentation of a racial group in the criminal justice system compared to the number of people in the racial group as a whole.

**Neighbourhood policing:** A policing strategy which involves deepening the relationship between officers and the community that they serve in order to facilitate consistent and crucial flows of intelligence from community members and information from officers.

**Mixed ethnicity adults:** Individuals with parents from different ethnic groups. For the purposes of this report, we have referred specifically to White-Black Caribbean or White-Black African adults, when discussing Mixed ethnicity adults from Black backgrounds. Our polling samples were not large enough to conduct robust analysis on other Black and Mixed ethnicity adults.

**Support in principle:** Respondents to our survey were given scenario based questions and were asked whether police officers should have the right to conduct stop and search in each scenario. These questions consider whether respondents believe officers should have the 'right' (ability) to conduct stop and search, not whether stop and search should be conducted.

[1] Davis, J, (2022). *Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding.* His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation: Retrieved from:https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/06/Academic-Insights-Adultification-bias-within-child-protection-and-safeguarding.pdf

[2]His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015), *Stop and Search Powers 2: Are the Police Using Them Fairly and effectively*, London: HMIC.

## Executive Summary

*Introduction*

In recent years, the police use of stop and search powers has become a totemic issue - many have argued that it is the main (or primary) cause of low confidence among Black communities in the UK, when compared to the rest of the population. However, our research, which draws on the most comprehensive survey of Black adults' views about policing ever conducted in England and Wales, suggests that Black people's concerns about the use of stop and search cannot be viewed in isolation; instead their attitudes towards its use by the police are shaped by, and closely connected to, their experience of policing as a whole. Black adults expressed at least as much concern about a perceived failure by policing to get 'the basics' right for their communities, such as responding to emergencies, investigating crime and engaging with victims, as they did about the use of stop and search.

This report, which is the first of three publications related to this research, and specifically focuses on the views of adults, has identified five key findings:

1. Black adults are more concerned about crime than the general population

Our survey found that nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of our nationally representative sample of 3,000 adults were either worried or very worried about crime in their local area. This varied considerably by ethnicity, however: 75 per cent of Black adults were worried or very worried - compared to 62 per cent for White adults. When asked about specific crime types, for example, knife crime or violence against women and girls (VAWG), Black adults were more worried than White adults about every crime type: in the 18-24 age group, 76 per cent of Black people were worried about crime compared to 58 per cent of White people, while Black males were more worried about VAWG than White females (82 per cent v 69 per cent). Knife crime was of particular concern for adults across all ethnicities. 65 per cent of adults in our nationally representative sample were worried about knife crime in their local area, and these concerns were highest in London, where 78 per cent of adults reported being worried or very worried about local knife crime. These findings were supported by our focus groups with Black adults, where VAWG and parental concerns about their children's safety were raised. Several members of the focus groups also had direct experience of knife crime, which was a key crime concern for the majority of participants.

2. Black people's trust and confidence in the police is lower than the general population, particularly in Black Caribbean communities, and may be declining across generations

Just over three fifths (62 per cent) of our nationally representative sample said they trusted the police compared to nearly a fifth (19 per cent) who said they distrusted the police. This varied

considerably by ethnicity, with only 46 per cent of Black adults trusting the police compared to 64 per cent of White adults. Further segmentation revealed variation within Black adults, with only 35 per cent of Black Caribbean adults trusting the police compared to 51 per cent of Black African adults. Trust varied across generations too, with higher levels among Black respondents who were the first in their family to live in the UK and lower among those whose families have lived here the longest. This suggests that trust may be declining across generations and that trust among Black Africans (more likely to be first or second generation) may decline in time too. Despite this, our research found Black adults want and appreciate good policing; 66 per cent agreed that the police have a hard job but want them to do it well and more than half (55 per cent) want to see more police in their area. However, the overwhelming majority of Black adults (69 percent) believe they do not get the service or protection they need from the police.

3. Most people (of all ethnicities) support stop and search as a police tactic in principle, but there are concerns about how it is used in practice

The majority of adults across all ethnic backgrounds in our survey, in principle[3], supported the targeted use of stop and search on specific grounds. 86 per cent of people in our survey supported the use of stop and search if an individual is suspected to have a weapon on them, while 81 per cent supported the use of stop and search for suspicion of class A drugs possession. When split by ethnicity, Black people had lower levels of support for stop and search across all scenarios, but the overwhelming majority still supported the use of it in principle: 77 per cent of Black adults supported the use of stop and search if an individual was suspected to have a weapon on them, and 71 per cent supported the use of stop and search for suspicion of Class A drugs possession. After providing information to participants on positive outcome and arrest rates, support for stop and search across each scenario remained broadly the same. This suggests there is support for the use of stop and search as a tool, even if the likelihood of finding a prohibited item during the search is lower than imagined.

4. Stop and search has a negative and traumatic impact on people, in particular on Black and Mixed-ethnicity adults

Overall, most people in our survey who had been stopped and searched, did not experience searches to be conducted properly by the police, particularly in terms of communication. Less than half of the people in our survey (47 per cent) who had been stopped and searched[4], regardless of ethnicity, felt that the police explained their rights to them and nearly half (45 per cent) felt that the police did not have reasonable grounds to search them. From our findings, it is clear that Black communities in particular do not experience stop and search to be well communicated, explained or respectfully and fairly carried out. Less than half of Black adults felt that the reasons for the search had been clearly explained to them (48 per cent) or that their rights had been explained (40

[3] Respondents agreed that in principle, police officers should have the 'right' (ability) to conduct stop and search under targeted and specific grounds; however, there were concerns about how these powers were used in practice

[4] 118 out of 363 people in our survey of 3000 (nationally representative) adults who had been stopped and searched

percent). It was also clear from our findings that larger numbers of Black people felt traumatised or humiliated by the experience of stop and search than other ethnic groups. 45 per cent of adults who'd been stopped and searched found the experience traumatising, but this rose to over half (52 per cent) for Black adults.

5. Irrespective of ethnicity, many people are concerned about disproportionality in the use of stop and search

There is strong evidence that concerns about disproportionality in the police use of stop and search are shared across different ethnic groups. Once told that Black people were 8 times more likely to be stopped and searched than White people, 75 per cent of survey respondents said they were concerned about this disproportionality. Though Black respondents were most likely to be concerned (94 per cent), nearly three quarters (72 per cent) of White people were concerned about disproportionality. Three quarters (75 per cent) of Black people and nearly a half (45 per cent) of White people were moderately to extremely concerned. Findings from our focus groups with Black adults also suggested that concerns over disproportionality have been amplified by negative footage of stops, circulated on social media.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, the findings from this research indicate that a perceived failure to protect Black communities, and negative interactions with the police, alongside concerns about the use of stop and search, are drivers of Black people's low trust in the police. This is evident across all ethnicities, but is particularly prominent among Black Caribbean communities. There is clear support for the use of stop and search in principle, including among Black people, but this should not be interpreted as a blank cheque: that support is contingent on stops being conducted fairly, effectively and proportionately. Currently, that is not reflected in Black people's experiences: in particular, Black Caribbean and Mixed ethnicity adults were more likely to say they found the experience traumatising and humiliating. Further action is needed to improve the trust Black and Mixed ethnicity adults have in how stop and search is conducted and in the police more broadly. This is especially true for groups within Black communities who have lower than average levels of trust in the police, including younger adults, second or third generation Black communities and Black Caribbean communities.

# Introduction

Public trust and confidence in the police are at the heart of effective policing. Positive interactions between police and communities help to build public trust; negative interactions can damage it. One of the most visible, and contentious interactions that officers have with people is when they use their powers to stop and search them. It has become a key issue for those who believe police officers engage poorly with particular sections of society, particularly younger Black men. Others argue the police should use stop and search more to tackle crimes such as street violence.

The debate about stop and search has often become polarised, with those across policing, civil society and government taking entrenched positions. However, the views of the public as a whole, and Black communities in particular, have not been robustly evidenced at scale. Our research intends to fill this gap in the evidence base, through methodologically sound research that explores attitudes towards crime, policing and stop and search in the context of disproportionality.

### *History of stop and search powers*

Stop and search powers have remained a controversial policing tool, ever since they were first introduced under the 1824 Vagrancy Act, which allowed officers to stop and search individuals on suspicion of them having 'the intent' to commit an offence. These were also known as the 'sus laws', which rose to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s for being disproportionately used on ethnic minority groups. The laws were eventually repealed following the Scarman Inquiry into the 1981 Brixton race riots, which recommended that national stop and search legislation replace the 'sus laws' that unfairly targeted Black and Asian communities. The 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) set out a legal framework to ensure police powers to stop and search people were balanced against the rights of the individuals being stopped.

In 1999, Sir William Macpherson's inquiry report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence recommended stricter regulation about the way stops were being recorded and greater transparency. The Inquiry concluded that the Metropolitan Police was "institutionally racist" and highlighted widespread disproportionality in the application of stop and search powers across England and Wales.[5]

At present, most stop and search powers require a police officer to have reasonable suspicion that a person is carrying illegal drugs, a weapon, stolen goods or an item that could be used to commit a crime. However, Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) allows police officers to stop a person without reasonable suspicion, in a limited area, for up to 24 hours, if they reasonably believe that serious violence may occur imminently or that weapons are being carried in the area. Improper application of the modern iterations of stop and search legislation, in particular, section 60 searches, run the risk of diminishing trust in ethnic minority communities and fuelling discontent. In 2021, the Criminal Justice Alliance launched a super-complaint about the use of section 60 searches, recommending that the powers be repealed, and that if they were to be

[5] Macpherson, W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Report of an Inquiry.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf

retained, the government should introduce stronger safeguards to mitigate the harms caused[6]. This super-complaint is currently under investigation by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and representatives from the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) and College of Policing (CoP).

The most recent legislative addition to stop and search powers was the introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs), as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (2022). SVROs allow those who have previously been convicted of knife crime offences to be searched by officers, without reasonable grounds to suspect the individual has a weapon on them at the time. SVROs are currently being piloted in four police forces before a decision is made on national roll-out.

A full list of legislative stop and search powers are detailed below:

| Legislation | Stop and search powers |
|---|---|
| **S.1** Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 | Legislative basis of stop and search under **reasonable grounds for suspicion** of possession of stolen goods, offensive weapons, and articles for use in criminal activity. 'Reasonable grounds' must be **genuine and objective**.<br>Requires that officers make a record of a stop or encounter<br>Officers must:<br>- Explain that the person is being detained<br>- Provide their name and station<br>- State the legal power exercised<br>- State the object of the search<br>- Inform of their entitlement to a copy of the record. |
| **S.23** Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 | Permits officers to detain and search a person reasonably suspected of **possessing a controlled substance**, as well as their vehicle. |
| **S.47** Firearms Act 1968 | Empowers constables to search and detain a person reasonably suspected of **possessing a firearm**, as well as their vehicle. |
| **S.60** Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 | Permits inspector rank officers or above to authorise officers to search individuals **without reasonable grounds** in a discrete geographical area for a limited period of time, if they believe that:<br>- There is an immediate risk that **serious violence may occur**, or<br>- **Weapons are being carried** in their police area.<br>The limitations on the legislation were permanently relaxed in 2022, allowing authorisation to remain for 24 hours, and allowing a maximum extension beyond the initial 24 hours to 48 hours.<br>S.60 authorisations do not need to be communicated to the public in advance. |
| **S.43** Terrorism Act 2000 | Allows officers to detain and search a person if it is reasonably **suspected that an individual is a terrorist**, or that they possess something that may indicate that they are a terrorist. Officers may also search the individual's vehicle. |

**Table 1**: Legislative powers associated with stop and search

[6] Ali, A, & Champion, N. (2021) *More harm than good: A super-complaint on the harms caused by 'suspicion-less' stop and searches and inadequate scrutiny of stop and search powers.* Criminal Justice Alliance.

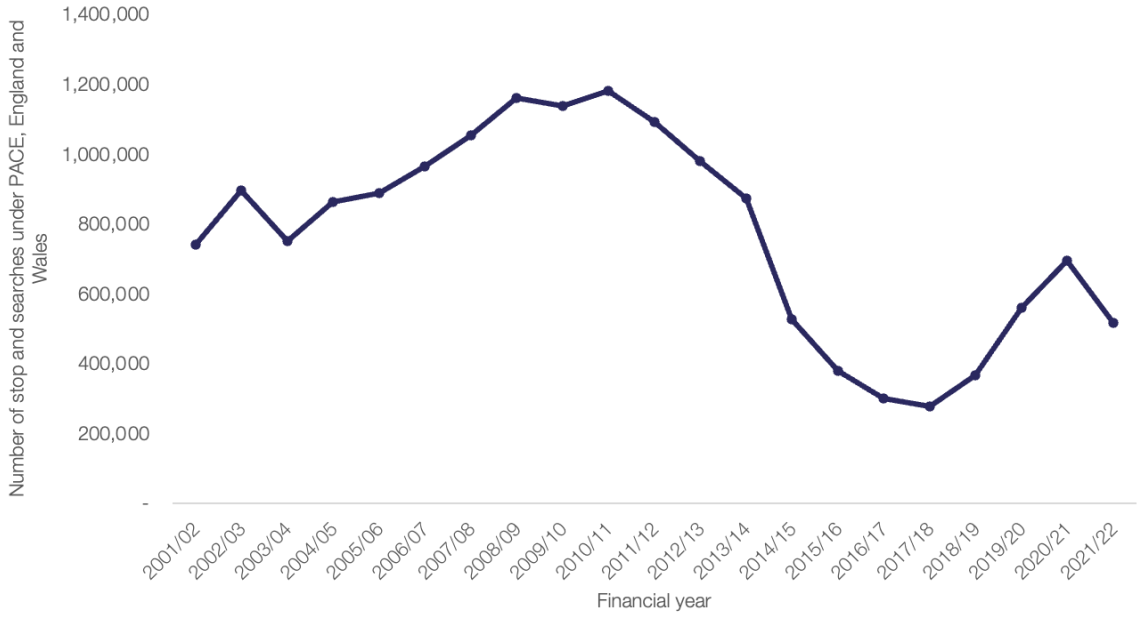
## *Trends in stop and search*

After a significant rise in the early 2000s (where they peaked at 1.2 million in 2010), stop and search rates declined sharply after 2010, before rising again in 2017-18 (Figure 1).

In 2021/22, the arrest rate for searches under s.1 of PACE and associated legislation was 13 per cent; 71 per cent of stop and searches required no further action. It was the first period since 2017/18 when the arrest rate increased, but was far below the peak of 17 per cent in 2017/18. Of the remaining searches, 16 per cent of cases resulted in an alternative outcome, most commonly community resolutions (7.7 per cent), summons (1.9 per cent), verbal warnings (1.5 per cent), penalty notices (1.4 per cent) and khat/cannabis warnings (1.2 per cent).

The vast majority (65 per cent) of stop and searches under PACE were conducted to look for drugs; 16 per cent were for offensive weapons, and 9 per cent for stolen property. The Met continues to account for a significantly larger proportion of stop and searches than any other police force, comprising 40 per cent of all searches across England and Wales in 2021/22.

**Figure 1: Total number of stop and searches conducted under PACE or associated legislation in England and Wales since 2001/02.**




*Data taken from: Home Office.*[7]

[7] Home Office (2022) *Police powers and procedures: Stop and search and arrests, England and Wales, Year ending 31 March 2022.* National statistics. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-stop-and-search-and-arrests-england-and-wales-year-ending

## *Home Office changes in stop and search policy*

Theresa May reforms

The police shooting of Mark Duggan in 2011 sparked a series of protests and riots in towns and cities across England. Official reports and inquiries into the disturbances identified the considerable rise of the disproportionate use of stop and search powers throughout the early 2000s as a major point of tension between Black communities and the police[8]. In response to this, the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, implemented reforms on the use of stop and search powers in 2014. These reforms were based on the findings of an inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) into the effectiveness and fairness of stop and search, which found that searches were often ineffective and procedurally incorrect.[9] May revised the code of 'reasonable grounds' to exercise stop and search powers, called for the opening of stop and search records to public scrutiny, and offered a training module on unconscious bias in policing. Her launch of the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme (BUSSS) also limited the use of section 60 powers. At the same time, May implemented cuts to police funding and police officer numbers, resulting in fewer police officers on the streets able to conduct searches.[10]

While rates of stop and search plummeted, racial disproportionality in stop and search rates did not reduce, and instead increased between 2014-2019. During this period, knife crime almost doubled, with some senior police officers arguing that reductions in stop and search were responsible.[11] In response to mounting concerns about knife crime, the use of stop and search began rising in 2017/18, as the police came under pressure to respond.

Priti Patel reforms

In line with the police-led increase in stop and search rates, in 2019 Home Secretary Priti Patel formally expanded stop and search powers through a pilot scheme that eased restrictions on section 60 powers and relaxed the BUSS scheme. Following the results of a 2020-21 impact assessment paper on the scheme, in 2022 Patel formally reified the terms of the pilot and removed May's restrictions on section 60 powers, increasing the maximum period of the power's authorisation, lowering the rank of officer able to authorise the power, and removing the necessity of communication of section 60 authorisations to the public in advance.[12]

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[8] Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2012) *After the Riots: The final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel*. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20121003195935/http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Riots-Panel-Final-Report1.pdf

[9] HMIC (2013) *Stop and Search Powers: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?* Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/stop-and-search-powers-20130709.pdf

[10] Travis, A. (2017) *Simple numbers tell story of police cuts under Theresa May.* The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/05/theresa-may-police-cuts-margaret-thatcher-budgets

[11] Dearden, L. (2019) *Theresa May must take responsibility for 'unforgivable' cuts amid rise in knife crime, Police Federation chair says.* The Independent. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/theresa-may-knife-crime-austerity-police-federation-stabbings-a8849486.html
Al-Othman, H. (2015) *Theresa May clashes with Met police commissioner over knife crime.* Evening Standard. Available at: https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/theresa-may-clashes-with-met-police-commissioner-over-knife-crime-a3096346.html

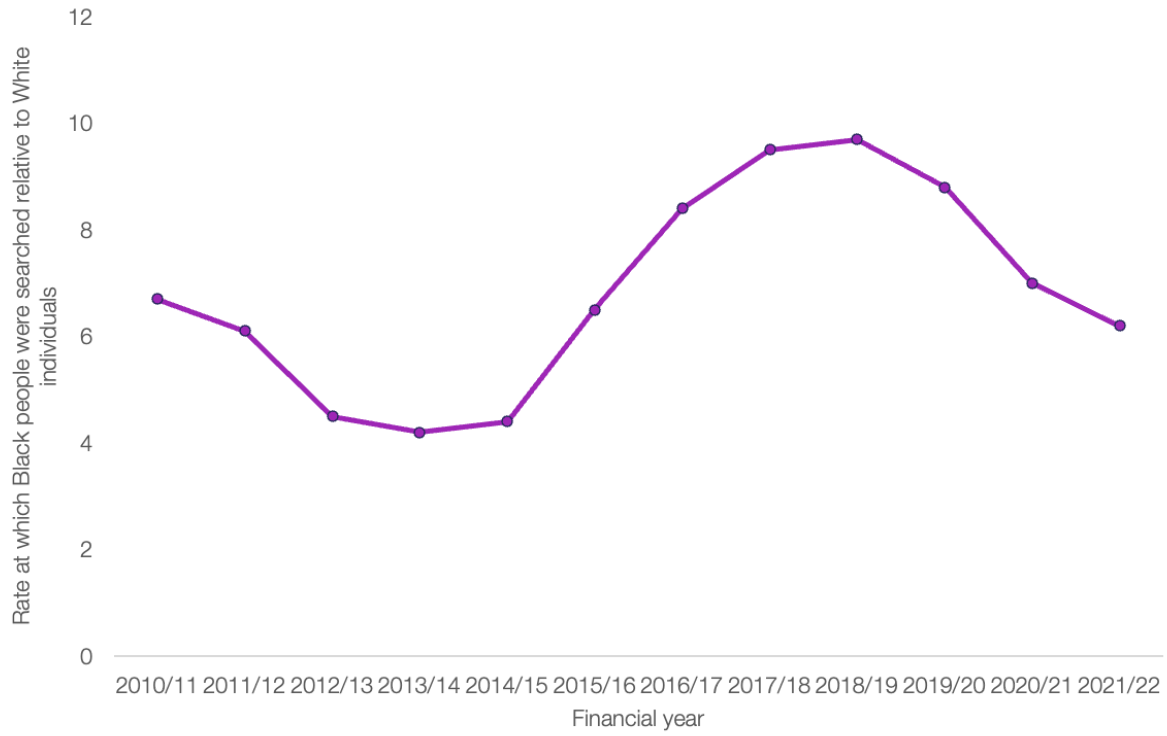
[12] Home Office (2022). *Home Secretary backs police to increase stop and search.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-backs-police-to-increase-stop-and-search

Further stop and search measures have been proposed as part of the Public Order Bill, which was introduced in May 2022. If the plans are approved by Parliament, police will be given powers to search people for items that could be used for protest related offences. Human rights groups claim the measures would disproportionately affect individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds and restrict the civil liberties of protestors.[13]

Disproportionality

Disproportionality refers to the over-representation of a group in a particular category or the substantial difference in their representation from others in that same category.[14] Stop and search powers have consistently been disproportionately used on individuals from Black and other ethnic minority backgrounds since their introduction in 1984. This has been highlighted in reports by HMICFRS in 2021 and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in 2020. Figure 2 shows the trends in disproportionality of stop and searches since 2010/11.

**Figure 2: Rate of disproportionality in stop and searches since 2010/11.**




*Data taken from: Home Office.*[15]

[13]Liberty (2022) *Figures show public disagree with government on new police powers.* Available at: https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/figures-show-public-disagree-with-government-on-new-police-powers/
StopWatch (2021) *Judicial Review of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme.* Available at: https://www.stop-watch.org/what-we-do/projects/judicial-review-of-the-best-use-of-stop-and-search-scheme/
Helm, T. (2021) *Patel faces widening revolt over policing bill's restrictions on protest.* The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/12/patel-faces-widening-revolt-over-policing-bills-restrictions-on-protest

[14] National Association of School Psychologists (2021) *Disproportionality*. Available at: https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity-and-social-justice/disproportionality

[15] Home Office (2022) *Police powers and procedures: Stop and search and arrests, England and Wales, Year ending 31 March 2022.* National statistics. Available at:

**2021/22 disproportionality statistics:**
Home Office statistics for police powers and procedures in 2021/22 reported that Black people were 6.2 times more likely to be stopped and searched compared to White people.[16]

**Section 60 powers:** Under the section 60 power, this disproportionality is even more pronounced; despite comprising only 3 per cent of the UK's population, 28 per cent of all section 60 searches were carried out on Black people, rendering them 17 times more likely to be subjected to section 60 searches than White people.The percentage of section 60 searches that resulted in an arrest in 2021/22 was 3.4%, down slightly from the previous year (3.7%).

**Drug related searches:** Black people are also 7.7 times more likely to be stopped and searched for suspicion of drug-related offences, despite evidence suggesting that Black people in the United Kingdom do not use drugs at a higher rate than White people.[17]

**Outcome rates**: More Black people than any other ethnic group are subject to no further action following a stop and search (72.8 per cent).

**Social and demographic factors affecting disproportionality rates**:
Ethnic disproportionality in stop and search figures, particularly in relation to Black people, can be partially explained by demographic factors.[18] Black people are more likely than White people to live in deprived communities: 19.8 per cent of Black people compared to 8.7 per cent of White people live in the ten per cent of neighbourhoods that are most income deprived. Proportionately more Black people (16.3 per cent) than White people (9.1 per cent) live in high-crime areas,[19] and Black people are more likely to be victims of crime: between 2009-2019, Black people aged 16 to 24 were 11 times more likely to be unlawfully killed than their White counterparts. Black people also have a higher average rate per million of homicide victimisation, six times higher than that of White victims[20].

However, a HMICFRS report on the disproportionate use of police powers determined that "no force can satisfactorily explain why" disproportionality exists in stop and search, nor can any force adequately understand the impact of this disproportionality.[21] The finding was echoed by the Lammy Review (2017), which identified no adequate explanation or justification for the nature and

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-stop-and-search-and-arrests-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2022/police-powers-and-procedures-stop-and-search-and-arrests-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2022

[16] ibid

[17] Shiner, M., Carre, Z., Delsol, R., Eastwood, N. (2018). *The Colour of Injustice: 'Race', drugs and law enforcement in England and Wales.* Available at: https://www.lse.ac.uk/united-states/Assets/Documents/The-Colour-of-Injustice.pdf

[18] Race Disparity Unit (2021) *Stop and search data and the effect of geographical differences.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stop-and-search-data-and-the-effect-of-geographical-differences/stop-and-search-interpreting-and-describing-statistics

[19] Home Office (2020) *People living in deprived neighbourhoods.* Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/people-living-in-deprived-neighbourhoods/latest

[20] ONS (2021) *Homicides in England and Wales: Year ending March 2021.* Census 2021. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2021

[21] HMICFRS (2021) *Disproportionate use of police powers: A spotlight on stop and search and the use of force.* Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/disproportionate-use-of-police-powers-spotlight-on-stop-search-and-use-of-force.pdf

scale of the statistical disproportionality, rendering Black people in the United Kingdom under-protected in proportion to the degree to which they are policed.[22] Furthermore, the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) joint Police Race Action Plan challenged chief constables to 'explain or reform' racial disproportionalities in policing.[23]

### *Evidence on the effectiveness of stop and search*

In 2021/22, approximately 14,900 searches resulted in offensive weapons or firearms being found, representing 3 per cent of all searches during the period;13 per cent of searches resulted in arrest. Due to the direct impact on the criminal possession of weapons and firearms, chief constables and police and crime commissioners (PCCs) position stop and search as a valuable tactic, despite its 71 per cent rate of no further action.

Further evidence on the effectiveness of stop and search is limited, however, especially where the majority of searches are conducted without prior intelligence (90 per cent).[24] Using 10 years of police and crime data, 2018 research by Matteo Tiratelli, Paul Quinton and Ben Bradford found little evidence to suggest stop and search is effective in preventing or reducing crime, suggesting it was more a wide ranging social control tool than a crime deterrent tool[25]. Their research identified that stop and search could have a limited deterrent effect on drug offences, but discussed several other possible causes for this relationship, which renders further research necessary before impacts can be robustly supported. The study also found that increasing the amount of stop and searches "is likely to have *at best* a very marginal effect on emerging crime problems".

In their 2020 study on stop and search, procedural justice and young people across England and Wales, Murray et al assert that "there is very little demonstrable proof that [stop and search] deters offending or reduces crime". They also suggest that stop and search damages public-police relations when used frequently and indiscriminately. Their findings suggest that regardless of the volume, the practice of police stop-and-search can damage trust in the police, confidence in police legitimacy and can result in increased offending behaviour[26] among young, vulnerable and disenfranchised groups.

### *Evidence on the importance of procedural fairness, trust and confidence*

Evidence suggests that overall trust in the police is an important predictor of support for police

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[22] Lammy, D. (2017) *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf

[23] NPCC and College of Policing (2022) *Police Race Action Plan: Improving policing for Black people.* Available at: https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/Police-Race-Action-Plan.pdf

[24] No further action is defined as: When an officer decides not to commit any further action as a result of searching an individual (i.e they did not receive a caution, warning, or were not arrested as a prohibited item was not found.

[25] Tiratelli, M., Quinton, P., & Bradford, B. (2018). *Does stop and search deter crime? Evidence from ten years of London-wide data.* The British Journal of Criminology, 58(5), 1212-1231.

[26] Murray, K., McVie, S., Farren, D., Herlitz, L., Hough, M. & Norris, P. (2021) *Procedural justice, compliance with the law and police stop-and-search: a study of young people in England and Scotland*, Policing and Society, 31(3), 263-282, DOI: 10.1080/10439463.2020.1711756

actions, decisions and tactics[27], including the acceptance of police use of force.[28] Trust in the police is based on judgements of efficacy, competence, and expectations that the police will treat members of the public fairly and behave appropriately.[29] Effective policing of local communities requires cooperation between the police and members of the public, to share information and build working relationships that relies on reciprocal trust at its core.

Any evaluation of the effectiveness of stop and search should therefore take into account its potential impact on the willingness of an individual who has been stopped and searched to report crime to the police both as a victim and witness, as well as provide general intelligence.[30] Research suggests a lack of trust and poor relationships between the police and communities is linked to a reluctance to report crime, due to disillusionment and a belief that it will not make a difference. That in turn undermines trust in and cooperation with the police, which may lead to higher crime rates.[31]

Despite limited evidence on the effectiveness of stop and search powers, it is clear that the majority of people support the use of the tactic, and feel safer knowing that it is used (discussed below); thus, stop and search may have merit beyond its actual impact on levels of crime.[32]

### *Existing evidence on public perceptions of stop and search*

There is some existing evidence about public perceptions of stop and search and the police in the UK, but, to our knowledge, there is none that specifically focuses on the views of Black adults.

In 2013, HMICFRS commissioned research from a YouGov poll of 19,078 respondents and a smaller sub-sample of respondents who had been stopped and searched. It found that while over half of adults said they felt safer knowing that stop and search is used by police as a tactic, when broken down by ethnicity only 40 per cent of Black adults compared with 53 per cent of White adults felt safer.[33] Older people were more likely to believe that the tactic is useful at preventing crime; younger and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups were the least likely. Over one-third of those who had been stopped and searched recently had not been given a reason by the police for their stop, rising significantly (42 per cent) among BAME adults. More of those surveyed reported that they were not treated with respect (43 per cent) than were (36 per cent).

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[27] Yesberg, J.A; Bradford, B; (2019) *Affect and trust as predictors of public support for armed police: evidence from London.* Policing and Society , 29(9), 1058-1076. 10.1080/10439463.2018.1488847.

[28] Gerber, M. M., & Jackson, J. (2017). *Justifying violence: Legitimacy, ideology and public support for police use of force.* Psychology, Crime & Law, *23*(1), 79–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2016.1220556

[29] Trinkner, R., Kerrison, E. M., & Goff, P. A. (2019). *The force of fear: Police stereotype threat, self-legitimacy, and support for excessive force.* Law and Human Behavior, *43*(5), 421–435. https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000339

[30] EHRC (2010). *Stop and think: A critical review of the use of stop and search powers in England and Wales.* Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc_stop_and_search_report.pdf

[31] Wiedlitzka et al., 2018*. Perceptions of Police Legitimacy and Citizen Decisions to Report Hate Crime Incidents in Australia.* International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy, 7(2), pp.91-106

[32] HMIC (2013) *Stop and Search Report.* YouGov. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/stop-and-search-survey-summary.pdf
IOPC (2021). *Public feel confident police respond fairly and proportionately to incidents, but questions remain around use of stop and search.* Available at: https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/public-feel-confident-police-respond-fairly-and-proportionately-incidents-questions-remain

[33] HMIC (2013) *Stop and Search Report.* YouGov. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/stop-and-search-survey-summary.pdf

The findings were echoed in a 2020 IOPC survey of 1,833 adults in England and Wales which found that the majority (80 per cent) supported the continued use of stop and search and believed it was a necessary tactic. However, nearly half (49 per cent) thought that stop and search was either not applied as it should be, or was unnecessary.[34]

The Lammy Review (2017) investigated treatment and outcomes of individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds in the criminal justice system. The review reported that over half believed that "the criminal justice system discriminates against particular groups and individuals", and recommended that institutions 'explain or reform' their racial disproportionality which the review identified as occurring at all stages of engagement with policing and the criminal justice system.[35] Similarly, a 2020 survey by Clearview, commissioned by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, found that 85 per cent of Black people who took part were not confident that they would be treated the same as a White person by the police.[36]

Lower levels of trust and confidence in the police among Black adults, compared to White adults, is well-documented. The Crime Survey for England and Wales found that in 2019-20 only 69 per cent of Black Africans and 54 per cent of Black Caribbean people had confidence in their local police force. In London - where the Metropolitan police is responsible for 40% of all searches nationally - the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime Public Attitude Survey reported similarly low findings. Only 57 per cent of Black people interviewed said they had trust in the police, 54 per cent expected fair treatment and 46 per cent had confidence that the police were doing a good job locally. The figure for White people surveyed was 78 per cent, 65 per cent and 51 per cent respectively. Recent YouGov polling revealed that 35 per cent of 1,826 British people from an ethnic minority background were not very confident in the police's ability to apply stop and search in a way that is fair to ethnic minorities; 26 per cent had no confidence at all.[37]

### *Existing recommendations for the improvement of stop and search*

Several organisations have made influential evidence-based recommendations for the reform of stop and search in order to improve its effectiveness, reduce racial disproportionality and improve trust and confidence in the police. The IOPC's learning recommendations (2020) to improve public confidence in the police, advocate for greater empathy and understanding from officers conducting searches, proportionate and reasonable use of force, and greater scrutiny from police leadership. HMICFRS' 'Disproportionate use of police powers' report (2021) echoes many of the IOPC's calls,

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[34] IOPC (2021). *Public feel confident police respond fairly and proportionately to incidents, but questions remain around use of stop and search.* Available at: https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/public-feel-confident-police-respond-fairly-and-proportionately-incidents-questions-remain

[35] Lammy, D. (2017) *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf

[36] Henry, C., Imafidon, K., McGarry, N. (2020) *The Black Community and Human Rights.* Clearview. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt5801/jtselect/jtrights/correspondence/The-Black-Community-Human-Rights-Report.pdf

[37] Kirk, I. (2022) *Stop and search: how do ethnic minority Britons feel about police powers?* YouGov. Available at: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2022/04/29/stop-and-search-how-do-ethnic-minority-britons-fee

and further recommends additional training for communication skills, effective internal and external scrutiny, and improved data collection for searches.[38]

In calling for an 'explain or reform' approach to address disproportionality, the NPCC and College of Policing's Race Action Plan (2022) recommends the development of a new national approach to tackle racism in policing, adopting a trauma-informed approach that understands the history of policing Black people in order to improve the reality.[39] It also recommends recruiting a representative workforce and increasing the involvement of Black communities in policing activities. The Home Office's 'Inclusive Britain' strategy (2022) builds upon these recommendations, calling for bridged divides between the police and communities by creating representative workforces, and ensuring recruits are either from or have a good understanding of the areas that they serve.[40]

The IOPC's 'National stop and search learning report' (2022) expands on its initial recommendations to encourage the recognition of the potentially traumatising nature of stop and search and its subsequent impact on trust and confidence in the police and law generally.[41] It also recommends that decision-making, qualification of reasonable grounds, conduct, the recording of stop and search data, and internal scrutiny of the practice be improved.

### *Aims and objectives of this research:*

Building on the existing evidence base from the IOPC, HMICFRS, College of Policing and others, we were keen to address the gap in limited comparable research that specifically explores attitudes towards stop and search in the context of disproportionality and policing as a whole.

This project set out to:

1) Better understand the evidence base around stop and search
2) Capture Black and ethnic minority groups' perspectives and experiences of stop and search and if, how, where and why that differs to the general population
3) Understand public attitudes towards the use of stop and search
4) Better understand what contributes to disproportionality in the use of stop and search

To do this, Crest secured funding from the Hadley Trust, a charity focused on creating opportunities for people who are disadvantaged, particularly in the criminal justice sector.[42]

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[38] HMICFRS (2021) *Disproportionate use of police powers: A spotlight on stop and search and the use of force.* Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/disproportionate-use-of-police-powers-spotlight-on-stop-search-and-use-of-force.pdf

[39] NPCC and College of Policing (2022) *Police Race Action Plan: Improving policing for Black people.* Available at: https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/Police-Race-Action-Plan.pdf

[40] HM Government (2022) *Inclusive Britain: the government's response to the Commision on Race and Ethnic Disparities.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1061421/Inclusive-Britain-government-response-to-the-Commission-on-Race-and-Ethnic-Disparities.pdf

[41] IOPC (2022) *National stop and search learning report.* Available at: https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/publications/OFFICIAL%20IOPC%20National%20stop%20and%20search%20learning%20report%2020%20April%202022.pdf

[42] Charity Commission for England and Wales (2021) *The Hadley Trust.* Available at: https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1064823&subid=0

Throughout the project we sought and received advice from an advisory group drawn from academia, policing and civil society with relevant knowledge and lived experience of stop and search, policing, and disproportionality. We are very grateful for their advice.

In this report we set out the findings from **our nationally representative survey and in-depth focus groups with adults in England and Wales**, to better understand public views and experiences of the police, stop and search and disproportionality. This report is the first of three publications related to this research and specifically focuses on the views of adults.

# Methodology

## Our approach and method:

The original research for this project adopted a mixed-methods design, including focus groups and a nationally representative survey. To ensure we designed our fieldwork approach based on the latest evidence around stop and search, we conducted a literature review on stop and search practices in the UK, interviews with prominent individuals from across policing, academia and civic society, as well as, a roundtable with experts in the field to consolidate our knowledge on the subject. From this early engagement it was clear that our fieldwork should explore the perspectives of Black adults from across different Black communities, as well as the intergenerational experiences of older adults (30-60), young adults (18-30) and children (10-18).

Focus groups were conducted with Black adults from across Black communities, and different age brackets in order to ensure a wide range of voices were heard in this research and to capture the depth of the different experiences and perspectives Black adults have of stop and search, in England and Wales. Our quantitative polling allowed us to test and validate these findings on a much larger scale, with a nationally representative sample, and a boosted sample of Black adults.

## Focus groups

The focus groups involved discussions around:

- Trust and confidence in the police
- Views on the use of stop and search powers
- Attitudes towards the police/stop and search in Black communities
- Views on what could work to improve trust in the police/stop and search

## Procedure

Individuals who met the inclusion criteria were identified and then invited to take part in the focus group by the recruiters commissioned by Crest.[43] Each potential participant was given a verbal summary of the study. The focus groups took place in local community centres or hired meeting rooms. The focus groups were facilitated by two members of the Crest team. Each focus group lasted 90 minutes and was audio recorded. Participants were reimbursed £50 for their time.

## Method of analysis

The focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim following each session. The responses were analysed using inductive thematic analysis i.e. a data-driven approach that does not depend on any pre-existing assumptions of the themes, based on the procedure outlined by

[43] Recruiters: Leftfield Market Research (focus groups 1-4) and Acumen Fieldwork (focus groups 5-8)

Braun and Clarke (2006).[44] Thematic analysis provides a method which is less dependent on pre-existing theory, providing an appropriate method for the present study, given the lack of existing research literature on the views across Black communities in England and Wales towards disproportionality and the use of stop and search powers.

## The survey

Early findings from our evidence review, engagement with stakeholders and focus groups informed the design and questions included within our survey. This survey included a mix of quantitative, closed questions, and more qualitative, open ended questions. The survey was designed to be initially broad – capturing general perspectives and knowledge about stop and search, policing and crime – before honing in on the key questions identified within our research.

The survey for our adult sample covered the following areas:

- Views on crime and policing in general
- Knowledge of stop and search
- Opinions about / of stop and search
- Experience of stop and search
- Context around disproportionality
- Reforming stop and search

A boosted sample of Black respondents and Mixed adults was included, in order to increase the validity of our findings.

## Procedure

Adults aged 18+ and who met the criteria were identified and then invited to complete our poll by a panel provider (WALR) commissioned by Crest[45]. 5455 respondents were surveyed online, consisting of a nationally representative (UK) sample of 3000 adults, and a sample boosted to include 1500 Black adults and 1000 Mixed ethnicity adults. The survey was designed to last no longer than 10 minutes, and all responses were submitted anonymously.

## Method of analysis

Response data from participants was collected by WALR. This data was cleaned by data analysts at Crest, before being processed into a set of data tables, broken down by key demographic variables. These data tables were interpreted and analysed by Crest Analysts, in order to communicate these findings and produce the visualisations included within this report. A regression analysis was conducted in the latter stages of this research, to determine the extent to which

[44] Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology.* Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3, 77-101.
[45] Data creation partner: WALR

different characteristics among respondents such as ethnicity or age, influenced their perceptions of the police.

This survey is, to our knowledge, the largest survey of Black and Mixed ethnicity adults on the subject of stop and search in England. We believe this research sheds new light on attitudes and views towards stop and search in England, and builds understanding on the impact of the disproportionate use of stop and search on Black adults.

## Fieldwork timeline

### May 2022

We conducted four focus groups with 28 Black adults[46] aged 18-30 across four areas: Hackney (London), Croydon (London), Radlett (Hertfordshire) and Leeds. The areas were selected to purposely sample for areas with likely different experiences of stop and search. The two London groups were to ensure we captured the views of different Black communities: Hackney (large Black Caribbean population) and Croydon (large Black African population). Similarly, Radlett was chosen as an area outside of London, with a smaller Black population and Leeds was selected as an area with high diversity and a larger Black population. All focus groups were mixed gender and an equal split of males and females where possible.

| Group | | N | Location / Place of residence | Gender | Ethnicity Sample | Age range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 6 | Hackney | Mixed | Black-Caribbean | 18-30 |
| | 2 | 4 | Croydon | Mixed | Black African | 18-30 |
| | 3 | 9 | Radlett | Mixed | Black | 18-30 |
| | 4 | 9 | Leeds | Mixed | Black | 18-30 |

**Table 2:** Demographic breakdown of participant sample for focus groups 1-4

### July - August 2022

We conducted a survey of 5,455 adults, consisting of a nationally representative[47] sample of 3000 adults, to provide us with a representative view of the UK. An additional 1500 Black adults and 1000 Mixed ethnicity adults were also sampled to allow us to robustly quantify the perceptions of these groups. Fieldwork was conducted from 12th July - 16th August 2022. The questions used within the survey were designed iteratively, to further test and explore emergent findings identified early on within our literature review, stakeholder engagement and focus groups.

[46] We define Black adults in our sample as those who self-identify as Black (this includes multiracial participants)

[47] The nationally representative sample was weighted to be demographically representative of the UK by age, sex, region and ethnicity (see Table 2 for the demographic breakdown of the unweighted and weighted survey sample). The boosted adult and child sample was weighted to be representative of all adults and children in England and Wales by age, sex and region.

### August 2022

We conducted a further four focus groups with 31 Black adults aged 30+ across the same four areas: Hackney (London), Croydon (London), Radlett (Hertfordshire) and Leeds. We conducted a second set of groups after the survey fieldwork took place to build a richer, more detailed understanding of public attitudes and experiences of stop and search.

| Group | | N | Location / Place of residence | Gender | Ethnicity | Age range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | 8 | Hackney | Mixed | Black-Caribbean | 30-60+ |
| | 6 | 8 | Croydon | Mixed | Black African | 30-60+ |
| | 7 | 8 | Radlett | Mixed | Black | 30-60+ |
| | 8 | 7 | Leeds | Mixed | Black | 30-60+ |

**Table 3:** Demographic breakdown of participant sample for focus groups 5-8

## Limitations of our research

### *Survey sample size:*

This survey is the largest survey feasible to conduct via an online approach (using a panel aggregator to reach the widest possible number of individuals). While this is the largest survey conducted to date on Black and Mixed ethnicity adults' views on stop and search specifically, we are aware that the sample size is still not large enough to equate significance to some of the findings. Although our findings are suggestive of a relationship between the variables tested, we are careful not to suggest these findings can be taken as a national trend.

### *Relying on self-reported data*

Quantitative polling uses self-reported data. As such, a key limitation of relying on self-reported data is that it makes it difficult to distinguish between the participants' actual views or those they deem to be the social norm. Additionally, people have a tendency to under-report counter normative behaviours, for example, being caught with a prohibited item after a stop and search.[48] However, respondents who had been stopped and searched were asked directly whether or not an item had been found on them during the search, and if so, were asked to detail what had been found. Despite the tendency to under-report, nearly a fifth of respondents (18 per cent) stated that an item had been found on them as a result of the search.

### *Significance*

We used a regression analysis to ascertain whether being stopped and searched was significantly correlated to trust and confidence in the police, controlling for variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, education etc. The explanatory power of the model is very weak however, accounting for just 6 per cent of the variability in the data (adjusted r2 = 0.0648). This is partly due to the construction of the question, which was not originally intended to be used in a regression model. Approximately half of all respondents said they "Somewhat trust" the police, meaning that there was inherently limited variability in the responses. The wording of the options is also, in hindsight, not conducive to the level of granularity that would be desired for modelling - by using absolutist labels ("Completely trust" and "Completely distrust") there will have been a natural disinclination for people to select these options who might otherwise quite strongly trust the police. A regression model was not the primary approach for analysing the data, but if it had been, a more granular scale with less absolutist labels may have yielded more explanatory power.

### *Boosted sample*

To ensure we gathered the views of a large sample of Black and Mixed ethnicity individuals, we boosted our sample to include 1500 Black and 1000 Mixed ethnicity individuals. The boosted sample is therefore not nationally representative of the population in England. Where attributing overall views or support, the nationally representative sample (3000) is used to control for this.

[48]Brenner, P. S., & DeLamater, J. (2016). *Lies, damned lies, and survey self-reports? Identity as a cause of measurement bias.* Social psychology quarterly, 79(4), 333-354.

# Findings

## Chapter 1: Views on crime

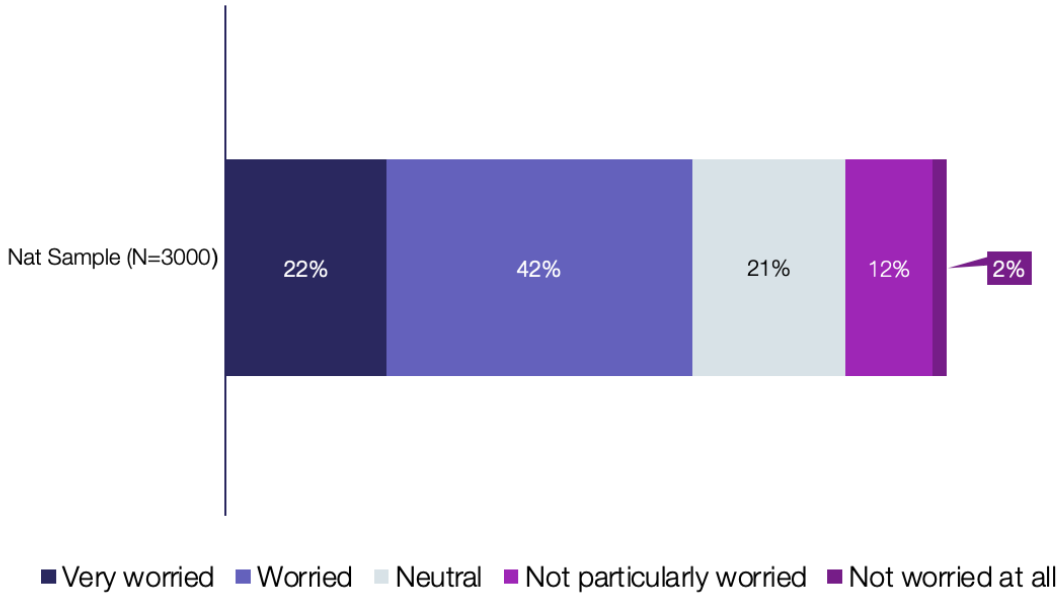
Both our focus groups and the survey revealed that the public do not view stop and search in isolation. Although stop and search is often the most visible aspect of policing for members of the public (and has become a totemic issue in its own right), perceptions of how stop and search powers are used by the police are linked to wider perceptions of whether the police are fulfilling their core functions and responsibilities. In particular, focus group discussions made it clear that participants' attitudes to the use of stop and search were closely connected to concerns about crime and local policing. This section discusses our findings regarding general crime concerns and trust and confidence in the police.

### Black communities are particularly concerned about a failure to get the basics of policing right

#### *Concern about local crime*

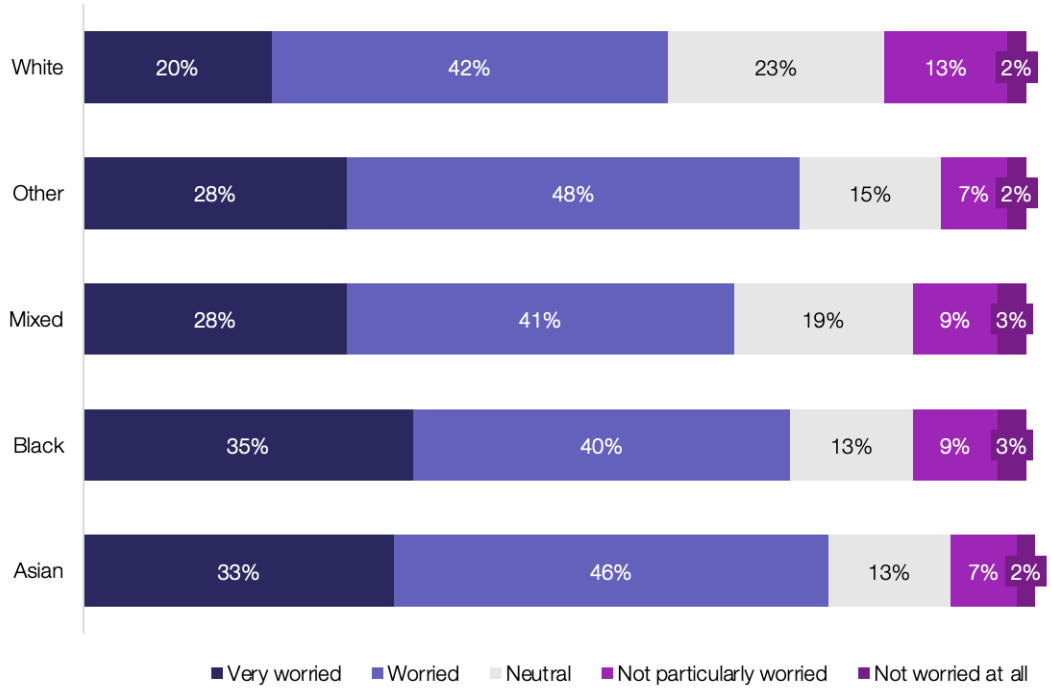
Our survey found that nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of adults in our nationally representative sample (n=3000) were either worried or very worried about crime in their local area (Figure 3). However, this varied considerably by ethnicity, with 75 per cent of Black adults and 79 per cent of Asian adults saying they were worried or very worried about crime in their local area - compared to 62 per cent of White adults (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: Responses to: How worried are you about crime in your local area?**
*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all



When asked about specific crime types[49], such as violence against women and girls, knife crime and drug dealing, we found that Black and Asian adults were more worried than White adults about every crime type.

**Figure 4: Responses to: How worried are you about crime in your local area?**
*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all

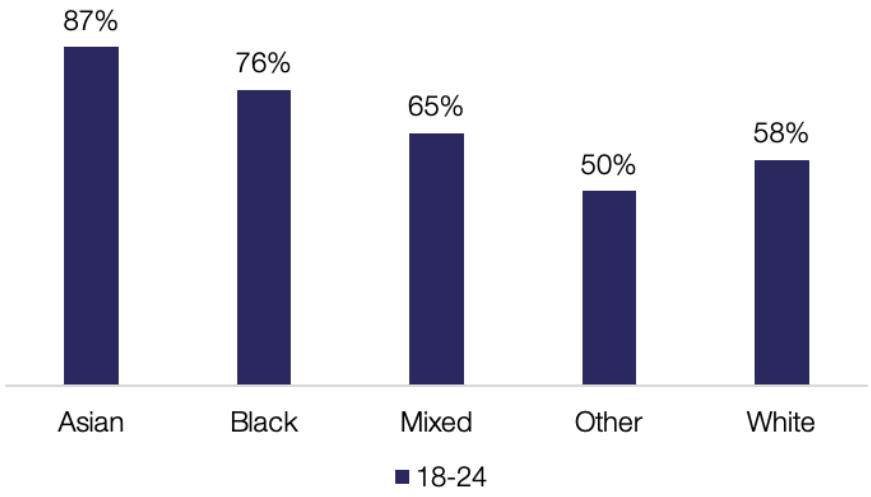



When breaking down these findings to look specifically at Black or Mixed ethnicity communities, respondents from a Black African background were slightly more likely to be worried about crime (76 per cent) than respondents from a Black Caribbean background (74 per cent) but the difference is not statistically significant. Differences in crime concerns by ethnicity and age also paint a similar picture. Across every age group,[50] Black and Asian respondents were more worried about crime than White adults. Concern about crime averaged at 68 per cent for participants aged 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44, then started to decline for adults aged 45+, averaging at 61 per cent.

Looking specifically at the 18-24 age group, we see that young Black and Asian adults are more concerned about crime than White adults: 87 per cent of Asian adults and 76 per cent of Black adults aged 18-24 were concerned about crime, compared to just 58 per cent of White adults aged 18-24 (Figure 5).

[49] *Full list of options: I am worried about antisocial behaviour; I am worried about serious violence; I am worried about VAWG; I am worried about theft; I am worried about knife crime; I am worried about drug dealing; I am worried about people using drugs
[50] Age groups included: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64 and 65+

**Figure 5: Responses (split by age and ethnicity) to: How worried are you about crime in your local area?**
*Very worried & worried (grouped together)




Higher levels of concern about crime among Black communities was also highlighted in the focus groups we conducted with Black adults. Several adults who were parents distinctly highlighted the difference in worrying about crime as Black parents compared to their White counterparts:

> *"When the boys go out, I do worry, are they going to come back okay? Whereas my White friends, it has never occurred to them to think that. Well, why? For us, it's different"*
> Participant 5, Focus group 5

> *"I can tell you as a mother of kids like in their teens. There's a fear of every single Black mother when that son walks out, that is equal to combat."*
> Participant 1, Focus group 7

Several participants also felt that the media unfairly reports on crimes where the victim or perpetrator were Black, amplifying concerns about crime in areas with predominantly Black communities. Some adults felt that Black neighbourhoods and events in predominantly Black areas were targeted by the police, fuelling racist stereotypes that Black people commit more crimes than White people:

> *"I find when people say, 'oh, with the Black neighbourhoods, that's where the crime is', I find it's like when the drug wars started in New York, they found that police were not even searching the White areas."*
> Participant 1, Focus group 6

> *"It [crime] happens at festivals. But if it happened at Carnival...it's a different story"*
> Participant 5, Focus group 8

*"I am worried about the crime. Well, I think what worries me more is if the crime was committed by a Black person, because I know that if it's committed by a Black person, the heightened awareness of any Black face in that particular area would reel up. I do remember during the London riots… everywhere I went during that period of time, the awareness I was getting, just for having a Black face was absolutely ridiculous. You know, and its tons of it, really intimidating (… ) About crime being committed in the local area, my first thought is, please let it not be a Black person, please."*
Participant 6, Focus group 5

*"We're bombarded with it wherever you go. It's just continual and oppressive, and it's not that White people don't commit those crimes, but the media are there to make money. And if you frighten people, people are gonna listen, 'I need to be careful of this, I need to be watchful of that'. So they do it because it makes them money and it gets them attention. But it doesn't help us in the community"*
Participant 5, Focus group 5

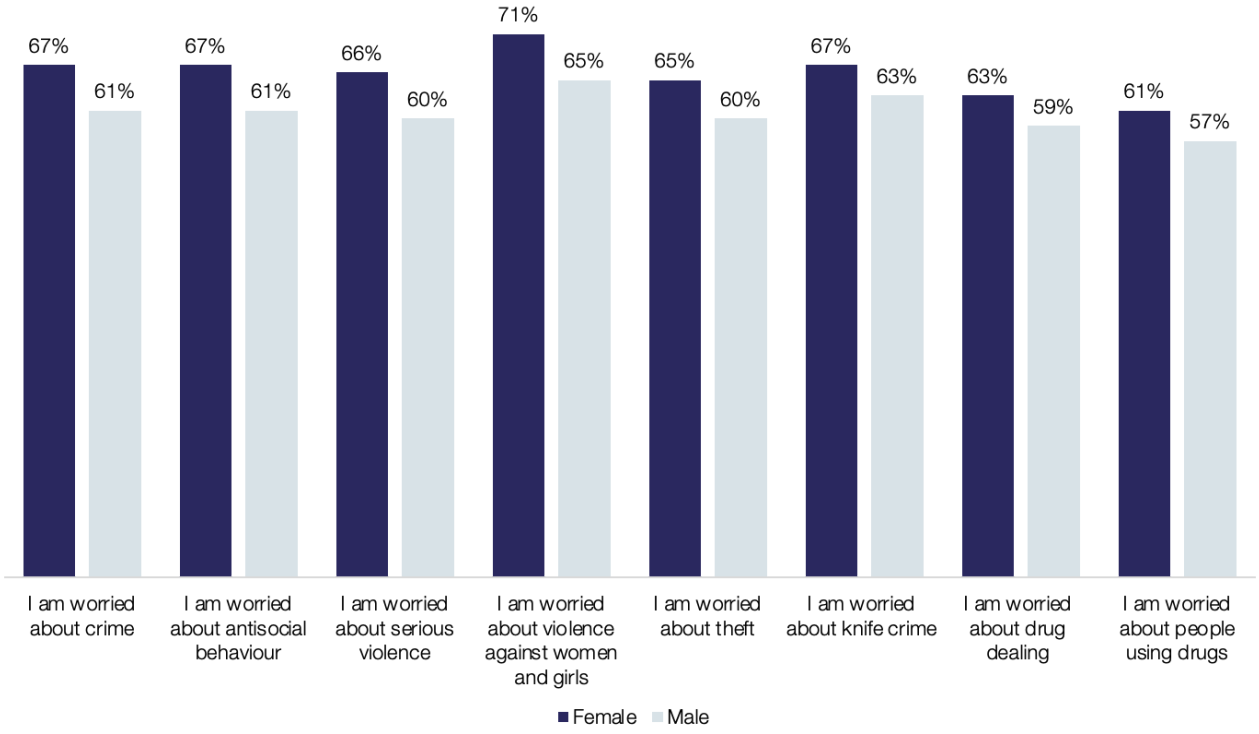
### *Concern about specific crime types*

Participants were asked how concerned they were about seven specific crime types.[51] Our survey found that violence against women and girls (VAWG) caused the greatest concern (68 per cent of our nationally representative sample). Knife crime (65 per cent), antisocial behaviour (64 per cent) and serious violence (63 per cent) were the next most concerning crime types, followed by theft (62 per cent), drug dealing (61 per cent) and people using drugs (59 per cent).

Concern about crime varied by gender. On average, women were 5 per cent more worried than men about crime, for each of the seven crime types included in the survey (Figure 6). Concern was highest about violence against women and girls, among both men and women, with 71 per cent of women and 65 per cent of men stating that they were worried.

[51]*Full list of options: I am worried about antisocial behaviour; I am worried about serious violence; I am worried about VAWG; I am worried about theft; I am worried about knife crime; I am worried about drug dealing; I am worried about people using drugs

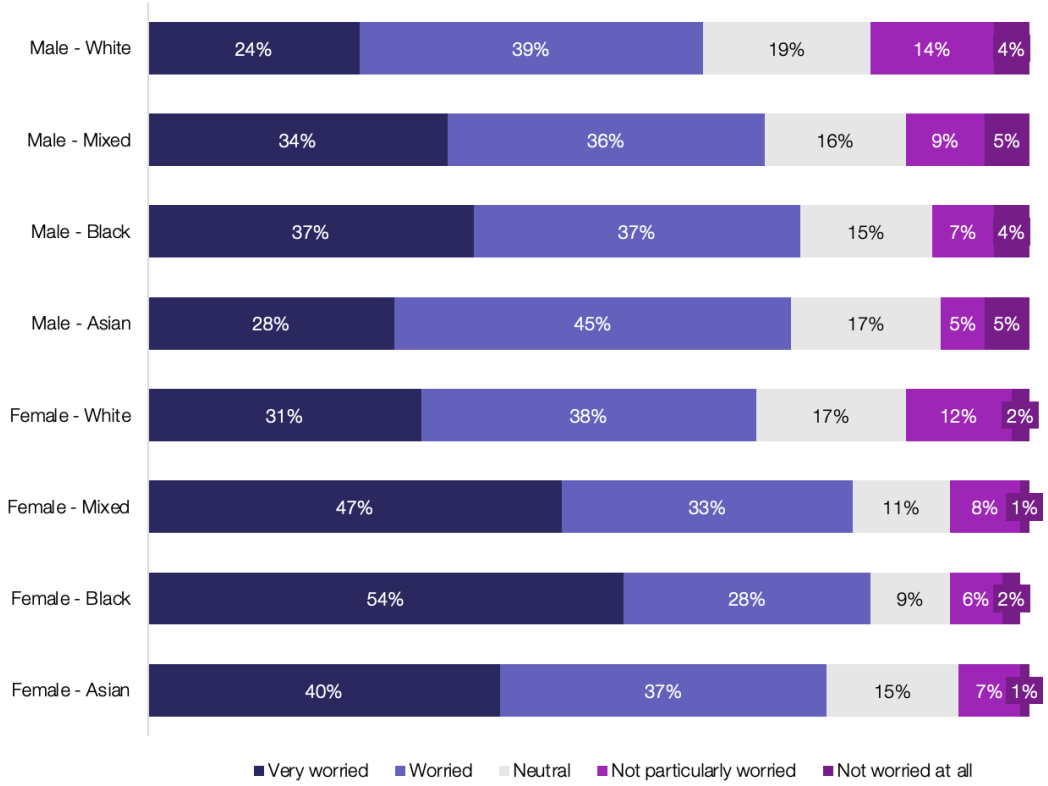
**Figure 6: Responses (split by gender) to: Thinking about your local area, how worried are you about crime? Please answer each of the following statements below.**
*Very worried & worried (grouped together)




## *Concern about Violence against Women and Girls*

When segmenting by ethnicity and gender, concern about VAWG rises to 82 per cent for Black women and drops to 69 per cent for White women (Figure 7). Overall, Black men were the most worried about VAWG in their local area, compared to men from other ethnic groups. Similarly, a higher percentage of Black men were worried or very worried about VAWG compared to White women (74 per cent vs 69 per cent). Further segmentation by ethnicity showed minimal differences in concern about VAWG for Black Caribbean and Black African respondents (80 per cent vs 79 per cent).

**Figure 7: Responses to: How worried are you about violence against women and girls in your local area?**
*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all




Concern related to VAWG was specifically mentioned across several focus groups we conducted across England, when participants were asked if they felt safe in their local area. Some participants described their added fears being both Black and a woman when walking out in the street, particularly at night:

> *"For me, it's just walking down the street as a woman. As it is, especially in this day and age, anything can happen. And then as a Black woman as well you mix in race attacks and so I'm very conscious of just walking the street when it's dark. Even early in the morning, I'm very conscious about oh my god what if someone drags me into a bush"*
> Participant 3, Focus group 2

> *"At least once every other month, someone's getting stabbed, sometimes three, four kids at a time. And it's just really scary. And obviously (...) the female element. Like you're scared that you'll just be walking and you'll get stabbed. So obviously, I commute into the city for work. When I'm at home, I don't walk anywhere, I always drive around. But there's that fear factor of being a girl"*
> Participant 1, Focus group 2

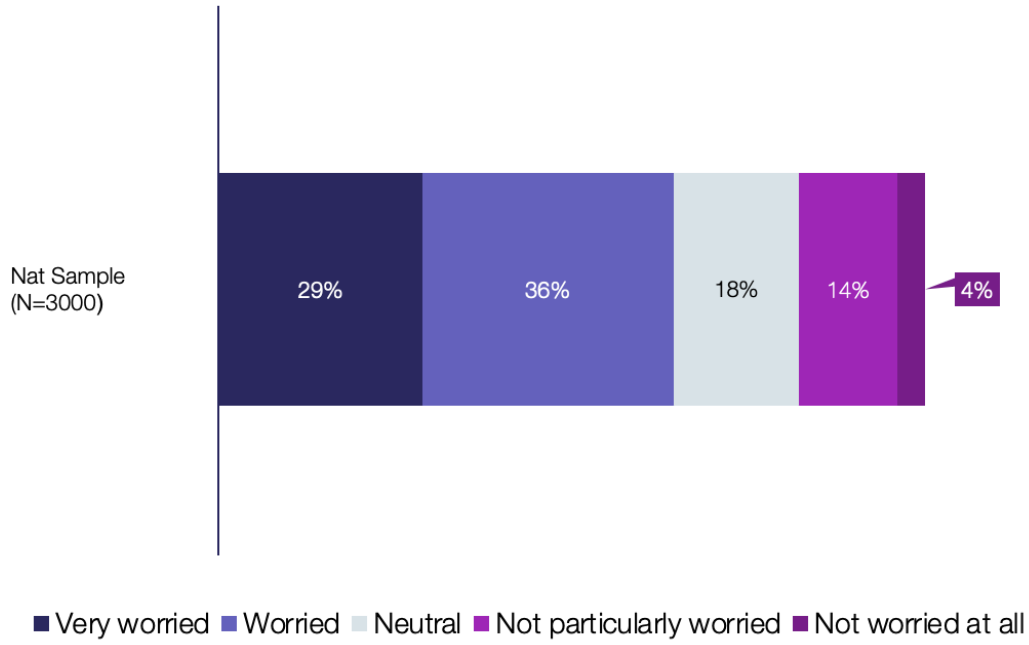
Additionally, some participants mentioned that their fear was more directed towards their children and ensuring their children were safe in their local area.

*"I'm not scared about the crime, but becoming a mum, I'm scared for my daughter growing up and something happens where I would have to be called or you know, I don't know what's gonna happen."*
Participant 5, Focus group 1

## *Concerns about knife crime*

Figure 8 shows that nearly two thirds (65 per cent) of our nationally representative adult sample (n=3000), were worried about knife crime.

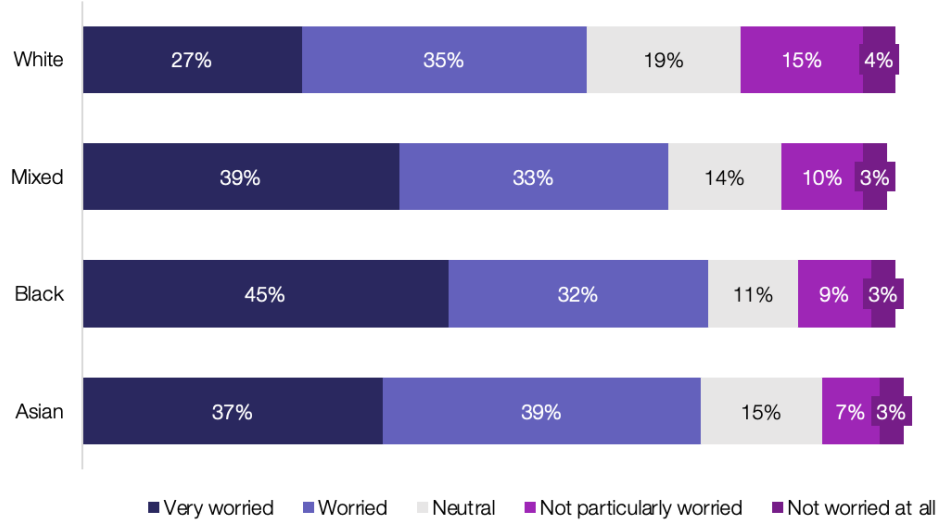
**Figure 8: Responses to: How worried are you about knife crime in your local area?**
*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all




When segmented by ethnicity using our boosted sample (n=5455), 77 per cent of Black adults were very worried or worried about knife crime in their local area, compared to 62 per cent of White adults (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Responses by ethnicity to: How worried are you about knife crime in your local area?**

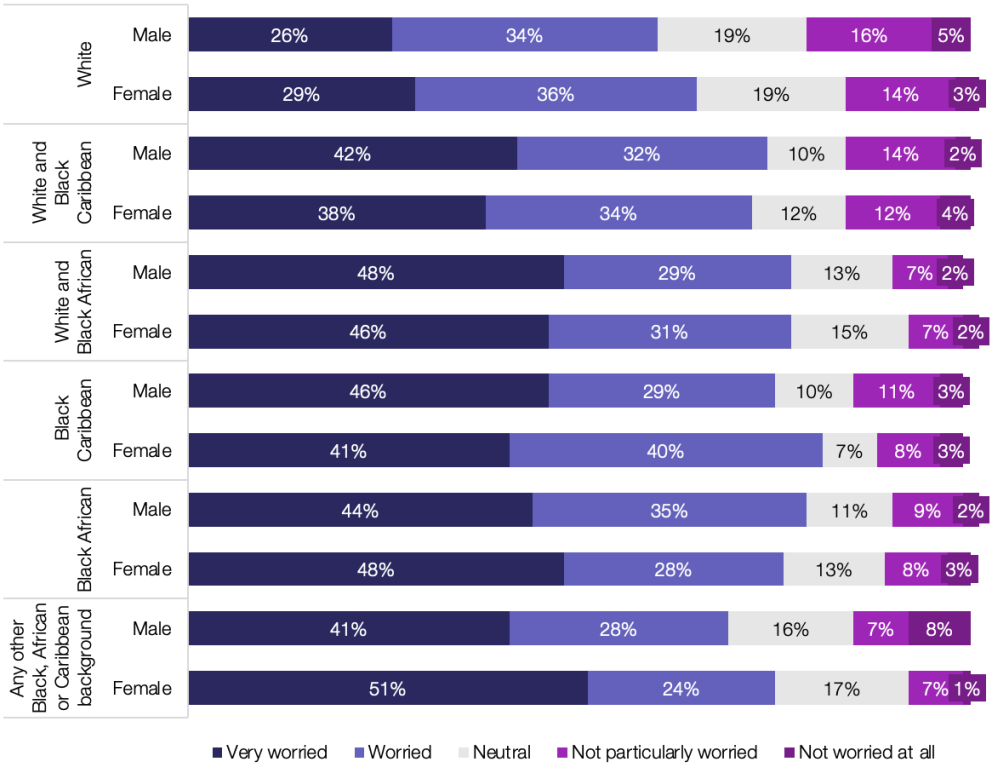
*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all




Across almost all ethnicities, women were more worried about knife crime than men. The group most concerned about knife crime is Black Caribbean women (81 per cent), followed by Black African men (79 per cent) (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Further responses by ethnicity to: How worried are you about knife crime in your local area?**

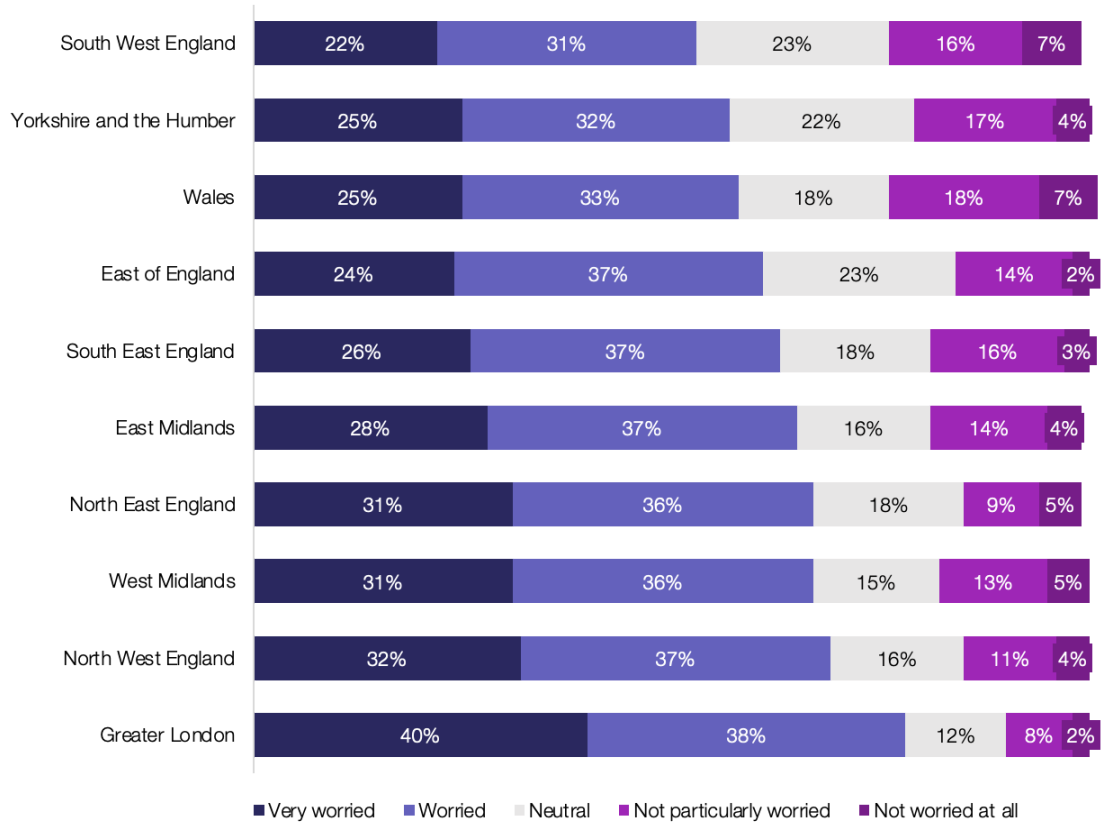
*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all



Overall, concerns over knife crime were highest within Greater London, where 78 per cent of adults were either worried or very worried about knife crime (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Responses by region to: How worried are you about knife crime in your local area?**

*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all

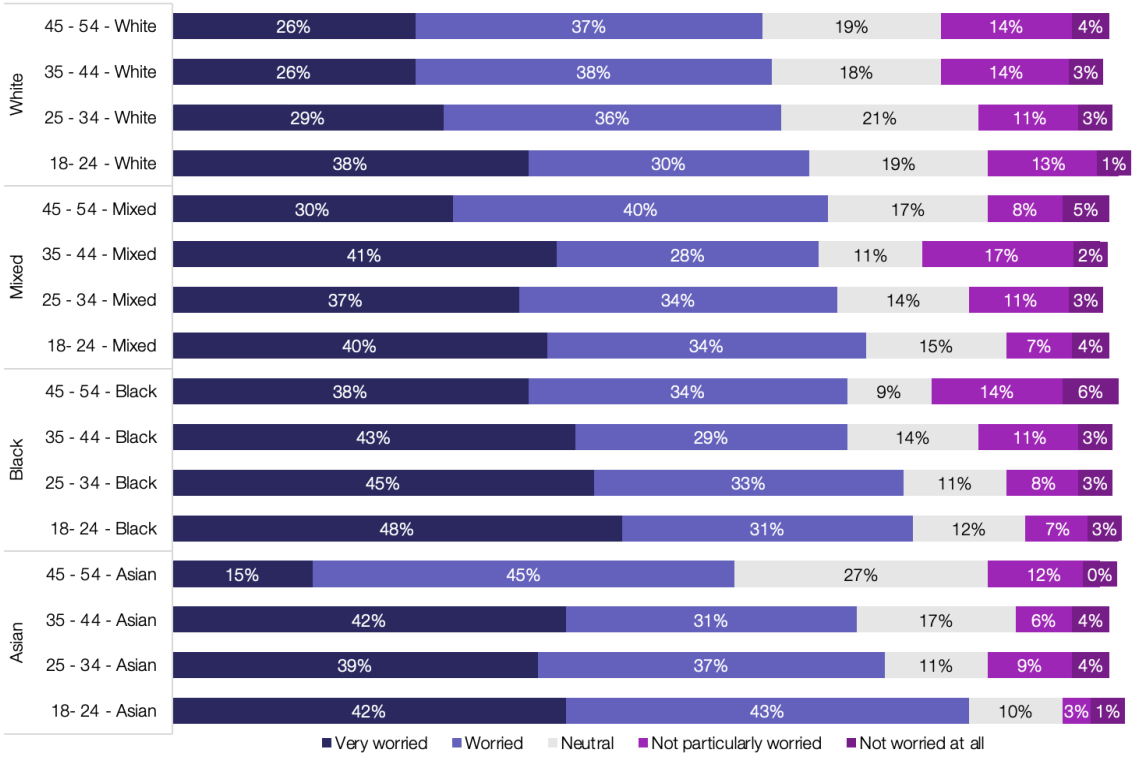



When looking further at ethnic differences by region, there were higher levels of concerns around knife crime among Black adults living in Greater London, than those who did not live in London. 82 per cent of Black adults and 84 per cent of Asian adults in London were worried about knife crime, compared to 74 per cent of White adults in London, and 73 per cent of Black adults who did not live in London.

Overall, concerns about local knife crime were higher for younger respondents, and decreased with age. 71 per cent of 18-24-year olds were worried or very worried about knife crime in their local area, compared to 61 per cent of adults aged 65 and over (Figure 12). Asian 18-24-year-olds (85 per cent) and Black 18-24-year-olds (79 per cent) and 25-34-year olds (78 per cent) were the most concerned about local knife crime. Nearly half of Black 18-24-year-olds (48 per cent) were very worried about knife crime, compared to 38 per cent of White 18-24 year olds.

**Figure 12: Responses by ethnicity and age to: How worried are you about knife crime in your local area?**

*Very worried & worried; neutral; not particularly worried & not worried at all




Several focus group members had also been a victim of knife crime or had close family members who were:

*"My brother was stabbed last year as well. He was 33. He's got two kids. Like, the area we live in Hackney, there's several gangs on either side. We've lived there for maybe 20 years. When we first moved to England, because we're Caribbean, when we first came everyone was like, 'oh, my God. You live in Hackney? Oh, it's scary'. And like, growing up there, it's fine. And so yeah, that randomly happening... It's quite anxiety inducing. And especially because the police, they didn't really seem that interested."*

Participant 1, Focus group 5

*"My cousin was stabbed and killed. And just in their [the police officer's] mannerisms, and how they dealt with my family, and just the level of communication, kind of keeping everybody up to date and being as transparent as possible. Because it's a horrible time, but then you have to remember, it's still an ongoing case, so you also have to cooperate in the sense of your grieving, but they need information from you. But they were extremely compassionate, especially towards my uncle and my aunty"*

Participant 4, Focus group 6

*"I've got a family member who got killed in this country in 1959, in Notting Hill, and to this day the crime is open. The case is open.(...)"*

*"In 2008 I got stabbed. I was in hospital, and the police said they caught the guy. The guy was arrested, and then released on bail. So the way I looked at it was like, 'Oh, what are you wanting to finish the job?' Why is he allowed back out?"*
Participant 7, Focus group 5

One parent also explained that her son was so fearful of knife crime and serious violence that he did not want to leave the house:

*"I've got two boys (...) The 14 year old doesn't want to go out, he's so fearful. So I'd say to him, you know, go out with your friends, go play football or something. 'No, I don't want to. I'll be safer at home'. And to actually hear that, it's sort of…[from] a child you know, a little bit painful because I can remember growing up in Hackney. We didn't have to worry, we could leave the doors open (…) And to hear a 14 year old boy saying that is so (…) I mean, I know that I have given him and the biggest one the best quality of life that I can give them. But you know, a 14 year old shouldn't be thinking that"*
Participant 6, Focus group 5

# Chapter 2: Trust and confidence in the police

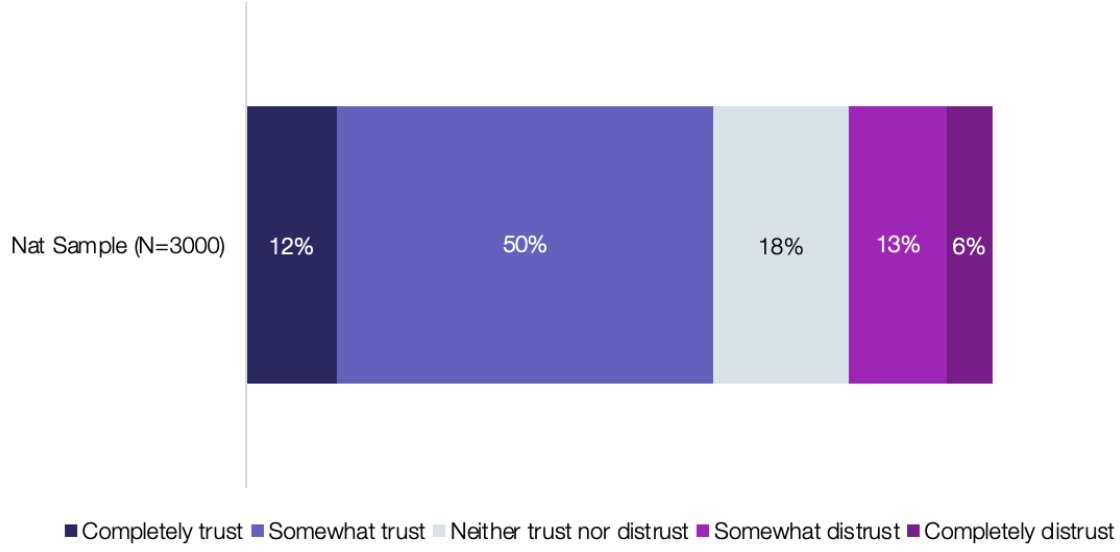
Findings from both the focus groups and survey show that Black adults have lower levels of trust and confidence in the police, compared to White adults and the general population. Within Black communities, there are notable differences in the level of trust that Black adults of different ages and backgrounds place in policing. However, findings from this research indicate that trust in the police is particularly low among Black Caribbeans, young Black adults, and those who are second or third generation. The reasons why Black adults have less trust in the police compared to others are undoubtedly complex. Focus group participants pointed to cases where they felt let down by the police response to their crime concerns, as incidents that lowered their overall trust in the police. This section discusses our findings regarding trust and confidence in the police.

## The police are facing a major shortfall of public trust and confidence

### *General views on trust in the police*

62 per cent of survey respondents said they trusted the police (somewhat or completely) (Figure 13), a figure 12 per cent lower than the 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales' (CSEW) finding that 74 per cent of adults have confidence in the police.[52] Nearly 1 in 5 (19 per cent) of respondents in our nationally representative sample stated that they actively distrusted the police (somewhat or completely).

**Figure 13: Responses to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**
*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust

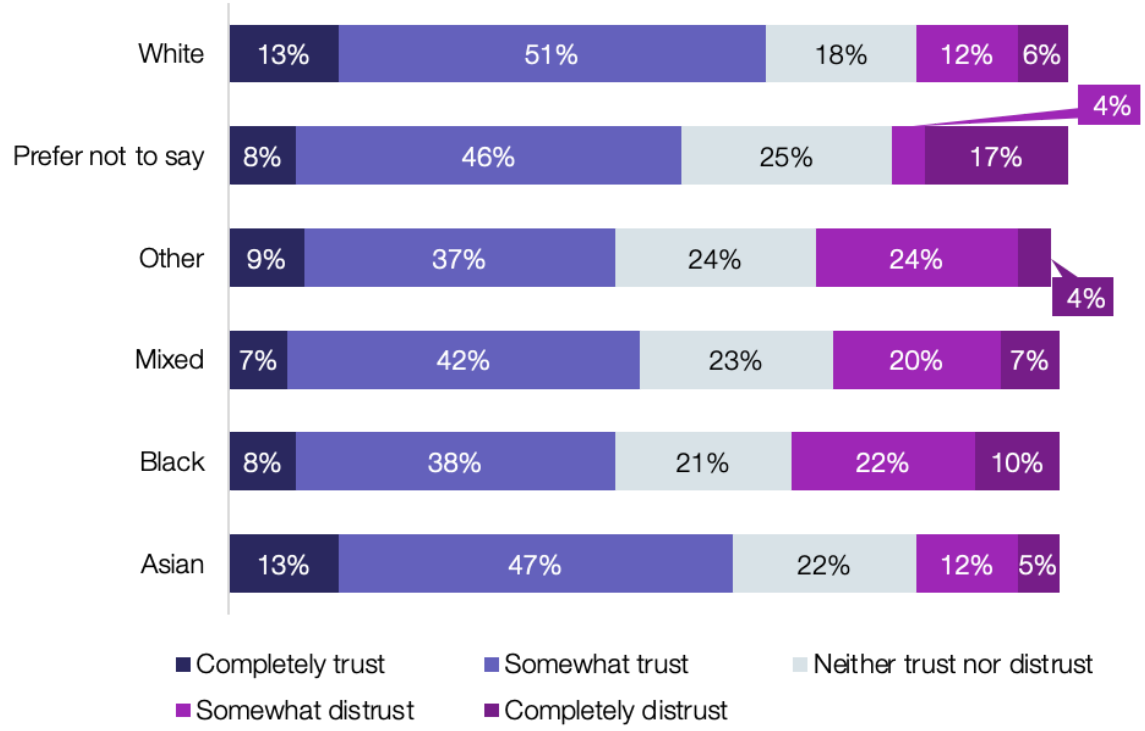



[52] ONS (2020) *Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates of personal and household crime, anti-social behaviour, and public perceptions, by police force area, year ending March 2020*. CSEW. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/12032crimesurveyforenglandandwalescsewestimatesofpersonalandhouseholdcrimeantisocialbehaviourandpublicperceptionsbypoliceforceareayearendingmarch2020

### *Ethnic differences in trust in the police*

Trust in the police drops further when split by ethnicity. Only 46 per cent of Black adults trusted the police (either somewhat or completely) compared to 64 per cent for White adults (Figure 14). Further to this, nearly 1 in 3 Black adults in our sample stated that they actively distrust the police. We also see lower levels of trust for Mixed ethnicity adults, with (49 per cent) stating that they trust the police (either somewhat or completely) and slightly lower levels of trust for Asian adults (60 per cent) compared to our nationally representative sample (62 per cent). This confidence gap between Black and White adults (18 per cent) is three times higher than the most recent CSEW, which reported that 6 per cent more White respondents had confidence in the police than Black and Mixed ethnicity respondents.[53]

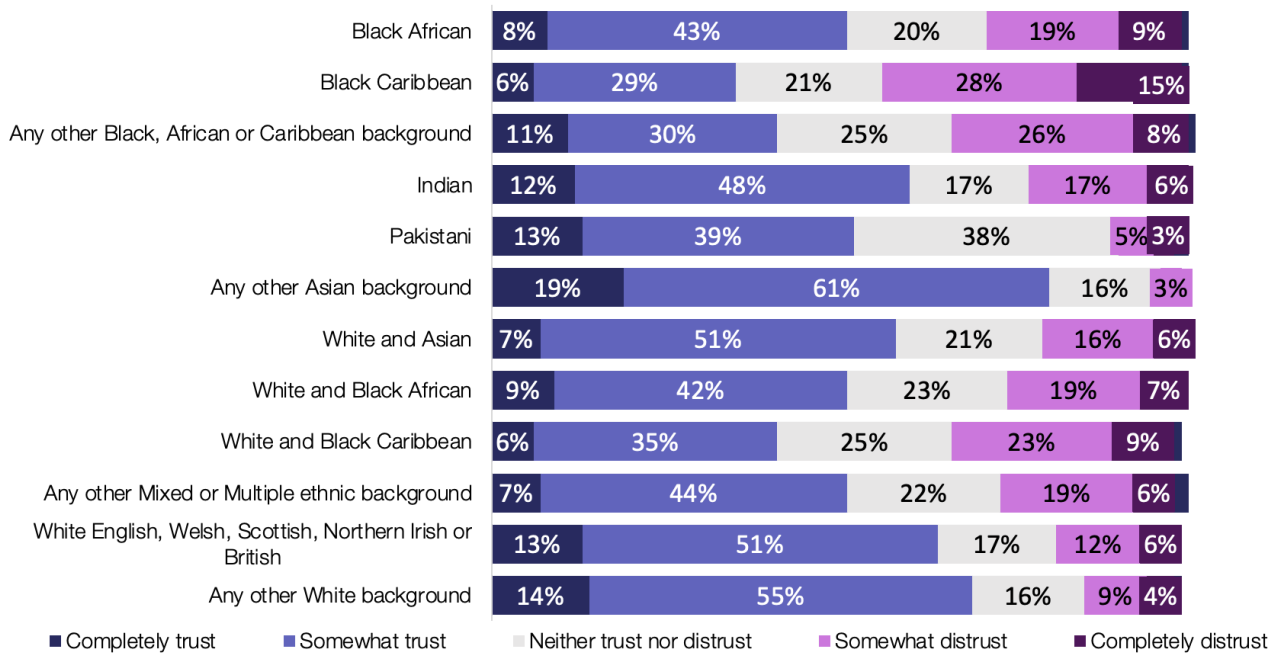
**Figure 14: Ethnic breakdowns in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**
*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust




[53] ONS (2020) *Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates of personal and household crime, anti-social behaviour, and public perceptions, by police force area, year ending March 2020*. CSEW. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/12032crimesurveyforenglandandwalescsewestimatesofpersonalandhouseholdcrimeantisocialbehaviourandpublicperceptionsbypoliceforceareayearendingmarch2020

When split further by ethnicity, only 35 per cent of Black Caribbean adults stated that they trust the police, compared to 51 per cent of Black African adults in our sample (Figure 15). For Black Caribbean adults, levels of distrust in the police (43 per cent), were higher than trust (35 per cent).

**Figure 15: Ethnic breakdowns in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**
*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust

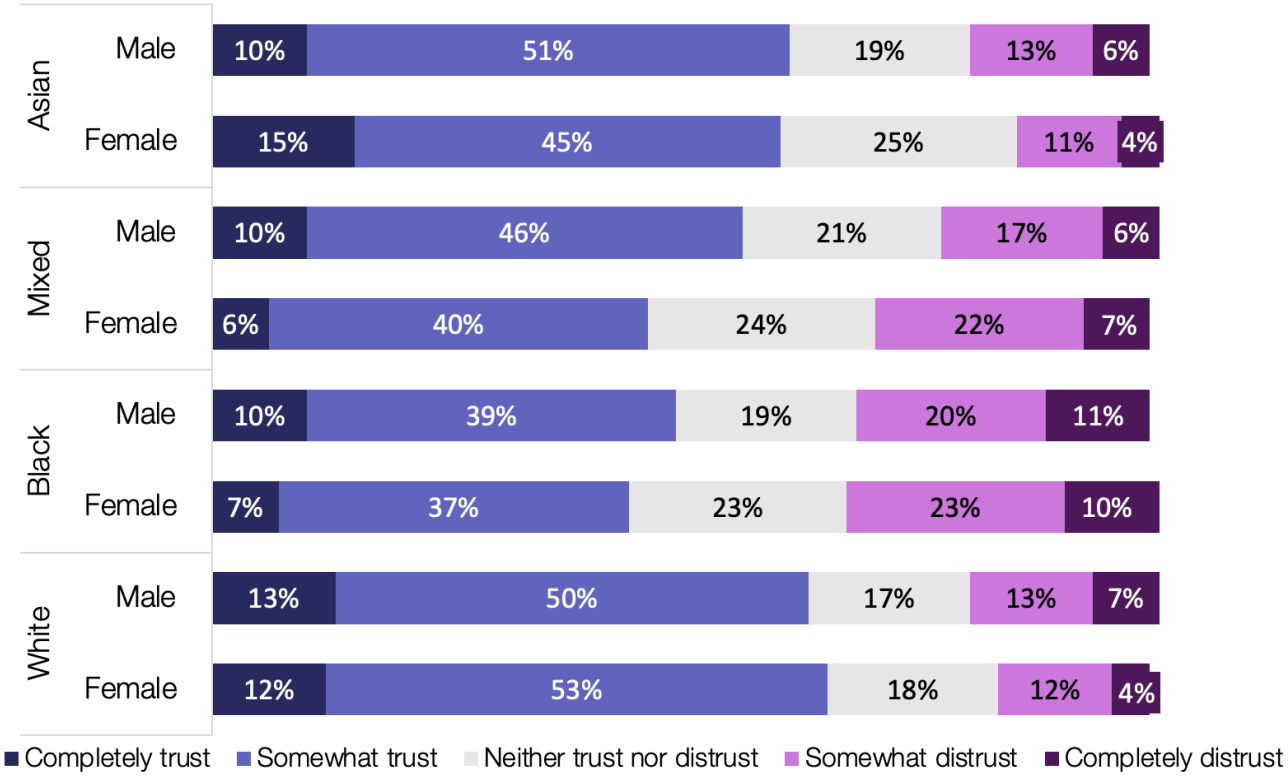


### *Gender differences in trust in the police*

While women on the whole, have more trust in the police than men, there are minimal differences in levels of trust for our total sample when split by gender (62 per cent of men trusted the police compared to 63 per cent of women). However, when segmenting further by gender and ethnicity, the gap in trust is notably wider between men and women from Black (5 per cent gap) or Mixed ethnic backgrounds (10 percent gap) (Figure 16). Within Black communities, 37 per cent of Black Caribbean women trusted the police, compared to 33 per cent of Black Caribbean men, but 48 per cent of Black African women trusted the police compared to 58 per cent of Black African men.

**Figure 16: Ethnic and gender breakdown in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**

*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust

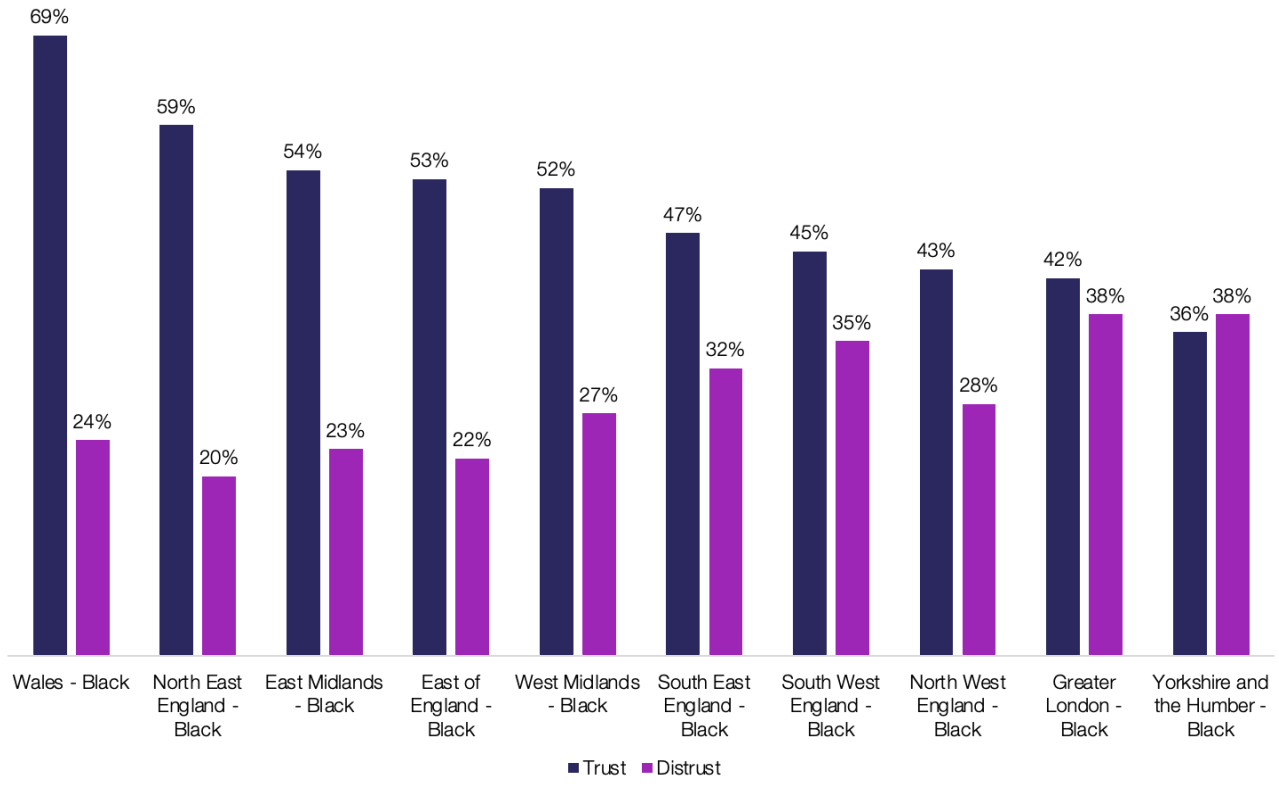


## *Regional and ethnic differences in trust in the police*

To further understand regional and ethnic differences in levels of trust in the police, our results were segmented by both ethnicity and region (Figure 17). Trust for Black respondents was lowest in Yorkshire and the Humber, where less Black respondents trusted the police (36 per cent) than distrusted the police (38 per cent). The regions with the second and third lowest levels of trust for Black adults were Greater London (42 per cent trust vs 30 per cent distrust), and the North West (43 per cent trust vs 28 per cent distrust).

**Figure 17: Ethnic and regional breakdowns in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**

*Completely trust & somewhat trust (grouped together); completely distrust & somewhat distrust (grouped together)



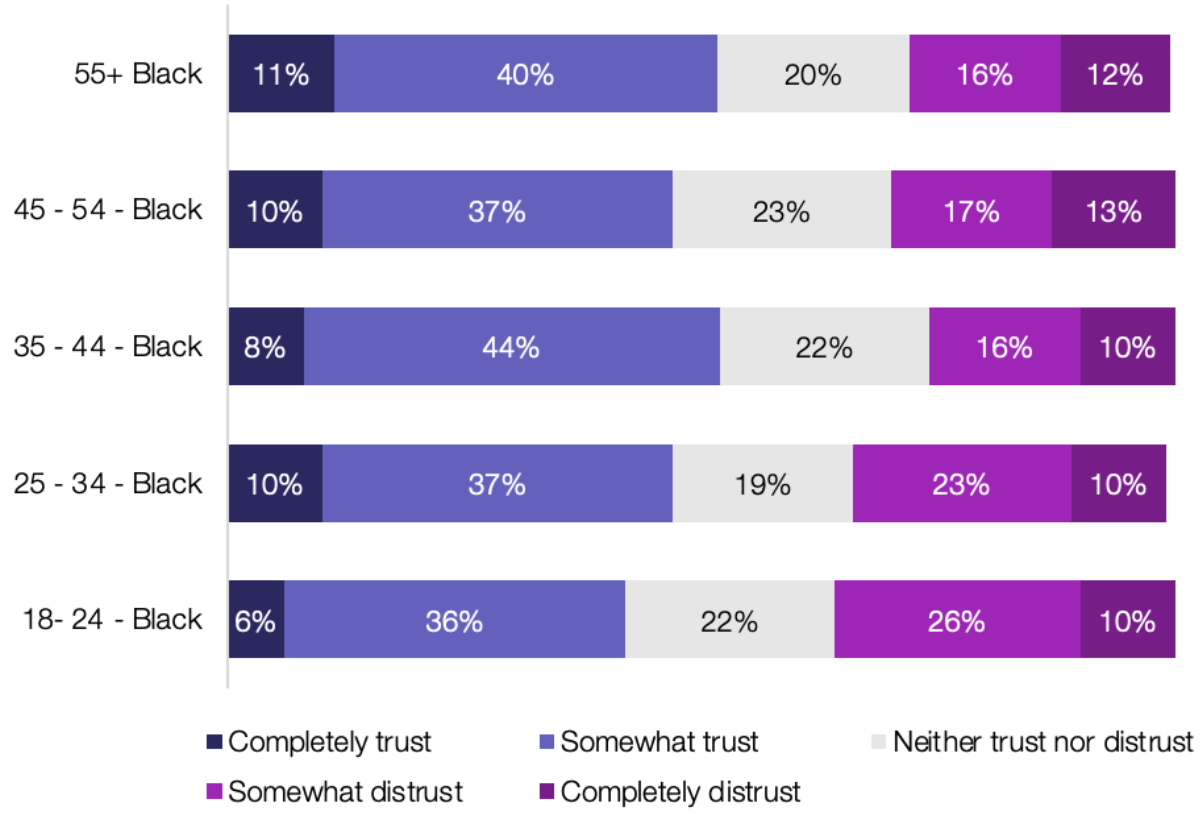

*Sample size of Black respondents (boosted) by region:* East Midlands (103), East of England (83), Greater London (636), North East England (46), North West England (120), South East England (189), South West England (69), Wales (29), West Midlands (182), Yorkshire and the Humber (91)

*Differences in trust by age and ethnicity*

When split by age, there is an increase in levels of trust among older adults, compared to younger groups (Figure 18). 72 per cent of adults aged 65 and over trusted the police compared to just over half (56 per cent) of 18-24-year olds. Trust in the police was lowest among Black, 18-24-year-olds: only 42 per cent completely or somewhat trusted the police, compared to 55 per cent of White 18-24-year-olds and 51 per cent of Black adults aged 55 and over.

**Figure 18: Ethnic and age breakdown in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**

*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust

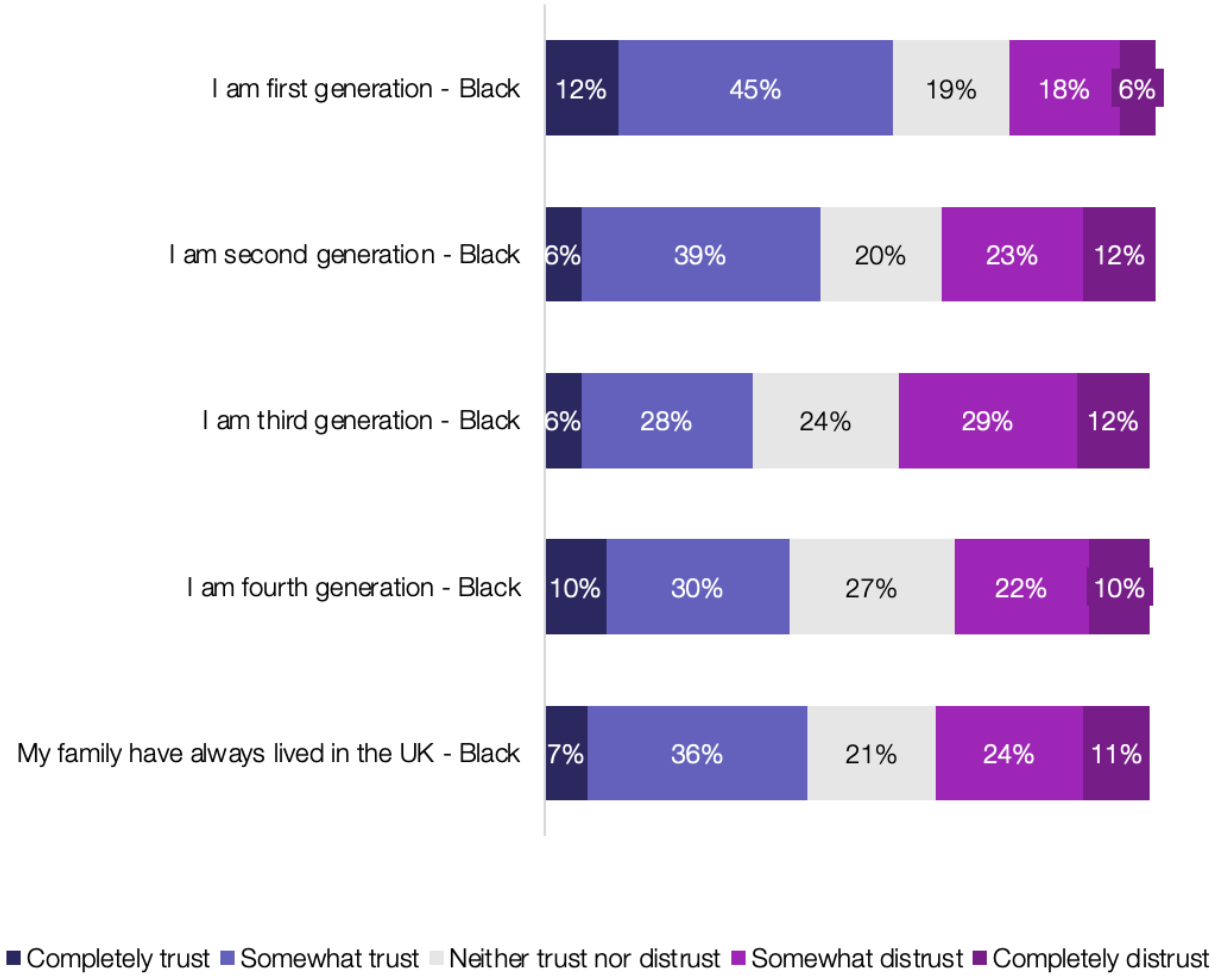


### *Differences in trust by generation*

For Black respondents specifically, we looked at how levels of trust changed across generations living in the UK. Respondents who were the first generation in their family to live in the UK were more trusting than any other group (Figure 19). Levels of trust (34 per cent) and distrust (41 per cent) were lowest for respondents who were third generation, followed by 40 per cent who trusted the police and 32 per cent who distrusted for fourth generation respondents. This suggests that trust may be declining across generations, and indicates that trust for Black African respondents (who are more likely to be first or second generation[54]) may decline in time.

**Figure 19: Breakdowns by generation for Black adults, in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**

*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust



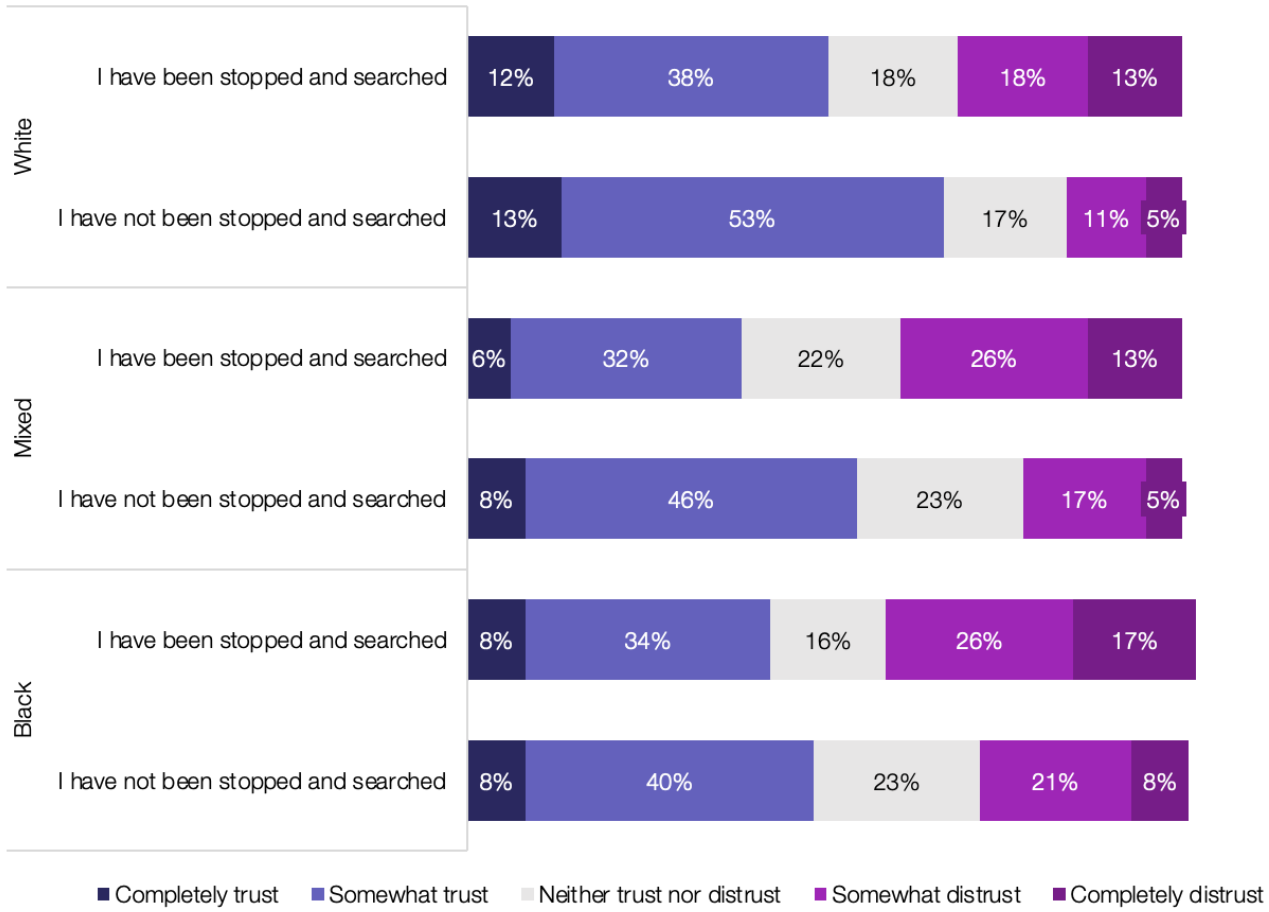

[54] Based on the 2011 census, the majority of foreign born residents who were Black Carribean arrived before 1981, compared to 95 per cent of Black Africans who arrived after 1981. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/2011censusanalysisethnicityandreligionofthenonukbornpopulationinenglandandwales/2015-06-18

*Differences in trust for individuals who have or haven't been stopped and searched*

Overall, adults who had been stopped and searched were less trusting of the police. Less than half (49 per cent) of adults in our nationally representative sample who had been stopped and searched trusted the police, compared to 65 per cent of adults who had not been searched. White adults who had not experienced stop and search were the most trusting of the police. 66 per cent of these adults either somewhat or completely trusted the police compared to just half of White adults, who had been searched. Black adults (42 per cent) and adults from Mixed ethnic backgrounds (38 per cent) who had been stopped and searched had the least trust in the police. It is important to note here, that over two fifths (43 per cent) of Black adults and 39 per cent of mixed ethnicity adults who had been stopped and searched actively distrusted the police, compared to 31 per cent of White adults. However, Black adults had the smallest gap in trust (6 percent) between those who had been stopped and searched, versus those who had not been (Figure 20). This suggests that alongside stop and search, there are other factors influencing the low levels of trust in the police, among Black adults.

**Figure 20: Breakdown by ethnicity and whether they have been stopped and searched. In response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**

*Completely trust & somewhat trust; neither trust nor distrust; completely distrust & somewhat distrust



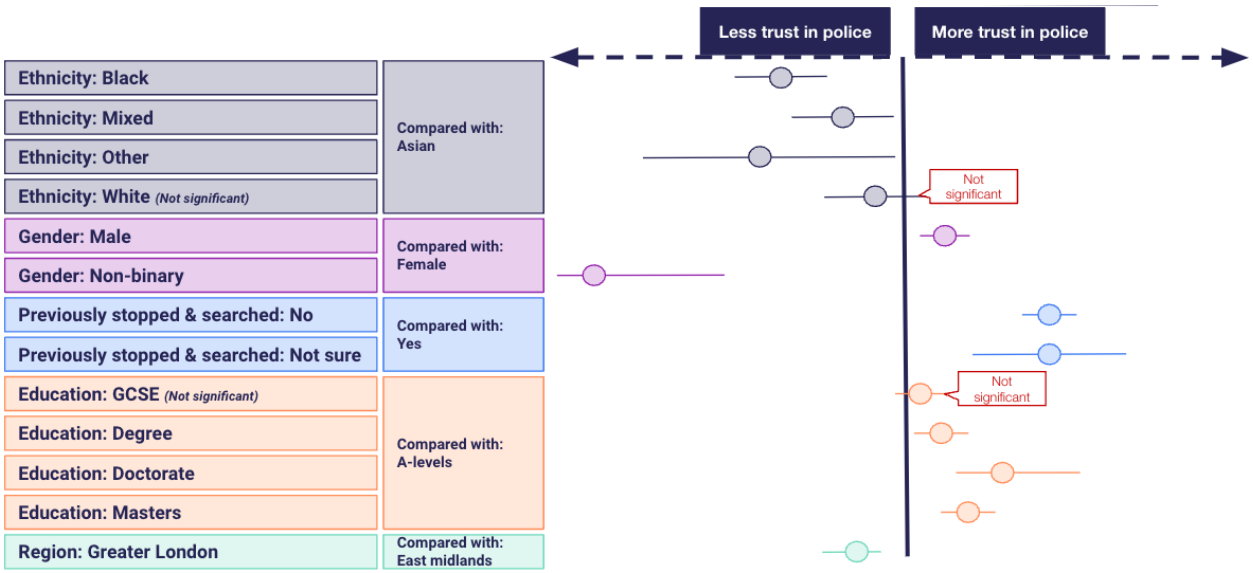
### *Regression*

A linear regression is a statistical model that is used to understand the relationship between two variables, usually to see if one variable has an impact on another.[55] For example, whether being stopped and searched is associated with low trust in the police. Given the complex relationship between trust in the police and an individual's characteristics, we ran a basic linear regression model on the data from our survey to better isolate the contributions from different characteristics on their perception of the police. The regression model estimated how the following characteristics were significantly associated with an individual's level of trust in the police:

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Whether or not they'd previously been stopped and searched
- Level of education
- Region

Trust in the police was measured on a 5-point scale from Completely Trust to Completely Distrust. The key findings of this model are presented in the figure below; and demonstrate how different groups within each category trust police more or less than a comparator group (the group that appears alphabetically first). The results highlight key characteristics with a statistically significant ($p<0.05$) association with levels of trust in police, when accounting for all of the variables included in the model. Detailed results are provided in the Annex.

**Figure 21: Regression analysis of measure of trust in police**




[55] Montgomery, D. C., Peck, E. A., & Vining, G. G. (2021). *Introduction to linear regression analysis*. John Wiley & Sons.

*Key regression findings:*

- Looking at ethnicity, the model estimated that **Black, Mixed ethnicity and Other respondents were associated with significantly less trust in police than Asian respondents.** In comparison, White respondents were not associated with a significant difference in police trust than Asian respondents.
- Gender also presented significant differences in the regression model; non-binary respondents (despite their low numbers in our sample) had significantly less trust in the police than female respondents who in turn had significantly less trust than males.
- **Respondents who had been stopped and searched by the police had significantly less trust in the police compared to those who had not been stopped and searched.**
- Trust was also strongly associated with the highest level of education respondents had completed. Respondents with doctorates were the most trusting in the police, followed by those with Masters degrees, then undergraduate degrees. There was no significant difference in trust between those who had completed A-levels and those who had left school after GCSEs.
- **The only region of England and Wales to show a significant difference in trust was London, where respondents were significantly less trusting of the police.**
- Age was the only variable in the model that was not categorical. This showed a significant increase in trust as individuals get older.

The regression model confirms that the characteristics described above are significantly associated with different perceptions of the police. The explanatory power of the model is very weak however, accounting for just 6 per cent of the variability in the data (adjusted r2 = 0.0648). This is partly due to the construction of the question, which was not originally intended to be used in a regression model. Even so, complex social issues such as policing and trust will never be fully explained by basic demographics. Our model omits key additional data that inevitably have an impact on an individual's trust in the police, such as previous direct and indirect experiences with the police and their engagement in policing news. It is impossible to control for all of the factors that contribute to a person's level of trust in the police, however this model gives us confidence that the differences in trust we observe across different characteristics in our findings are legitimate.

*Focus group findings*

Findings from our focus groups with Black adults in four areas across England, suggested participants had very little trust in the police. To summarise, there were three key areas in which the police were perceived to be untrustworthy and importantly, unhelpful:

**Victims** - Generally, the police were perceived by most participants as uncaring and unhelpful to victims of crime. Several people described multiple situations where they felt their concerns had not been taken seriously, potentially due to their race.

**Witnesses** - Were they to witness and report a crime, most participants had little confidence that

the police would keep them safe, or that any action would be pursued.

**Suspects** - Several participants described feeling unfairly targeted by the police, as suspects of crime, even in situations where they themselves had been victimised.

Focus group participants were asked if they trusted the police and if they would go to the police if they needed help. Several people described **personal experiences of going to the police where they felt let down or unsupported:**

> *"I've had an experience recently, and they just acted like they didn't care. So I reported something, I reported a hate crime. They spoke to the person, but they didn't take it any further. And it was just very much a … well, if it happens again, call us back. And it's like, what for?"*
> Participant 3, Focus group 3

> *"I think my reasons have changed on calling them because my cousin passed away from knife crime and (...) I don't know anymore. You came 40 minutes late. I'm just in a place where I have to wait for it to happen to know what I'm going to do. Because the police have really failed me in a big way. We called, we were all panicking. And the ambulance came late, so everyone just failed that day. And the police really, they sounded bored when they were on the phone. They didn't really sound like they cared"*
> Participant 2, Focus group 1

> *"It depends. Because if it was someone that stole my phone, let's say if it was a White person that stole my phone, I'm going straight to the police but if it was a Black person, even though you shouldn't be stealing, they're not really going to do anything."*
> Participant 2, Focus group 2

**Others described a lack of trust more specifically due to perceived racism:**

> *"How many police officers do you really think view the typical Black boy as a human? And not just oh we're going to end up in prison or dead anyway"*
> Participant 6, Focus group 1

> *"It's funny how they recognise [mental health issues] when it's a White person. So I don't think it's the fact that they didn't recognise it, it's the fact that they didn't want to. They don't care. You can go there with the rest of 'your kind'."*
> Participant 1, Focus group 5

> *"I don't think we should negate the idea that it could be a race thing, because back in the day when that whole Stephen Lawrence thing happened, that's when the police kind of got exposed for being racist."*
> *Participant 8, Focus group 3*

**There were also some participants, who felt not just a sense of distrust, but *actively* felt unsafe around the police:**

*"I feel more unsafe around the police than I would around a wild animal. I'm being deadly serious (...) I would rather be in a cage with a wolf than in a cage with a police officer."*
Participant 1, Focus group 3

*"I've got a son as well and he's already scared of the police, and he's eight."*
Participant 3, Focus group 4

*"I get kind of anxious. Are they going to stop and search me? Am I dressed a certain way? Like, I hope they don't think I have something on me? I don't know. I just feel anxious even though I know I'm not a criminal"*
Participant 6, Focus group 1

Other people described that **they would avoid interacting with the police, even if they witnessed a crime, as a result of feeling unsafe around the police, or fear they would somehow be implicated:**

*"They try to always blame you (…) I can't say I've really had a good experience, apart from probably as a kid I would've met the police or wanted to put their hat on. Other than that, growing up it's just been all bad experiences. Literally. I've got nothing good to say about them to be fair."*
Participant 4, Focus group 8

Similarly, **some participants described feeling unfairly targeted by the police, even in situations where they were the victims, due to racial profiling:**

*"Our neighbour next to us, he was racist (…) So he said some real bad things about my dad, and kept threatening my mum. Police were called, came, my dad was out on the street. [The police officer] wasn't told that, you know, he was my mum's husband, and [the police] just arrested my dad or attacked my dad thinking that he was being abusive to my mum"*
*Participant 6, Focus group 8*

*"Because when I was young, I was 16 and it was my fault. I was with my friend and she was showing me how to shoplift (...) And I was coming out of the shop, but they grabbed me and not her. And she was White. And obviously, I'm Black."*
Participant 8, Focus group 4

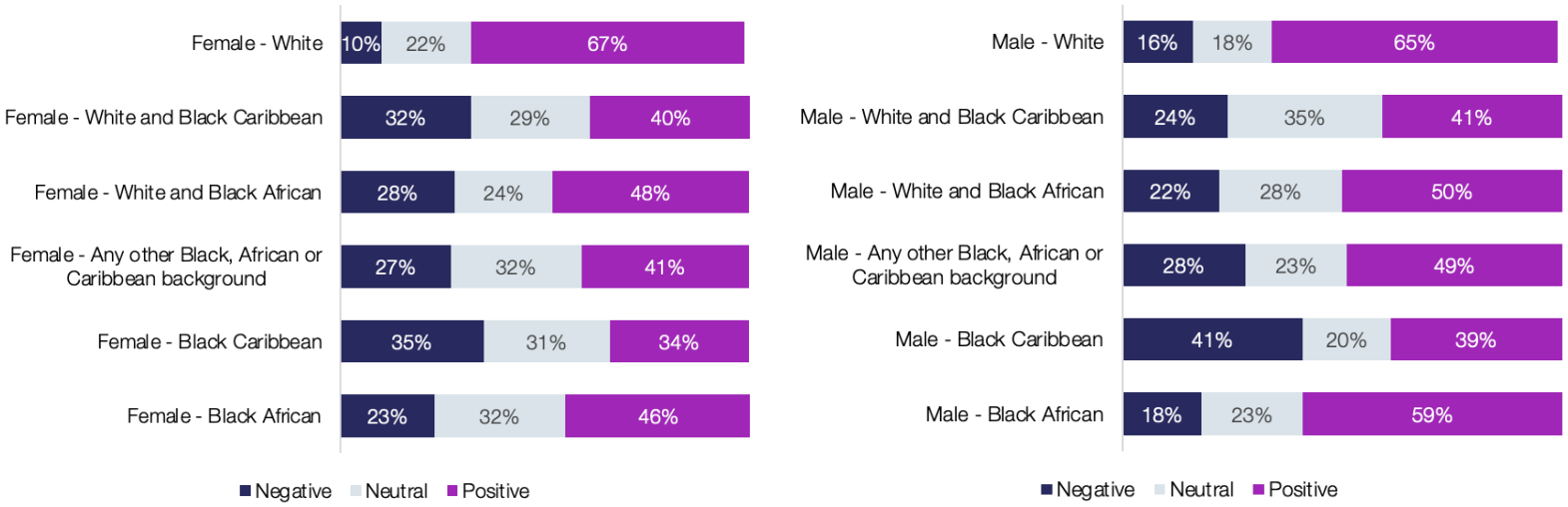
### *Communicating about the police with friends and family*

As well as capturing individual views on trust and confidence in the police, we also asked polling participants how they communicated about the police to friends and family. Family and friends have

a strong influence on a person's attitudes and behaviours,[56] and likely contribute to a person's attitude towards trust in the police. Sharing stories of trauma or negative experiences of the police may contribute to a decreasing trust and confidence in the police for some communities. Black adults who were second (44 per cent) or third (41 per cent) generation had less positive views about the police overall, compared to first generation Black adults (53 per cent positive). Understanding how families communicate with each other about the police, may increase our understanding of what contributes to decreasing trust and confidence in the police for some communities.

When broken down by ethnicity and gender (Figure 22), White women are the most likely group to speak about the police positively with family or friends (67 per cent). Black Caribbean women (34 per cent) and men (39 per cent) are the least likely to speak about the police positively out of all groups. Black Caribbean women are over three times more likely to speak about the police negatively with family or friends than White women (10 per cent).

**Figure 22: Responses to: On a scale of 1-5, how positive would you be about the police, when talking with family or friends?**




Several people from one focus group discussed the impact shared stories of negative experiences and trauma had on their own experiences with the police.

> *"I feel like the general feeling of you don't talk to the police, it's still instilled in every single person, whether it's sometimes or all the time, that feeling is still there, and you always question whether 'oh should I talk to them, is it the right thing to do'. But I generally don't know a person of an ethnic minority background that will go and say, yeah, I talk to the police openly about everything."*
>
> Participant 4, Focus group 1

[56] Sargeant, E., & Bond, C. E. (2015). *Keeping it in the family: Parental influences on young people's attitudes to police.* Journal of Sociology, *51*(4), 917-932.

*"I'm from an African household. My parents did not have it, like you couldn't talk to police, if you talk to them, social workers will come, it was that type of thing. And it's like, well, even though they're not abused in that society, they're scared. I don't know why they're scared, but we're just taught, even if they [the police] come, to comply, don't even look at their faces. Just keep quiet and keep moving. If not, you're gonna... they will take you away from your mum, so I was really scared"*
Participant 3, Focus group 1

*"In terms of anxiety, I think I can't speak for myself, but I remember a bit about my brother's experience and his friends. And I just remember when he was in secondary school, my mum sitting down and having a conversation with him about obviously, it [stop and search] possibly happening to him. And she told him a story that had happened to her friend's son, where the police had stopped him and asked to search, obviously, but had placed their hands inside his pocket and planted something and then arrested him. Even though it wasn't his they actually planted it. So we were always raised with the anxiety in saying that you can never let a police officer go into your pocket. You have to say I will do it myself and show you myself because you don't know what they're gonna do to you, just to be able to say I caught one of them."*
Participant 2, Focus group 1

*"Based on how my family are, the communication with the police… if they don't have to speak to them, they won't. They won't give information that is about anybody else, even if it's the right thing to do, they're just not gonna do it. Because it's just not how they were raised - like you stay away from the police, you don't talk to them and you go about your day."*
Participant 5, Focus group 1

## *Opportunities for improved trust and engagement*

Despite the majority of experiences with the police being negative, **some participants shared positive encounters with the police**. Those that did were quick to mention that these positive interactions had a lasting impression on them:

*"Me and my mum were driving near a police station, and we got stopped by the policeman. And then I was like, 'oh jeez mum'. And actually, my mum had a flat tyre and the policeman changed the flat tyre for my mum. That was really nice and I've always remembered it"*
Participant 2, Focus group 4

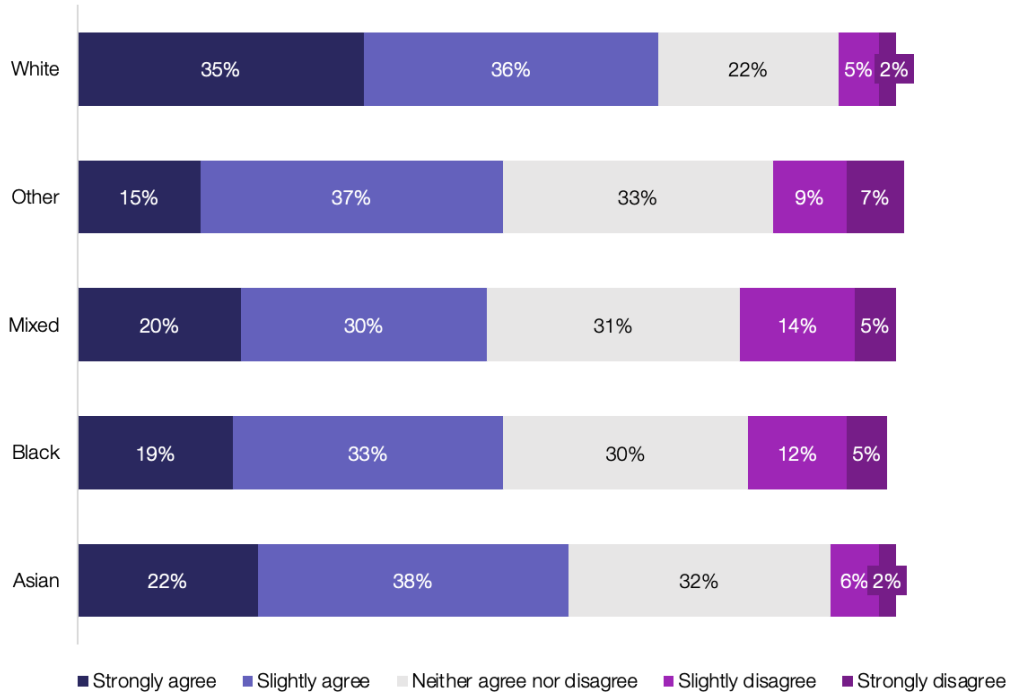
*"I remember when I was living in Kingsmead, we used to have some day, like a big day. Police would come and paint with you and all of these things. You don't really see that, I'm telling you. The police will actually come, they'll paint, because there was a lot of gang stuff on Kingsmead a lot when I was living there. Police will come and paint with you. They will even eat the rice and peas with you, sit down (...) such an amazing day. You don't have that anymore."*
Participant 3, Focus group 1

*"First time I ever physically interacted with one, I would have been like eight or nine. And somebody had hacked into my email address to send a really nasty threatening email to my teacher, who I had a great relationship with. And I remember the police being called…I remember very vividly it was the police officer who talked the principal down to make them see like, this kid is, he's a good egg. You know, there's no way judging by the three and a half minutes I spoke with him, there's no way that I can even imagine him being able to say that sort of stuff. (...) that was the first time I'd ever seen a police officer in real life and that was great. She really did a lot to like, put me in a better mood and de-escalate the situation."*
Participant 2, Focus group 2

### *Most people think the majority of police officers do good work for communities*

One theme that stood out in this research was that despite negative experiences with the police, people across both the polling and focus groups appreciated the work police officers do, and crucially, wanted them to do it well. Within our polling sample, 69 per cent of all adults agreed (33 per cent strongly agreed and 36 per cent slightly agreed) that the majority of officers do good work for communities, regardless of demographics. Black adults were less likely to agree (52 per cent) but were more likely to agree than disagree (Figure 23).

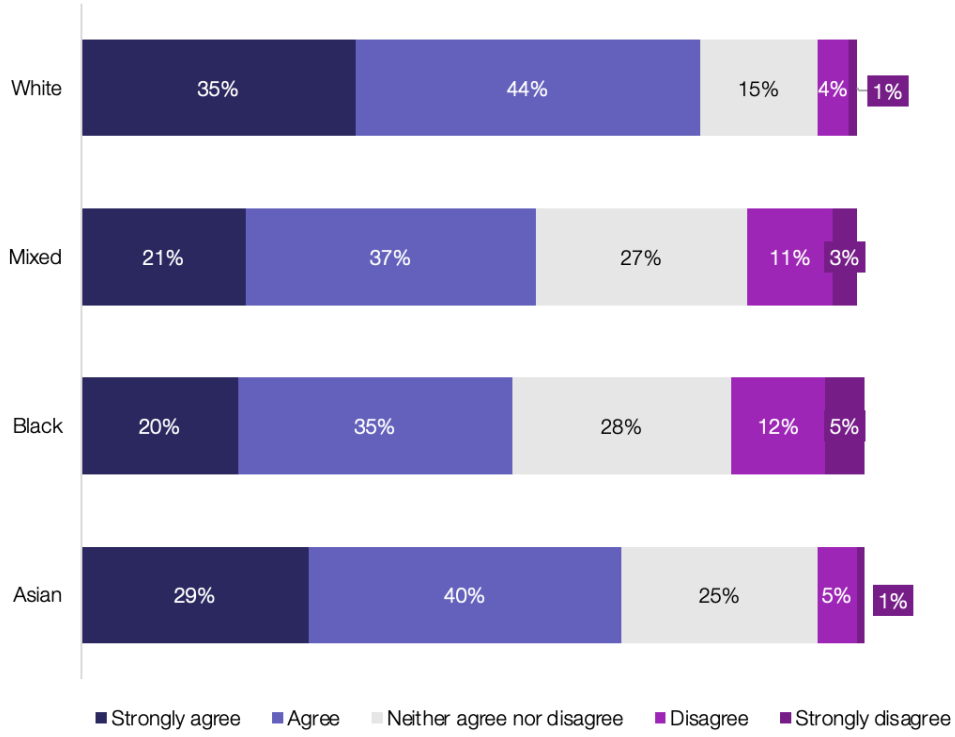
**Figure 23: Responses to : To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**
"I think the majority of police officers do a lot of good work for communities regardless of their race, gender, religion or sexuality"



### *Neighbourhood policing helps improve community relations with the police*

77 per cent of the nationally representative sample either strongly agree (34 per cent) or slightly agree (43 per cent) that they would like to see more police officers in their area. Over half (55 per cent) of Black adults also agreed: 20 per cent strongly agreed and 35 per cent slightly agreed (Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Responses to : To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**
I would like to see more police in my local area




Several people within our focus groups also highlighted the importance of neighbourhood policing where officers have a cultural understanding of the area they are supposed to serve:

*"I have a problem with people policing people that don't live in the neighbourhood. How do you police a neighbourhood you don't live in? You're not policing a neighbourhood you don't live in, I can tell you that... So I don't think a lot of them can help, because there's a way when they come into this neighbourhood... It's a job and you come home and go back"*
Participant 1, Focus group 6

*"You'd need the same type of police officers in your area consistently to build that trust up"*
Participant 2, Focus group 1

*"I think if there was a change, it would have to be community-based for sure. To get everyone sort of on board. I think that's the only way that they could do it."*
Participant 5, Focus group 8

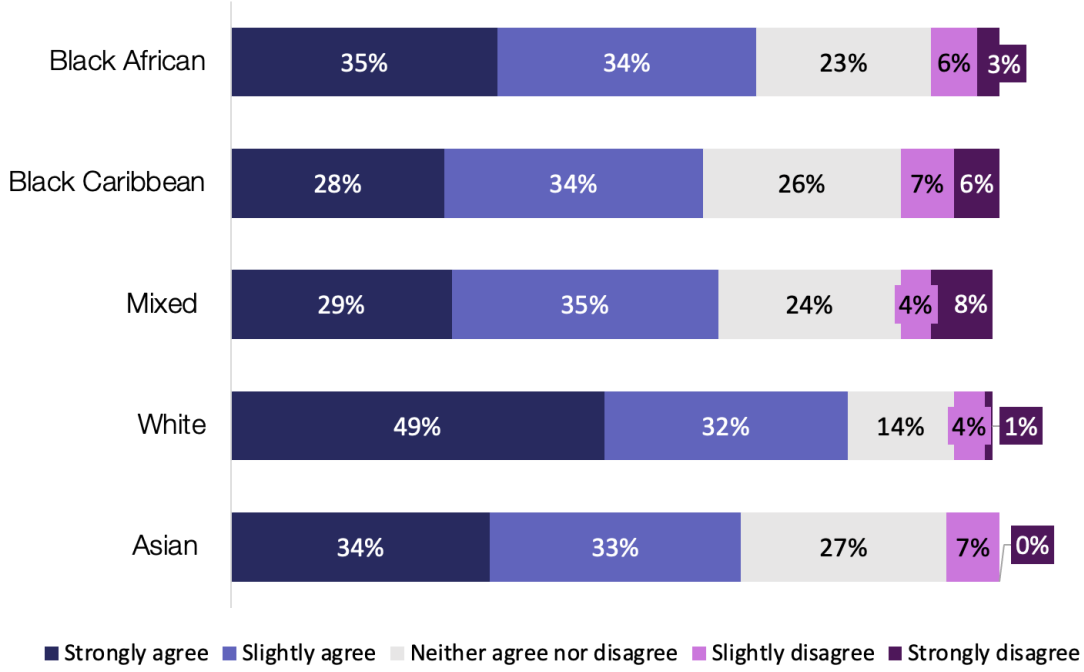
One person described how they wanted to feel supported by the police and protected in the same way White communities are:

> *"It's something that has affected me for over 30 years. So if they stop someone feeling bad about themselves, even though they've never done a crime, if I haven't even nicked a sweet... If that can change, and for me not to think to myself 'can I wear that tonight? That would make a real difference'"*
> Participant 2, Focus group 8

### *Most people want police to do their job well, but feel they do not currently get the service they deserve*

In our survey, 66 per cent of Black adults agreed or strongly agreed that the police had a hard job, but that they wanted them to do it well (Figure 25). These findings suggest that while levels of trust and confidence in the police are lower among Black people compared to the general population, that Black communities want and appreciate good policing.

**Figure 25: Ethnic breakdowns of responses to: *People like me think the police have a difficult job but want them to do it well**




Within our focus groups, participants also recognised the difficulty of policing:

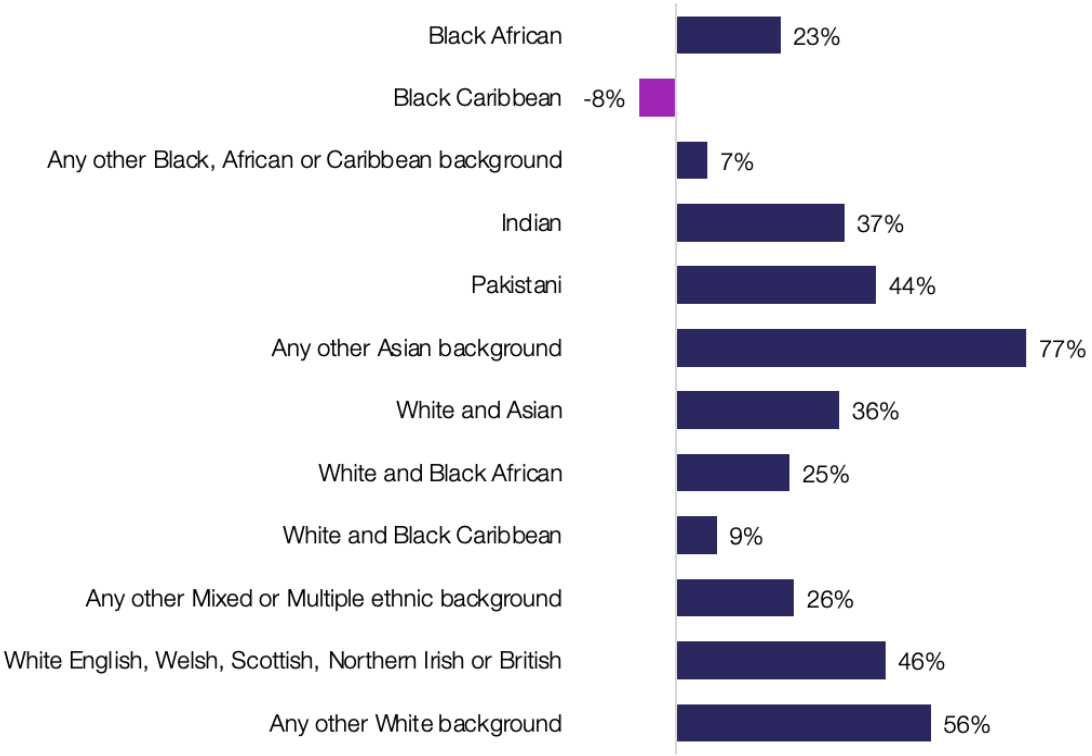
> *"That's the thing. The police have a hard job. I have to admit that. Because on one hand, yes, there's no trust there for the police. But then on the other hand, the gun crime, the knife crime in the area is so high that you think to yourself, I don't see any police on the street, walking. Or maybe I'd see police cars, and when I see them behind me, I think 'oh god, not again'. But I don't see them walking. I feel they're just stretched, completely stretched to the point where I don't know what can be done. They've got one job to get trust from the community and another job to try and reduce knife and gun crime. Which is difficult."*
> Participant 3, Focus group 6

*"At the end of the day, they're humans… The crime is high, and they are seeing things that we don't see everyday. They see people laying down stabbed or shot and it plays with their psychology, so when they go to a different crime scene… How do they react then?"*
Participant 6, Focus group 6

*"Especially with what you see now, some of these knives that you see people carrying in their trousers, you're like, how on earth... And it's like, it's applicable to everybody, White, Black and like everything. So I can definitely understand that you see he's running down the street in the middle of the day with a machete. Of course, you want him to be stopped and stuff. But, again, it's the way that it's done."*
Participant 4, Focus group 7

Across nearly all ethnic backgrounds, net trust (Figure 26) in the police was positive, with more people stating that they trusted the police than distrusted. This indicates that there is an opportunity for policing to take proactive action to regain trust and confidence, particularly for Black people who are still unsure over whether to trust the police or not: 20 per cent of Black Africans and 21 per cent of Black Caribbeans neither trusted nor distrusted the police. However, it is important to note here that Black Caribbeans were the only community (and the only Black community) where more adults actively distrust the police, than trust.

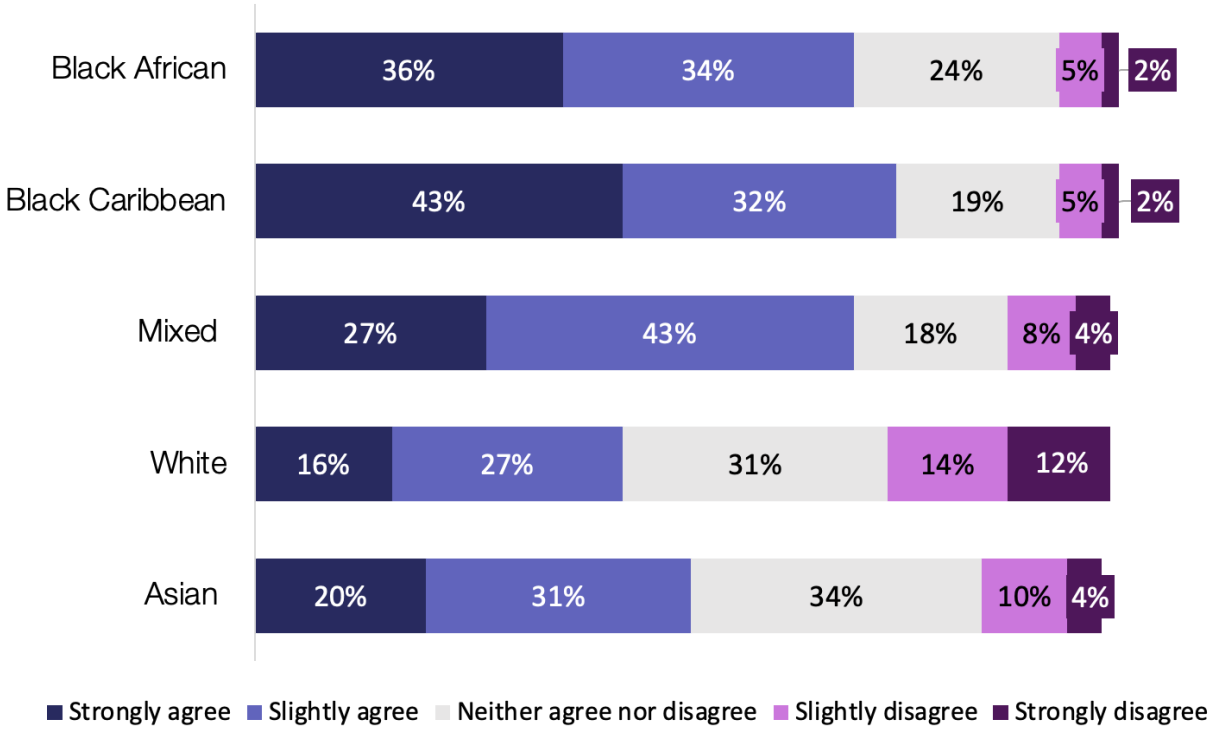
**Figure 26: Ethnic breakdown of net trust, in response to: In general, how much would you say you trust the police?**



*Black people feel they do not get the service they should, from the police*

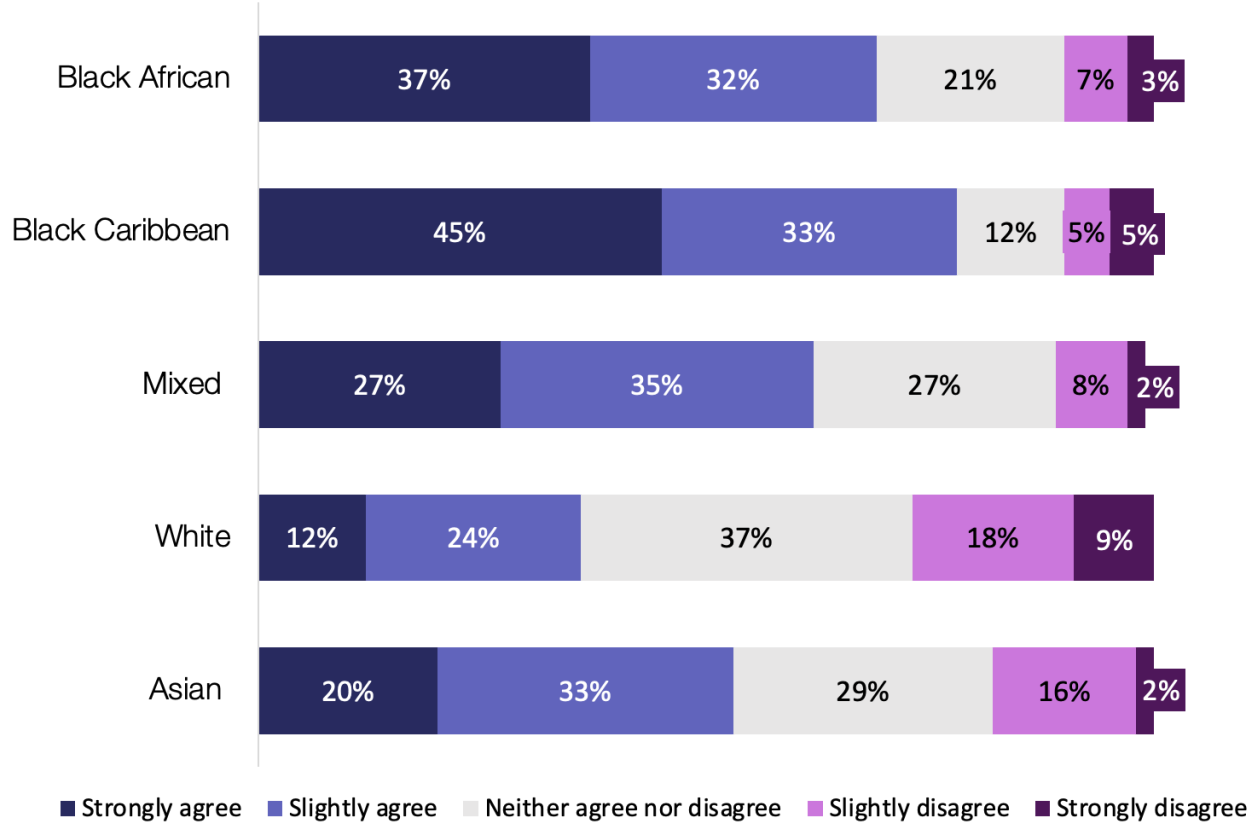
Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of Black adults and 65 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults believe that they neither get the service nor protection that they should get from the police. Substantially fewer Asian (51 per cent) and White (42 per cent) people agree that Black people do not get the service they should get from the police (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Ethnic breakdowns of responses: I think Black people do not get the service that they should get from the police and do not get the protection that they should get**




Additionally, in our nationally representative sample, more adults agree (39 per cent) than disagree (25 per cent) that the police do not treat people from ethnic minorities the same as White people. The majority of people from ethnic minority backgrounds agreed that the police did not treat people from ethnic minority backgrounds the same compared to White people. White adults (36 per cent), however, were half as likely as Black adults (72 per cent) to believe this (Figure 28).

**Figure 28: Ethnic breakdowns of responses: The police do not treat people from ethnic minorities the same as White British people**




Across our focus groups, participants described experiences where they felt let down by the police, and didn't get the service or protection they deserved:

> *"I had an experience where I had to call the police, because I was fifteen, came home from school, [and] this guy basically came to my house thinking I was somebody else, banging off my door, screaming, and attacking me through the door. But I called the police and I said to them that something's gonna happen because this man is doing a lot, and like he ripped out my electricity box, everything was pitch black. (...) The police didn't call me back until four days later and asked if I wanted to report it... So what if I was dead? I was by myself [and] this man is literally fuming."*
>
> Participant 3, Focus group 1

> *"There was a nice lady, she was the liaison officer. And she was alright. But to be honest, I think even though she was alright, what I mean was, she was a little bit more empathic than everyone else was, I don't mean that she was the greatest one, because she could have been a lot more caring and supportive, you know, and being more there, literally on the phone. She weren't. So it just left me feeling like, no one really gives a shit"*
>
> Participant 5, Focus group 5

*"A drunk man, he barged into me and just held onto my wrist so tight and I didn't even say anything. I was just looking at him, even though he wasn't gonna do anything, but he wasn't letting go. So I just called the police and they asked me how do I know him? Even though I'm panicking on the phone, I'm telling you, I don't know this man! And they're still telling me, what, you must know him? Like just dismissing everything like, well, nobody is gonna walk up to you in such a secluded area. But my area clearly is not secluded. I need help. That's why I've called you. So after that, I just didn't call them again,"*

Participant 4, Focus Group

Overall, findings from this chapter show that Black adults have lower levels of trust in the police, compared to every other ethnic group. Additionally, a majority of adults from ethnic minority backgrounds do not feel that the police treat them the same as White people. This raises fundamental questions for policing over the service and relationship police forces have with diverse communities, and Black communities in particular. Across our focus groups and survey, Black adults expressed little trust in police officers, felt that they would not be treated the same as White people, and that they and their community did not receive the service or protection that they should from the police. Despite this, a majority of all adults, regardless of ethnic background, agreed that the police have a hard job to do, and want them to do it well, highlighting opportunities for policing to constructively engage with and rebuild trust within diverse communities. Black adults want and appreciate good policing, but at present, do not believe they are receiving the service they should.

## Chapter 3: Views on stop and search, in principle

Our survey and focus group findings suggest that in principle, there is support for the targeted use of stop and search as a policing tactic. However there are clear concerns about how stop and search is used in practice[57], particularly regarding police conduct during searches. This chapter discusses our findings around participants' views on the use of stop and search in general, and across various policing scenarios, as well as views from focus groups.

### Support for the use of stop and search

Polling participants were asked if they supported the use of stop and search across a range of scenarios related to reasonable grounds to stop an individual (see Figure 29). After answering the questions, participants were then asked to guess or estimate what percentage of searches had a positive outcome rate.[58] After being told that **77 per cent of searches require 'no further action' and only 11 per cent of searches result in an arrest**,[59] participants were then asked to rate their level of support for the same reasonable grounds scenarios *again*, to see if their opinions changed after being given the correct information[60].

#### *Support for the use of stop and search prior to being given positive outcome statistics:*

The scenario with the highest level of support was the use of stop and search powers if the police suspect that an individual has a weapon on them (86 per cent), the second if an individual is suspected to be in possession of Class A drugs (81 per cent), and third if an individual was suspected to be in possession of Class B drugs (68 per cent). Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of participants supported the use of a section 60 search. This refers to a stop and search conducted without reasonable grounds in an area where serious violence may take place.[61] Additionally, 62 per cent believed that the police should have the right to stop people previously convicted of a knife crime without reasonable suspicion. Less than half (43 per cent) of adults supported the use of stop and search powers without reasonable grounds.

[57] Respondents agreed that in principle, police officers should have the 'right' (ability) to conduct stop and search under targeted and specific grounds; however, there were concerns about how these powers were used in practice

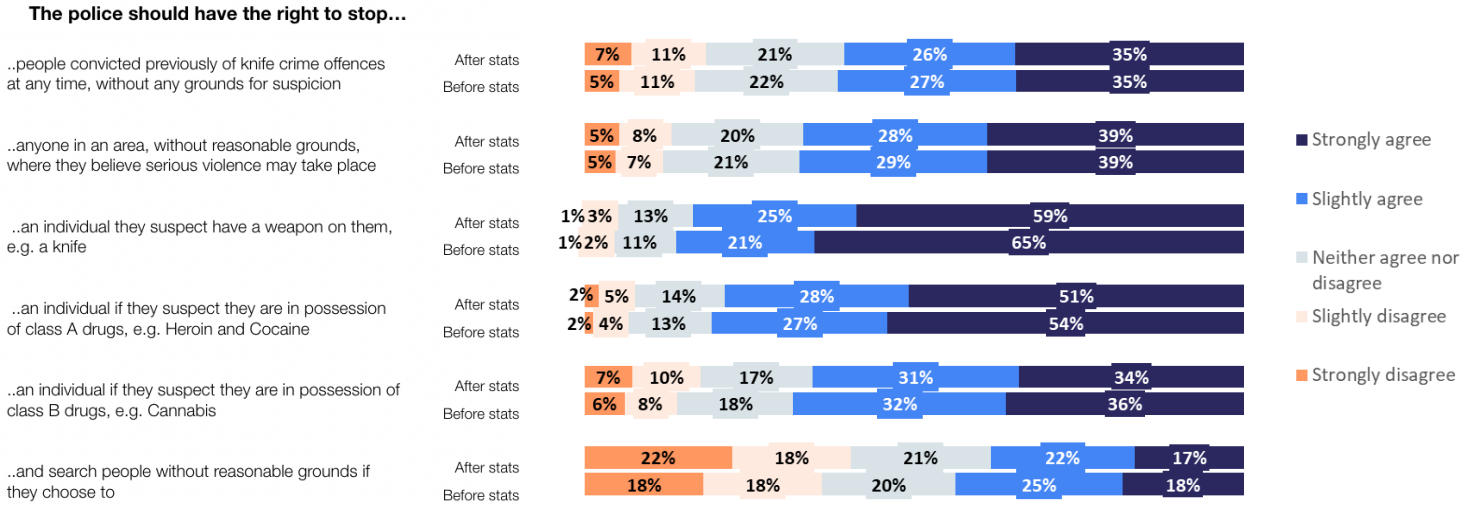
[58] A positive outcome rate is defined as: a stop that results in either an arrest or any on the street sanction such as caution, summons,or penalty notice.

[59] Home Office (2022). *National statistics: Police powers and procedures: Stop and search arrests, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2021 second edition.*

[60]Participants were provided with the arrest and positive outcome rates for Stop and Search conducted under PACE powers, **not for section 60 searches conducted under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which have a lower arrest rate of 4% (and 1% for offensive weapons)**

[61] Section 60 (s60) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (CJPOA) enables officers to conduct 'no suspicion' stop and search for dangerous instruments or offensive weapons. Section 60 is only used in anticipation of or in response to serious violence and is limited in duration and geographical reach. From:

**Figure 29: Responses to: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Before and after being given positive outcome rates)**




## What constitutes reasonable grounds?

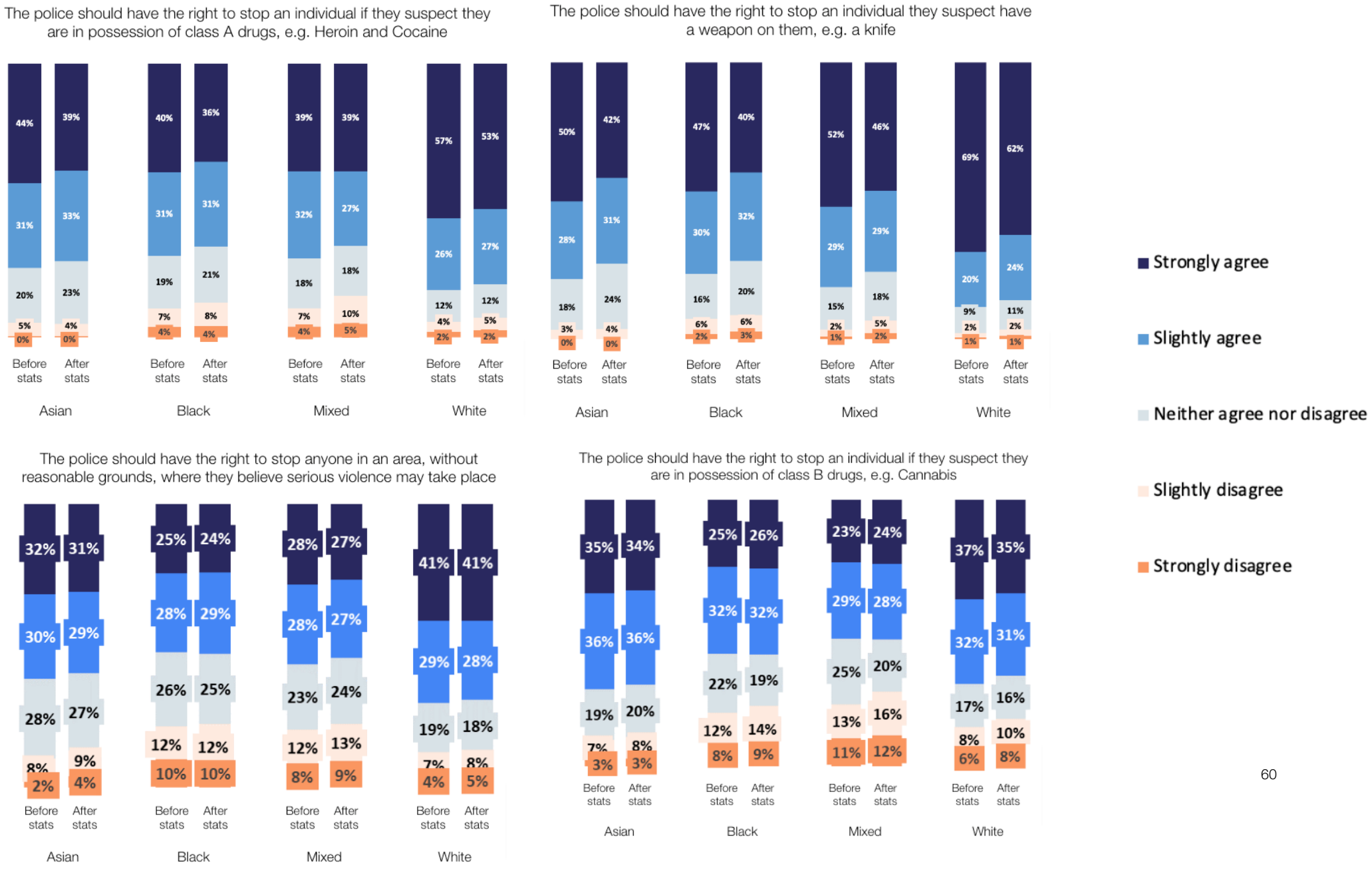
Participants were also asked their views on what constitutes reasonable grounds[62] to stop and search an individual. These questions were informed by experiences raised within our focus groups, as well as contentious examples of reasonable grounds discussed by key stakeholders and experts. Just over two-thirds (69 per cent) of adults felt that the smell of cannabis on an individual driving a car was reasonable grounds to stop and search someone. There were also similar levels of agreement for individuals sitting alone smelling of cannabis (63 per cent), but less support for stopping a passerby smelling of cannabis, with only 56 per cent agreeing (either strongly or slightly). Only 46 per cent of individuals thought an individual repeatedly cycling around an area was reasonable grounds to stop and search someone, and only 38 per cent thought driving an expensive car in a high-crime area constitutes reasonable grounds.

## Ethnic differences in support for stop and search scenarios (prior to receiving positive outcome rates)

When broken down by ethnicity, White adults were the most likely to support the use of stop and search powers if police suspect that an individual has a weapon on them (89 per cent), and Black adults were the least supportive (77 per cent). For possession of class A drugs, again we see lower levels of support for Black adults (71 per cent) compared to White adults (83 per cent). We see the greatest difference in support between Black and White adults for use of section 60 stop and searches. Just 53 per cent of Black adults supported the right to use stop and search under section 60, compared to 70 per cent of White adults (Figure 30).

[62]Full list of questions on what constitutes reasonable grounds included:
1) The smell of cannabis among passers-by is reasonable grounds to stop and search an individual
2) An individual sitting alone that smells very strongly of cannabis is reasonable grounds to stop and search an individual
3) An individual repeatedly cycling around an area is reasonable grounds to stop and search them
4) An individual driving an expensive car in a high-crime area is reasonable grounds to stop them and ask the occupants questions
5) An individual driving a car that smells of cannabis is reasonable grounds to stop and search the individual/vehicle

**Figure 30: Ethnicity breakdown of responses to: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**



### *Support for the use of stop and search after being given positive outcome statistics*

Across all stop and search scenarios, after being given information on positive outcome rates for stop and search, there were minimal changes in agreement, suggesting that there are many factors that contribute to support for stop and search alongside positive outcome rates. This may also indicate a lack of surprise, or acceptance among the public, that the majority of stops do not result in further action.

### *Views on stop and search from focus group participants*

Participants across the eight focus groups we conducted recognised the importance of the use of stop and search as a policing power, however expressed clear concerns with how it is used, and the perceived lack of reasonable grounds behind stops:

> *"I feel like all of us here would say that stop and search isn't good in any situation. But I feel like until something has happened to you, where you realise that maybe if that person was stopped and searched before, then it would have prevented the situation. Like for example, if God forbid, like any of my brothers got like stabbed or something like that, I would want to have that reassurance that there was a police officer that could have like, searched them beforehand to stop it from getting that bad, but I feel like you just have to have reasonable cause. Don't just discriminate against people just like that, because you can"*
> Participant 1, Focus group 1

> *"I know a couple of people that's been stopped and searched and they found firearms in their vehicle and stuff like that"*
> Participant 2, Focus group 4

> *"I do think it should exist, but I think they should justify [it], there should be a process where they should explain fully why they've come to the conclusion that they feel they should search you."*
> Participant 3, Focus group 3

One person acknowledged that police officers conduct searches in areas with high crime for a reason, but questioned the reasoning behind excessive stop and searches of individuals:

> *"Police officers, they do go off statistics. So like you said, they wouldn't be in Chelsea, for no reason, because there's no crime. But in Hackney, there is crime, so they have a reason to be here. And I feel like their presence has a reason, but what they're doing doesn't have reasoning behind it."*
> Participant 4, Focus group 1

While some participants acknowledge that stop and search may successfully identify and seize weapons, many were sceptical about the ability of stop and search powers to actually prevent serious violence and knife crime:

*"I think it's a hit and miss because I understand the importance of stop and search because sometimes you might find something on someone, and you've now helped to save a life, I get that. But the way that they use it and the things that they're doing right now, I would say I don't agree with it."*
Participant 4, Focus group 1

*"(...) stop and search as a whole, I don't think it's that effective. If you're lucky, you can prevent a crime, you know. Like you can, if you're lucky, catch somebody who's got a knife on them, finally you've stopped one person who might potentially have used that knife, great."*
Participant 2, Focus group 2

Some people also highlighted their belief that stop and search powers need to be more targeted in order to achieve their function, using local intelligence to identify crime hotspots and assess the further criminal network of those who have been arrested after a successful stop and search.

*"I don't think that as a whole, it is effective in really reducing crime, because if this person doesn't commit a crime, who's to say that his associates, or a rival or anybody else isn't going to commit another crime in that timeframe or that time?"*
Participant 2, Focus group 1

One person felt that the police had unbalanced priorities for tackling and preventing crime and conducted a disproportionate number of searches targeting Black individuals for minor offences:

*"You're talking about a bit of weed and a bit of this but actually, you've got a paedophile living across the road and you don't care about that. We're not following that person. So I don't believe in that. It's just a valuable excuse to get as many of us [Black people] off the road as you can."*
Participant 5, Focus group 1

Although participants generally supported the use of stop and search powers for suspected drug possession, many felt these searches were disproportionately used on Black males and conducted in a disrespectful and excessively forceful way. Ethnicity is associated with significant disparities within the CJS that are particularly acute for Black men above 18 years old, in relation to drug offences. These disparities range from Black men being 5.4 times more likely than White men to be arrested for drug offences, to Asian men being approximately 1.4 times more likely[63]. This perception of disproportionality is corroborated by data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales which found that Black people are no more likely to use drugs than White people,[64] echoed by research from the London School of Economics (LSE) and Release.[65]

[63] Stott et al. (2021). Understanding ethnic disparities in involvement in crime - a limited scope rapid evidence review. Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. GOV.UK
[64] Home Office (2019) *Drug misuse: findings from the 2018 to 2019 CSEW.* National Statistics. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2018-to-2019-csew
[65] Shiner, M., Carre, Z., Delsol, R., Eastwood, N. (2018). *The Colour of Injustice: 'Race', drugs and law enforcement in England and Wales.* Available at: https://www.lse.ac.uk/united-states/Assets/Documents/The-Colour-of-Injustice.pdf

"*They stop and search a lot of black males. And you're more likely to find drugs on like White males, okay, so it's not really having an effect, because the White males are just now selling loads of drugs and getting away with it*"
Participant 2, Focus group 1

"*I know, you need to make sure that you control the drugs in the area. But there's a way of going about things. You don't need to come up to me up on level 10 like that, at least have a conversation with us instead*"
Participant 1, Focus group 4

### *A proxy measure of general support for stop and search:*

The scenarios[66] described above; (scenarios 2-5 referenced in figure 29) were real life examples of reasonable grounds used to stop and search an individual. As a way of contextualising general support for the use of stop and search, we used scenarios 2-5 as a proxy by calculating a combined metric based on the number of people who supported all four of the real world scenarios (2-5), before they were given further information.

Our findings suggest that 51 per cent of our nationally representative sample supported all four of the real life uses of stop and search in the scenarios provided. Overall support was highest among White adults, with a majority (54 per cent) strongly or slightly agreeing with all four of the real life scenarios provided, compared to only 33 per cent of Black adults (34 per cent of Black African, and 28 per cent of Black Caribbean adults). A majority of participants from ethnic minority backgrounds did not agree with all four scenarios provided.

When split by age, support for the proxy measure of stop and search was substantially lower among younger adults compared to older. Only 34 per cent of adults aged 18-24 and 28 per cent of Black, 18-24-year-olds, supported all four, real life uses of stop and search, compared to 64 per cent of all adults aged 65 and over. Black adults in London were also less likely to express support for the use of stop and search in all four of the scenarios provided. 26 per cent of Black adults in London supported the proxy measure of general support for stop and search compared to 40 per cent of all adults in London (in our nationally representative sample) and 37 per cent of Black adults who lived outside of London.

[66] Responses to: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
[1] The police should have the right to stop and search people without reasonable grounds if they choose to
[2] The police should have the right to stop an individual if they suspect they are in possession of class B drugs, e.g. Cannabis
[3] The police should have the right to stop an individual if they suspect they are in possession of class A drugs, e.g. Heroin and Cocaine
[4] The police should have the right to stop an individual they suspect have a weapon on them, e.g. a knife
[5] The police should have the right to stop anyone in an area, without reasonable grounds, where they believe serious violence may take place
[6] The police should have the right to stop people convicted previously of knife crime offences at any time, without any grounds for suspicion

**Table 4:** Percentage of participants who agreed with scenarios 2-5 in Figure 29.

| | Asian | Black | Mixed | White | Total sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Support** | 46% | 33% | 31% | 54% | **51%** |
| **Does not support** | 54% | 67% | 69% | 46% | **49%** |

**It is important to highlight that fewer adults supported the use of stop and search for section 60 and class B drug searches, which skews the combined support for all four stop and search scenarios.** This does not reduce the validity of the proxy measure, but instead provides context to the lower overall figure of general support for stop and search. While most adults supported the use of stop and search in all four of the scenarios provided, the majority of adults from ethnic minority backgrounds would not support stop and search in all four scenarios. This suggests that people believe officers should have the right to conduct stop and search, when it is targeted on the specific grounds that are important to them.

Despite low support among Black adults for the general use of stop and search; support for stop and search substantially increases when targeted on specific grounds, in particular, searching for weapons, or class A drugs. Before being provided with any further information on the use of stop and search, 71 per cent of Black adults agreed that the police should have the right to stop an individual if they suspected they were in possession of Class A drugs, and 77 per cent agreed if the police suspected the individual had a weapon on them.

On the whole, our findings indicate that support for stop and search among Black people (and the general population) depends both on the grounds for the search and on the person you ask. Findings from both the survey and focus groups show that it would be crude to generalise support from complex and diverse communities for the broad range of stop and search powers. However, it is clear from our findings that there is support in principle, for police officers having the 'right' to stop and search individuals on specific and targeted grounds, notably searches for weapons or class A drugs. There was little change in support for stop and search across the scenarios after participants were given information on positive outcome and arrest rates. This suggests there is support for the use of stop and search as a tool, even if the likelihood of finding a prohibited item during the search is lower than imagined.

Additionally, a majority of adults supported the use of stop and search more broadly, but this support was substantially lower across all ethnic minority groups, and was lowest for Black, and Mixed ethnicity adults. Discussions within our focus groups show that while there are Black adults who see stop and search as a useful tactic for tackling knife crime in particular, the lower levels of support for the general use of stop and search are influenced by concerns over racial disproportionality, how the police engage with Black communities and people who have been stopped, and whether stop and search is targeted on the crimes that communities see as important.

## Chapter 4. Views on stop and search, in practice

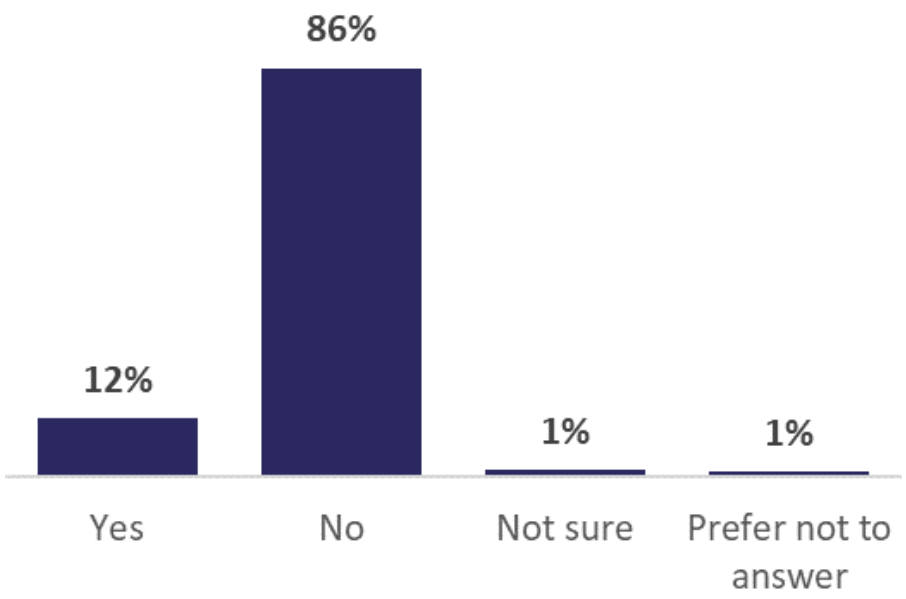
This chapter discusses participants' experiences of stop and search and the impact it had on them, with a particular focus on Black adults. Across all ethnicities, the majority of our polling sample did not experience stop and search to be conducted properly by the police. For the majority of our sample, police did not explain the reasons for the search and participants did not believe that there were reasonable grounds to stop them.

However, for Black and Mixed ethnicity participants, a higher percentage had a negative experience of stop and search across each area compared to White adults. Black and Mixed ethnicity adults were also more likely to feel humiliated, embarrassed or traumatised than White adults. This suggests that poor standards in policing and a failure to give people the service they deserve is a widespread issue, with a particular impact on Black and Mixed ethnicity adults.

### Type and frequency of stop and search

Overall, 12 per cent of our nationally representative adult sample had been stopped and searched (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Responses to: Have you ever been stopped and searched by the police?**

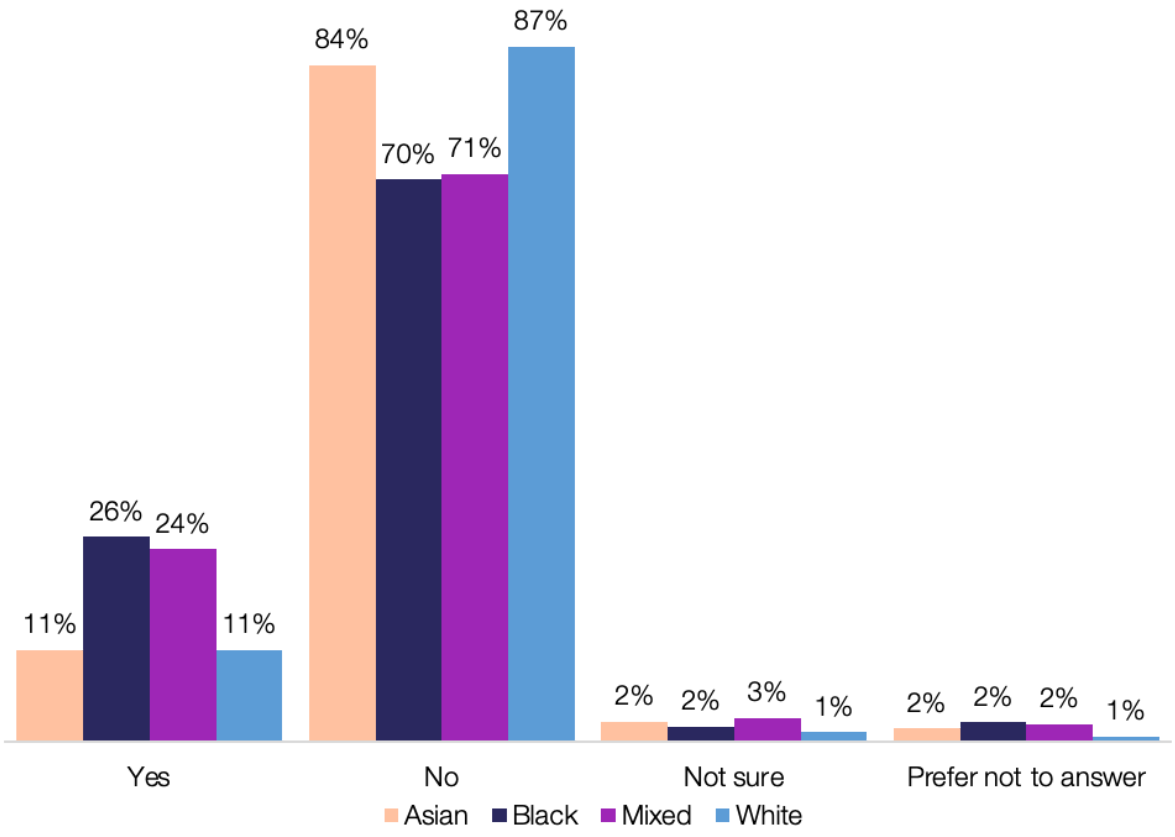



*Base size: Total sample (3000); Those who have been searched (434)*

### *Stop and search by ethnicity*

When split by ethnicity, (Figure 32), 26 per cent of Black adults in our sample reported that they had been stopped and searched by the police, compared with 11 per cent of White adults.

**Figure 32: Responses to: Have you ever been stopped and searched by the police?[67]**

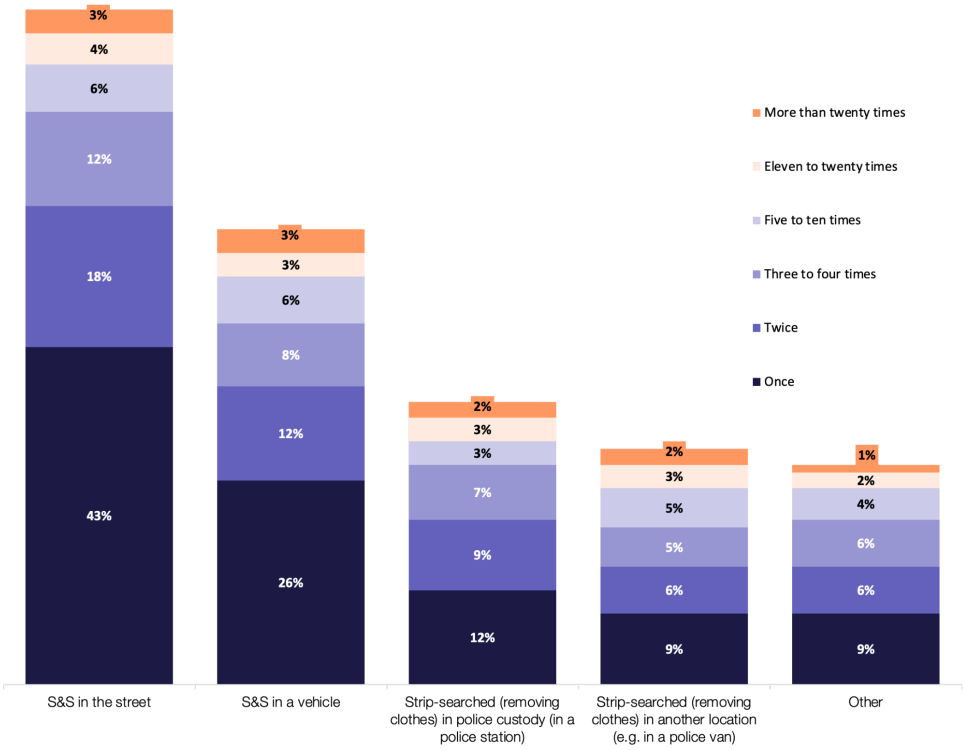



### *Volume and type of search*

For those who had been stopped and searched, most searches took place in the street (87 per cent) or in a vehicle (58 per cent), typically once or twice (Figure 33).

[67] *The sample size of Asian adults who had been stopped and searched (n=28) was too small to robustly analyse within this chapter.

**Figure 33: Response to: Please select all of the following statements that apply to you [someone who has been stopped[68]] over the past ten years.**



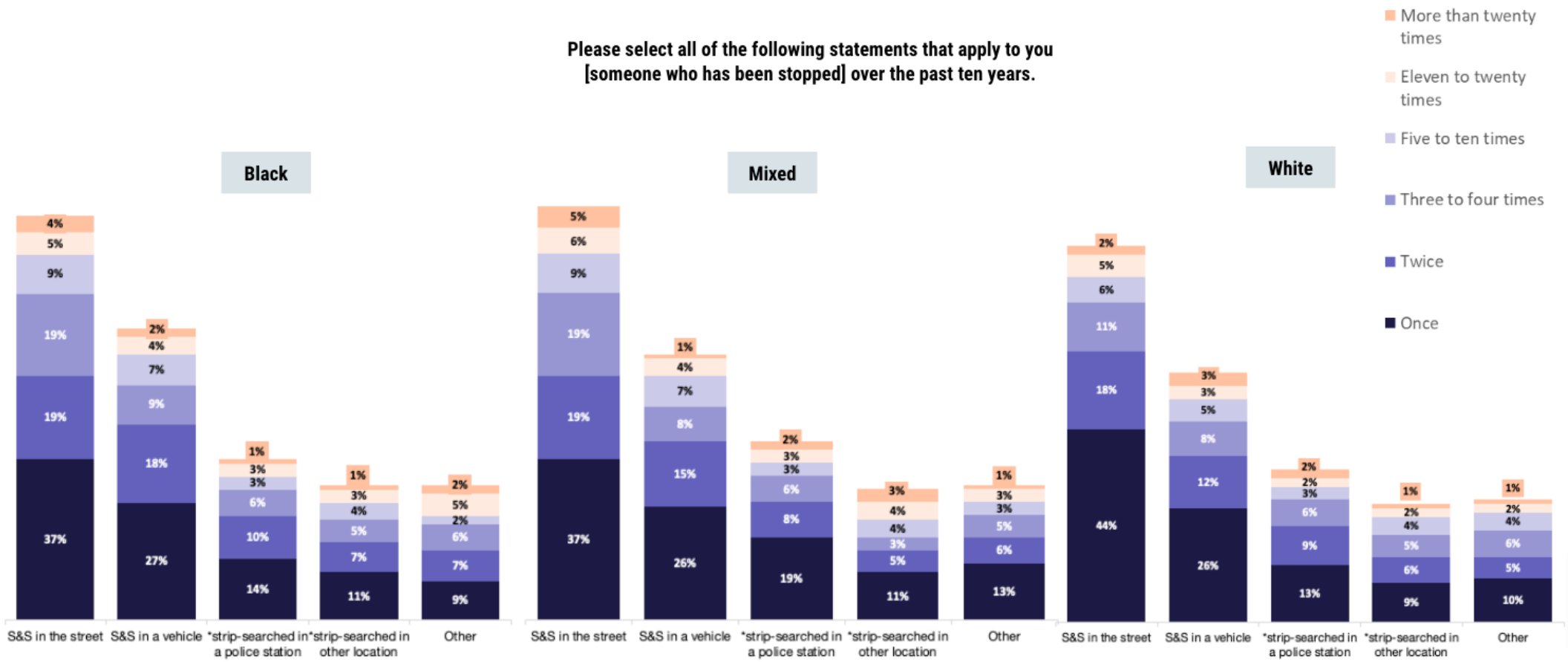

## *Volume and type of search split by ethnicity*

Black and Mixed ethnicity adults were also more likely to have experienced a higher frequency and volume of searches across all search types compared to White adults. A higher percentage of Black adults had been stopped and searched for each search type, and were more likely to have been searched multiple times compared with White adults (Figure 34). These findings suggest clear disproportionality in the experiences of stop and search across each type of stop within our polling sample. These findings are in line with previous research looking at disproportionality in the use of stop and search in the UK[69].

[68] *S&S in figure 33, refers to: "stopped and searched"

[69] HMICFRS (2021) *Disproportionate use of police powers: A spotlight on stop and search and the use of force.*
Keeling, P. (2017). *No respect: Young BAME men, the police and stop and search*. Criminal Justice Alliance.
Bland, N., Miller, J., Quinton, P., & Willis, C. F. (2000). *Upping the PACE?: An Evaluation of the Recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on Stops and Searches* (No. 128). Home Office, Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.
Kyprianides, A., Yesberg, J. A., Milani, J., Bradford, B., Quinton, P., & Clark–Darby, O. (2020). *Perceptions of police use of force: the importance of trust.* Policing: an international journal
IOPC (2020) *Learning Recommendations on Stop and Search.*
IOPC (2021). *Public feel confident police respond fairly and proportionately to incidents, but questions remain around use of stop and search.*

**Figure 34: Ethnicity breakdowns in responses to: Have you ever been stopped and searched by the police?**



### *Repeated, unnecessary stops*

Within our focus groups, several participants described personal experiences of stop and search, either their own, or close family members:

> *"There isn't anybody I know that has never been stopped. And well, we've never been in jail."*
> Participant 2, Focus group 8

> *"My brother... it feels like five times a week he gets stopped driving his car. Constantly, all the time. It's happened five times in one day before when he was driving from work and the police have stopped him because they want to check the car's not stolen. So they see a Black guy driving a nice car and think, oh he's a drug dealer"*
> Participant 4, Focus group 2

> *"When I was at uni, initially I was doing a law degree (…) And I was always in central London. And I always got stopped every single day, Monday to Friday. It got to the point where when I went into the chambers, I spoke to [my old boss] about this. He made a formal complaint, because I would just get stopped. I wasn't wearing a hoodie. I was dressed appropriately for the job."*
> Participant 3, Focus group 7

> *"My brother-in-law, he's like 36 now, but you know, dark skin, beard, always wears a hat or a hoodie and he constantly gets stopped. And I'm always telling him, take your hat off, you shouldn't wear your hoodie while you're driving and stuff like that. And all those things, I'm almost saying, it's almost like it's your fault you got stopped, but really, it shouldn't be like that"*
> Participant 2, Focus group 6

### *Strip searches*

As part of a standard stop and search, a police officer can require those being searched to remove an outer coat, jacket or gloves[70]. This can take place anywhere and does not require the person being searched to be taken out of public view.

**Strip searches** refer to any searches that take place out of public view. There are two types: 'More Thorough' searches - where an individual removes more than an outer coat, jacket or gloves, e.g. a T-shirt and 'More Thorough Searches with Intimate Parts of the Body Exposed', where an individual is required to remove all or most of their clothing. Each type of search is summarised in the table below:

[70] Parliament. House of Commons (2022). *Police powers: Strip searching.* Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9593/CBP-9593.pdf

| Level | Extent of search | Who can search? | Where can you search? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Standard:** Up to Jacket, Outer coat & Gloves removed | Any Officer | Public Place |
| 2 | **More Thorough:** Headgear & footwear removed | Any Officer | **Out of public view** |
| 3 | **More Thorough**: Religious headgear only removed | Same sex where practicable | Out of public view |
| 4 | **More Thorough:** Upper and lower clothing removed | Same sex | Out of public view |
| 5 | **More Thorough Intimate Parts exposed** | Same sex | **Out of public view (not in police vehicle)** |

**Table 5:** Types of search by Level: Metropolitan Police Service: FOI Request. May 2022[71]

As part of our survey, we asked participants if they had been strip searched in a police vehicle, i.e. a More Thorough search without intimate parts exposed, and if they had been strip searched in police custody, i.e. a More Thorough search with Intimate Parts Exposed.[72]

### Our findings

Of those who had been stopped and searched, 30 per cent had been strip searched in a police vehicle (More Thorough Search without intimate parts exposed) and 37 per cent had also been strip searched in a police station (More Thorough Search with intimate parts exposed) (Figure 35).

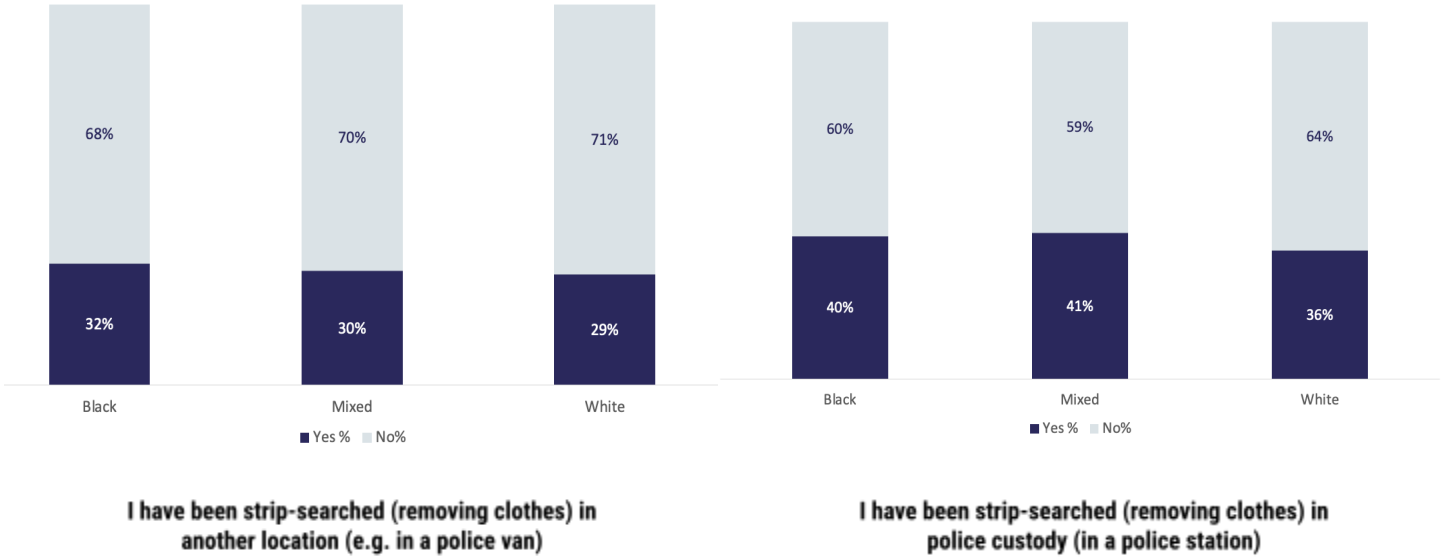
When split by ethnicity, we see lower levels of disproportionality compared to other types of search: for strip searches in a police vehicle or another location (MTS without intimate parts exposed), the figures for those who had been stopped and searched were 32 per cent of Black adults, 29 per cent of White adults and 30 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults. For strip searches in police custody (MTS with intimate parts exposed): 40 per cent of Black adults had experienced this, compared to 36 per cent of White adults and 41 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults.

In London, 33 per cent of Black adults who had been stopped and searched had been strip searched in a police vehicle or another location (MTS without intimate parts exposed), compared to 39 per cent for White adults. In contrast, 43 per cent of Black adults (who had been stopped and searched) had been strip searched in police custody (MTS with intimate parts exposed), compared to 41 per cent of White adults in London.

[71] Metropolitan Police (2022). *Process of Strip Search.* Available at: https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/d/may-2022/process-of-strip-search/

[72] The wording of our questions about strip search are purposely ambiguous due to the sensitive nature of the question. Strip searches in police custody could also involve a more thorough search with or without intimate parts exposed.

**Figure 35: Responses to: Have you ever been strip searched within the last 10 years**




*Base size: sample who has been strip searched in police custody (370)*
*Base size: sample who has been strip searched in another location (293)*

## Patterns/trends in experiences of stop and search

### *Poor communication during searches*

Several people who had been searched felt the police officers did not communicate well, did not clearly explain the reasons for searching and did not behave in a respectful or fair manner when carrying out the search.

> "*I don't think they were really helpful. They didn't explain anything to me. But again, I was really young and I was alone. And I didn't necessarily know all of my rights then.*"
> Participant 6, Focus group 4

> "*I think they use a lot of vague terms like suspicious and like you fit the description and it's like, it's not actually telling you the description. Because anybody can perceive someone's act as suspicious because that's my perception of them.*"
> Participant 7, Focus group 3

> "*We use the word reasonable to basically make up whatever meaning we want. Like, you know, if you have reasonable suspicion, someone's got drugs, but you're just looking for anything, you'll just use that to find something*"
> Participant 5, Focus group 3

Several Black women in the focus groups also discussed their own, unique experiences with the police. They felt that officers were not aware of how to properly engage with them, and would wrongly interpret how they spoke as being aggressive.

> *"As a woman, it's different, like engagement with the police. I think people forget that Black women have negative experiences with the police."*
> Participant 4, Focus group 2

> *"But for me as a Black woman, especially having, I feel like we just have this stigma of being aggressive."*
> Participant 7, Focus group 3

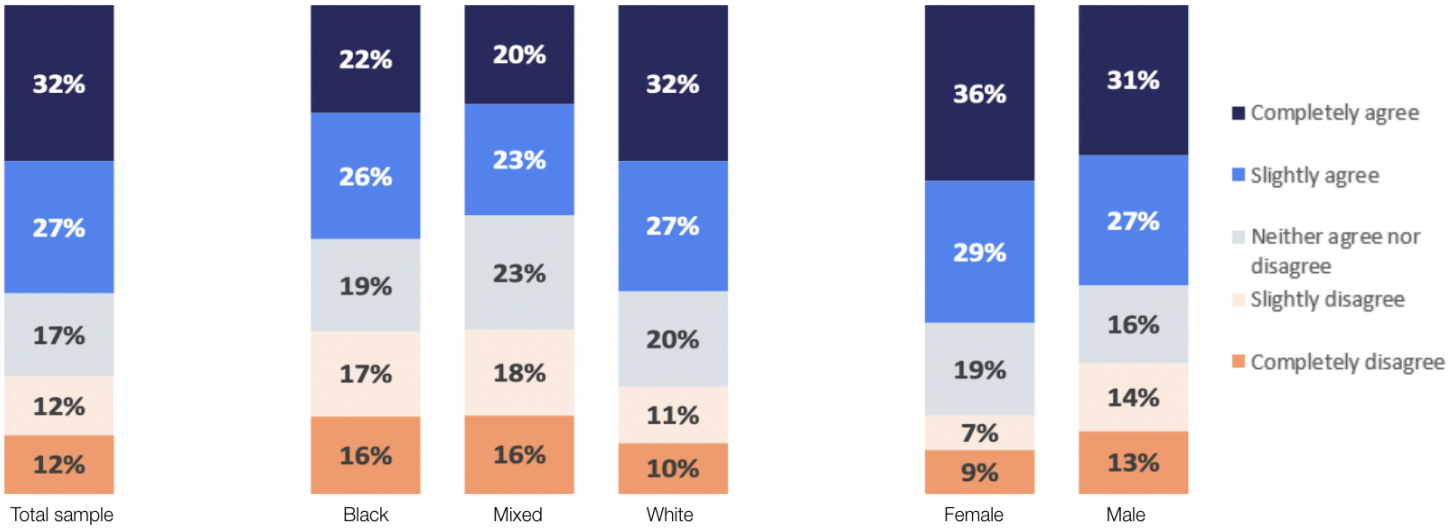
> *"I do believe that just culturally, the way we might express ourselves, the way we speak, can be misconstrued as being aggressive."*
> Participant 7, Focus group 3

### *Failure to clearly explain the reasons for a stop and search*

Less than two thirds of our nationally representative sample (who were stopped and searched), felt that police officers had clearly explained their reasons for stopping them, with considerable variation by ethnicity (Figure 36). The figure for White adults was 61 per cent, but for Black adults it was 48 per cent (52 per cent of Black African and 41 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and 42 per cent for Mixed ethnicity adults (53 per cent of White and Black African, and 36 per cent of White and Black Caribbean adults).

We also see gender and regional differences: over a third of Black adults (39 per cent of Black women and 34 per cent of Black men) felt that officers had not given them a clear explanation. 45 per cent of Black adults in London felt that officers had clearly explained to them why they were being stopped, compared to 61 per cent of White adults in London, and 51 per cent of Black adults outside of London.

**Figure 36: Responses to: Police officers clearly explained why they were stopping me (Agree/Disagree)**

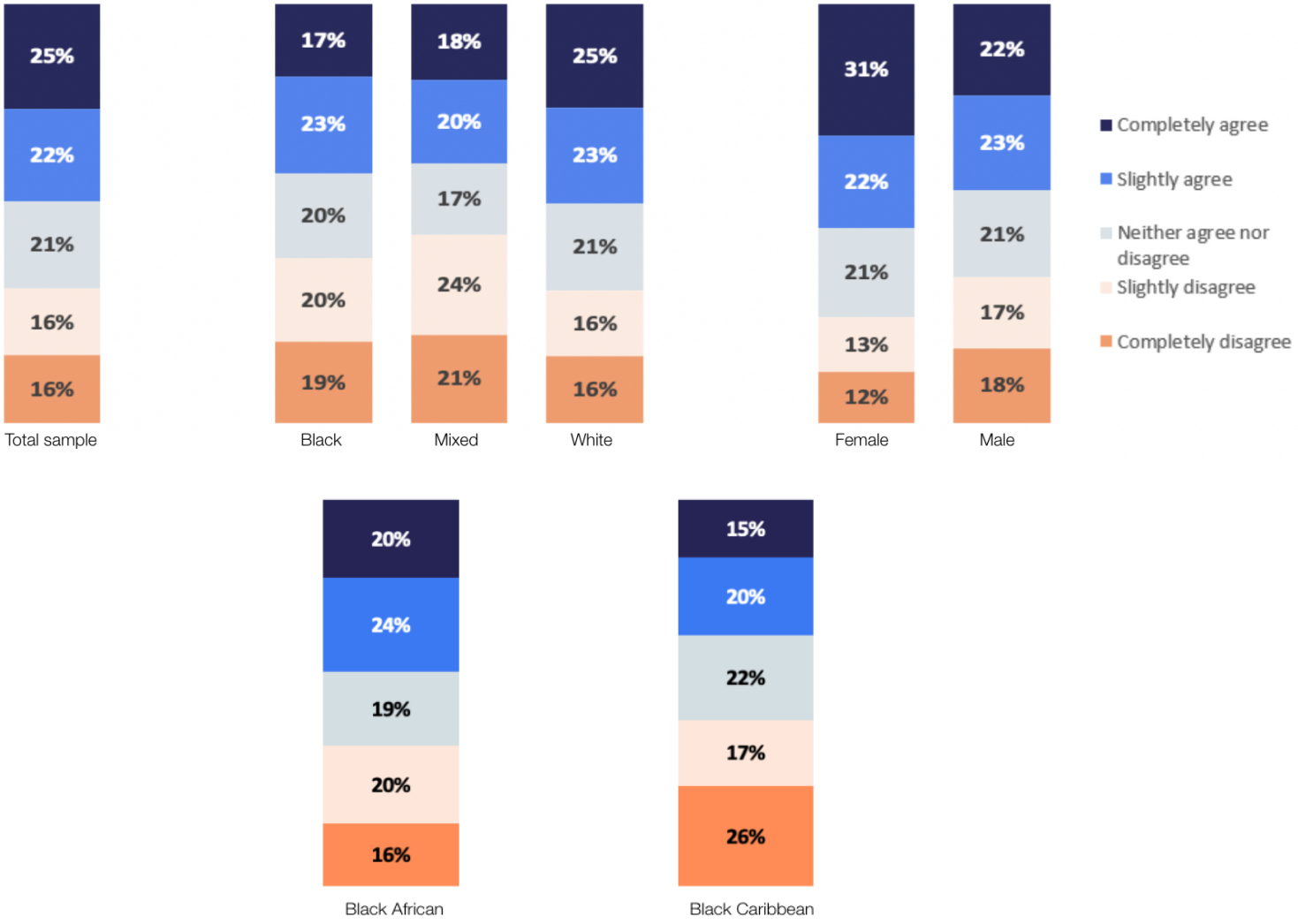



### *Failure to explain an individual's rights during a search*

Alongside reasons for being stopped, just 47 per cent (of our total sample who had been stopped) felt the officers clearly explained their rights during the search, or how to give feedback afterwards (Figure 37).

This means less than half of the people in our survey, regardless of their ethnicity, felt their rights were clearly explained to them during a search. When broken down by ethnicity, more White adults (48 per cent) felt their rights were clearly explained compared to 40 per cent of Black adults and 38 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults. These figures are low across the board, and particularly low for Black (44 per cent of Black African and 35 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and Mixed ethnicity adults (51 per cent of White and Black African, and 29 per cent of White and Black Caribbean adults).

**Figure 37: Responses to: Did officers clearly explain your rights to you, and how to give feedback afterwards?**




Similarly, across all of our focus groups, participants felt that if they weren't aware of their rights during a stop and search, police officers would take advantage of their lack of understanding. Many people described feeling a duty to educate themselves, their family and their friends on their rights, so that they would not be taken advantage of in the future:

> *"I think that they sometimes like to use the knowledge that you don't have against you."*
> Participant 4, Focus group 3

> *"Because yes, okay it's up to us to educate ourselves. But we're not going to know, the legal system as well as police officers will. So in that moment, tell me exactly what my rights are. Tell me*

*exactly what you were stopping me for. And tell me what you're about to do, before you've even laid one finger on me.*"
Participant 3, Focus group 1

*"I have to start teaching all black boys and girls how to be a lawyer without having a degree."*
Participant 1, Focus group 6

*"I just feel like if you teach children that from young, then they grow up with those rights, they can tell their friends, and it just ensures that police know that they're being looked upon, and they shouldn't overstep their boundaries."*
Participant 1, Focus group 1

Several people also felt that it was a conscious decision by the police to keep members of the public uninformed about their rights during a stop and search:

*"I've been stopped several times (...) one time was tough because I was driving my mother's car as well… The lights were on. I was driving normally… But because I know my rights, I just asked 'how can I help you?' I know what to say. But the majority of people do not know what to say.*"
Participant 6, Focus group 7

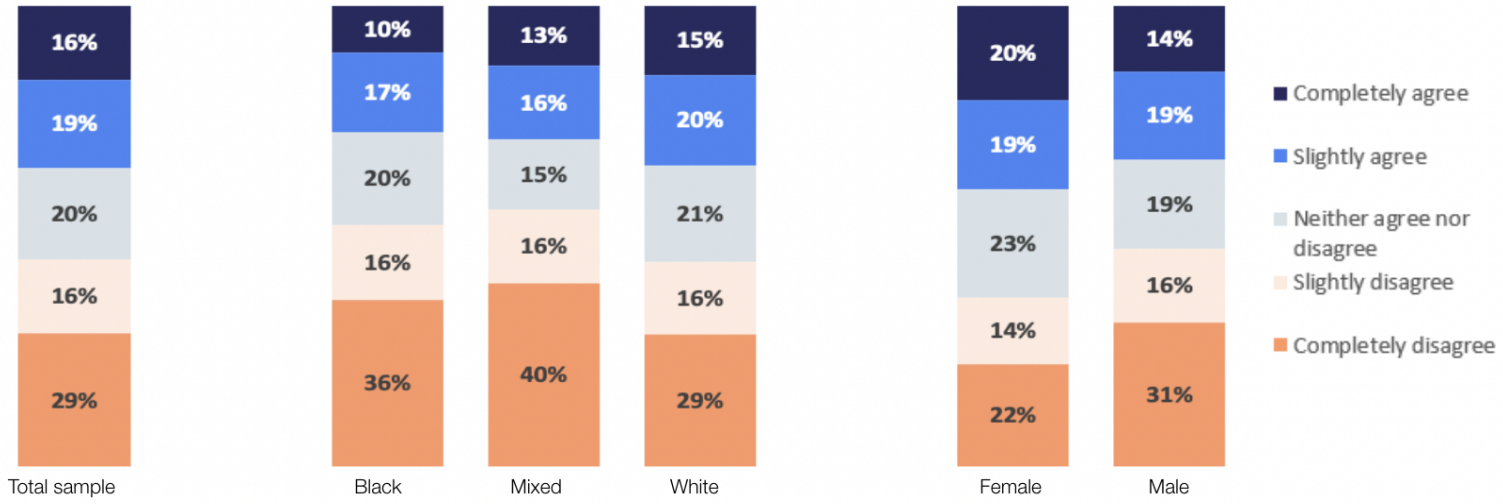
*"On our side, I think, especially young Black men, they need to know their rights. Because I've seen the police take the piss… Something has to be done… If you don't know your rights, they're just going to walk all over you every time."*
Participant 7, Focus group 6

### *Limited belief in the existence or communication of reasonable grounds*

Within our polling sample, just over a third of adults (35 per cent) felt that reasonable grounds had been present when they were searched. Almost half (45 per cent) felt that there had not been reasonable grounds for the search. When split by ethnicity, just 27 per cent of Black adults (32 per cent of Black African and 18 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and 29 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults (43 per cent of White and Black African, and 23 per cent of White and Black Caribbean adults) felt the officers had reasonable grounds to search them, compared to 35 per cent of White adults (Figure 38).

Overall, women (39 per cent) were more likely to agree that reasonable grounds had been present when they were searched, compared to men (33 per cent). 49 per cent of Black women, and 54 per cent of Black men, felt that there had not been reasonable grounds when they were searched, compared to 34 per cent of White women and 48 per cent of White men. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) of Black adults in London, and 28 per cent of Black adults outside of London, agreed there had been reasonable grounds.

**Figure 38: Responses to 'The police officers had reasonable grounds to stop me' (Agree/disagree)**




This was reflected in our focus groups, where most people felt that reasonable grounds had not been present when they had been stopped and searched:

> *"I mean, even if they're lying about the reason I was stop and searched, at least make it sound more believable"*
> Participant 1, Focus group 8

> *"So they finish all the questions, and I asked her what was the reason for the stop? She's like, 'oh no, don't worry, it's that you took that left so sharply'. So I was like, but then why would you box me in like that? If I just took a left that was a bit sharp? (...) They were really evasive in the answers. There wasn't any actual answering of my questions, they were just saying 'oh it'll be okay'."*
> Participant 2, Focus group 4

> *"I work early in the morning sometimes (…) I was driving, going around a corner, and an officer said please stop. The reason he gave me was that my wheel was too close to the curb… He searched my car, he searched me, and found nothing wrong at all. Luckily it was in the morning, it was early. I made a complaint. Nothing happened… It never does (...) You can't take it any further. They think… You'll forget about it in a couple of weeks."*
> Participant 4, Focus group 5

### *Disproportionate experiences of stop and search*

Many people in our focus groups described experiences of adultification and racial profiling. The concept of adultification is when ideas of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children, determined by people and institutions who hold power over them. Adultification is founded on

discrimination and bias, relating to a child's personal characteristics or lived experiences.[73] Black children are more likely to experience adultification due to racism and race being a central part of this bias.[74] Racial profiling is the use by the police of generalisations based on race, ethnicity, religion or national origin, rather than individual behaviour, specific suspect descriptions, or intelligence.[75]

**Case study: Black female participant was stopped and searched aged 13. Police said she fit the description of a local arsonist. Officers found nothing, but she was arrested and fingerprinted and taken to a cell:**

> *"I was walking to my friend's house, and I was about 13, and the police stopped me and said I fit a description. And they searched me, didn't find anything, but took me to the cells anyway."*

**When taken into custody, the custody sergeant disagreed with officers and said she didn't match the description given. Her parents were called and she was released.**

> *"When I was there [in the station], the custody sergeant was like I didn't actually fit the description, so they were like yeah, she does. But like, that's a denim jacket not a leather jacket. She's not six foot, she hasn't got short hair, so how is this the same? So they were going back and forth, they called my parents, and then my parents came, got me and took me home"*

Several participants described feeling that as Black people, they had different experiences of stop and search compared to White people:

> *"When I see a Black person get stopped, it's a totally different way than when I see a White person get stopped. It's kind of like an apology, that they've stopped the White person. Whereas I think when it's a Black guy, the first thing they're doing is just checking everything… It's like, Black males, mainly, there's something suspicious about them, they must be up to no good. And it just irritates me because I don't really believe that. A lot of us are just trying to, you know, work, earn money, look after our families, try to get further than our parents did. I mean, we're just as normal as everybody else."*
>
> Participant 2, Focus group 8

[73] Davis, J, (2022). *Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding.* His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation: Retrieved from:https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/06/Academic-Insights-Adultification-bias-within-child-protection-and-safeguarding.pdf

[74] ibid

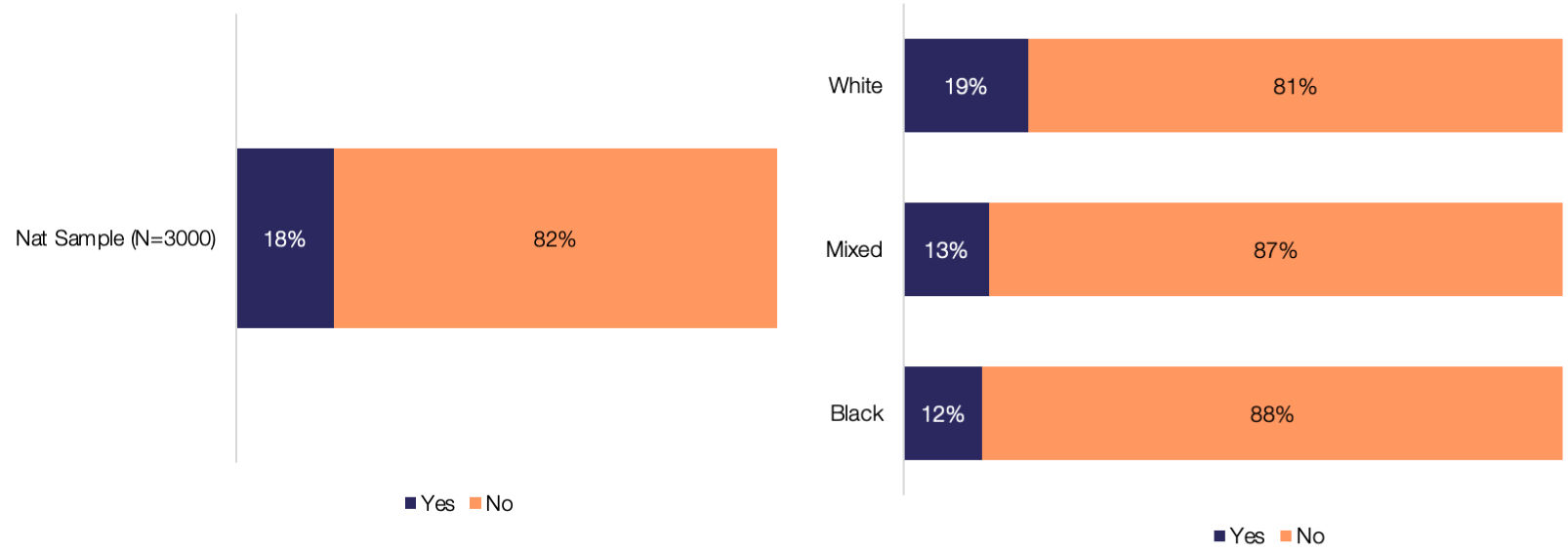
[75]His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2015), *Stop and Search Powers 2: Are the Police Using Them Fairly and effectively*, London: HMIC.

### *Disproportionality in positive outcome rates*

Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) of those in our survey who had been stopped and searched said that the police had found the item they were searching for, but Black and Mixed ethnicity adults reported the lowest positive outcome rates across all ethnicities (12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively), despite having higher stop and search rates than White adults in our sample (Figure 39). Overall, women had higher positive outcome rates than men. Over a quarter of women (26 per cent) said that the police had found what they were looking for during the search, compared to 16 per cent of men. However, when split by ethnicity and gender, we can see that Black women reported lower positive outcome rates compared to Black men. 9 per cent of Black women (2 per cent of Black African women and 15 per cent of Black Caribbean women) said that their search had led to a positive outcome for the police, compared to 13 per cent of Black men (12 per cent of Black African men and 18 per cent of Black Caribbean men). Conversely, nearly a third of White women (29 per cent) reported a positive outcome from their search, compared to 15 per cent of White men.

In London, positive outcome rates were lower (15 per cent) than those outside London (19 per cent). 11 per cent of Black adults in London, and 12 per cent of Black adults outside the London region said police had found the item they were looking for during the search, compared to 16 per cent of White adults in London, and 19 per cent of White adults outside London.

**Figure 39: Responses to: 'When you have been searched, have the police ever found the object they were looking for, or another prohibited article?'**




Respondents to the poll were given the opportunity to detail what was found on them during the search. Several respondents indicated that class B drugs, predominantly cannabis, had been found on them as a result of the search. Stolen or prohibited items, and weapons, including a knife and a gun, were also listed.

## The impact of being stopped and searched

Across both the polling and focus group participants, negative experiences of stop and search had a clear impact on people. The research demonstrates that feeling disrespected or believing officers behaved unprofessionally during a search can have lasting and traumatic effects.

### *Lack of professionalism and respect*

Participants across both polling and focus groups also described being treated with a lack of respect, and just over half of all adults (57 per cent) felt that officers remained professional during the search:

**Respect:** Just over half (56 per cent) of all adults in our sample who had been stopped and searched felt that the police had communicated politely and treated them with respect during the interaction. 44 per cent of Black adults (49 per cent of Black African and 41 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) felt that the police treated them with respect compared to 59 per cent of White adults. When split by gender and ethnicity, 46 per cent of Black women and 42 per cent of Black men felt that they had been treated politely and with respect by officers.[76] Over a third of Black adults (35 per cent) felt that officers had been disrespectful or impolite during the interaction.

Overall, more adults in London felt that officers had treated them disrespectfully compared to adults outside of London. 30 per cent of adults in London (36 per cent of Black adults) felt that the officers who had stopped and searched them had been disrespectful or impolite compared to 26 per cent of adults (34 per cent of Black adults) outside London.

Young Black adults also felt more disrespected than older Black adults, only 39 per cent of Black 18-24 year olds felt they had been treated with respect by police during a search, compared to 51 per cent of Black 35-44 year olds.

The same feelings were also highlighted by some people across focus groups:

> *"So in like, inner London, they still do have that response to particularly young Black people. And then it was just a bit. I was thinking, is this response really needed? Because when you go heavy-handed, you're gonna make people be more resistant"*
> Participant 2, Focus group 3

> *"It feels like a bit of a violation because (...) it almost felt like they were just playing games. I just didn't like the whole... when I looked back at the situation and how they were with me, how they interacted with me. Like you don't… it's not good to interact with young people like that. You just spread a seed and it carries on, and it carries on"*
> Participant 4, Focus group 7

[76] *Base size: Those who have been stopped: Nat Rep (434), Female(136), Male (293) including boost samples for ethnic groups: Black (461), Mixed (307), White (335).*

**Professionalism:** 46 per cent of Black adults (50 per cent of Black African and 35 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) felt the police remained professional throughout the search compared to 58 per cent of White adults (57 per cent total sample).[77] Older Black adults were also more likely to feel that officers had behaved unprofessionally during the interaction. 28 per cent of Black, 18-24-year olds felt that officers had behaved unprofessionally, compared to over a third (35 per cent) of Black adults aged 45 and over.

Several people described their negative experiences of communication with the police during a search:

> *"I think sometimes it's their tone, the way they speak to you sometimes, you know, it can be quite sarcastic sometimes, you know (...) So it depends on the officer, you get some great officers out there, but there's some of them who just would probably talk down to you, and then it puts your back up"*
> Participant 5, Focus group 8

> *"My worst encounter with a police officer must have been in Harrow. I must've been about 21 and I was working for BMW at the time. I actually saved all my money and had a nice BMW at the time. And I got pulled. And the police officer said to me 'how did you afford this car? How can you work for BMW? What are you, a cleaner?'"*
> Participant 7, Focus group 7

> *"There's no respect. So that's why you feel dehumanised as it's happening."*
> Participant 2, Focus group 1

> *"That's the thing, the attitude. Speak to people, like you'd like to be spoken to yourself. So when a person gets aggravated by the way someone spoke to them, because they've been disrespectful to begin with, that starts.... the dancer's as good as the leader, isn't it? So who's to blame there"*
> Participant 8, Focus group 8

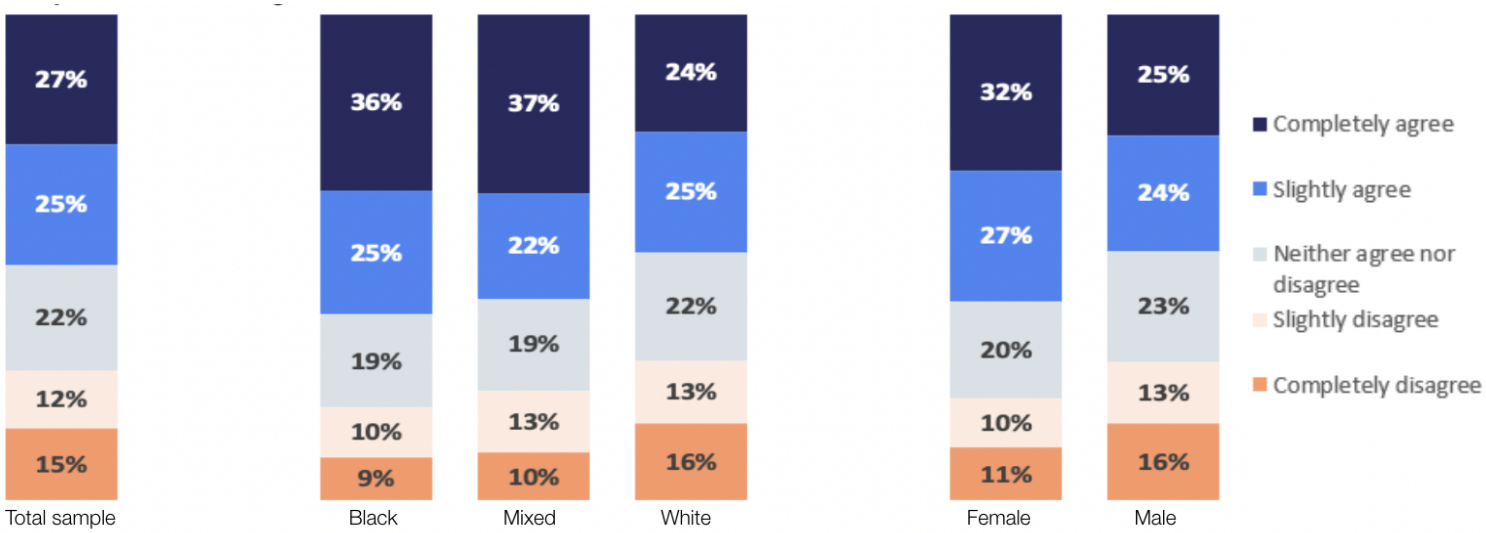
### *Embarrassment and humiliation*

52 per cent of our total nationally representative sample felt that the experience of being stopped made them feel humiliated and embarrassed. **When split by ethnicity, it is clear that this is disproportionately felt by Black people in our sample**. 61 per cent of Black adults (58 per cent of Black African and 65 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and 59 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults (61 per cent of White and Black African and 57 per cent of White and Black Caribbean adults) found the experience humiliating and embarrassing (to some degree) compared to 49 per

[77] *Base size: Those who have been stopped: Nat Rep (434), Female(136), Male (293) including boost samples for ethnic groups: Black (461), Mixed (307), White (335).*

cent of White adults. Women (59 per cent) were more likely to feel humiliated or embarassed by the experience than men (49 per cent), and Black women (69 per cent) were the most humiliated and embarrassed by the experience (Figure 40).

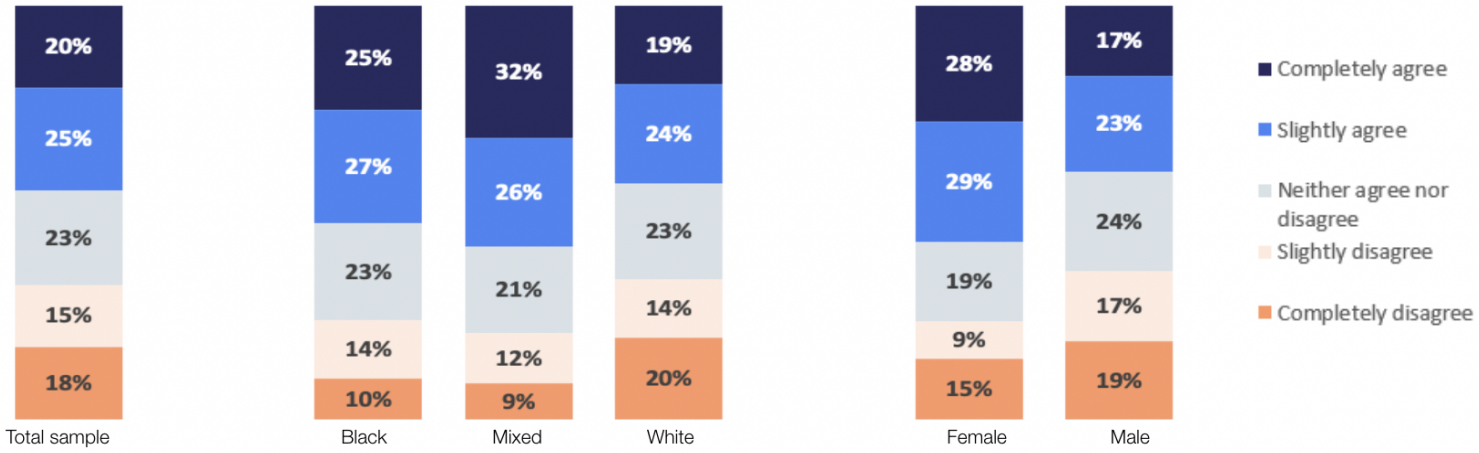
**Figure 40: Responses to: 'The experience of being searched made me feel humiliated and embarrassed' (Agree/disagree)**




### *Traumatic stop and search experiences*

45 per cent of adults in our poll who had been stopped and searched felt that their experience of being stopped and searched was traumatising (See Figure 41). This rises to 52 per cent of Black adults (49 per cent of Black Africans and 54 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and over half (58 per cent) of Mixed ethnicity adults, compared to 43 per cent of White adults. Across the total sample, women (57 per cent) were substantially more likely to have found their experience traumatising than men (40 per cent). Women from Mixed ethnicity backgrounds (63 per cent) were the most likely to have found their experience traumatising, compared to 60 per cent of White women and 54 per cent of Black women.

**Figure 41: 'The experience of being searched was traumatising' (Agree/disagree)**




**Our polling findings suggest that this trauma has led to people changing their behaviour as a consequence of the police stopping and searching them:**

42 per cent of the poll's nationally representative sample agreed or strongly agreed that they now try to avoid coming into contact with the police, because of their experience of being stopped and searched. 61 per cent of Black adults (58 per cent of Black African and 64 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and 60 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults (61 per cent White and Black African and 63 per cent of White and Black Caribbean adults) are the most likely to avoid further police contact, compared with 40 per cent of White adults.

Additionally, Black adults are the most likely to report avoiding the area where they were stopped and searched (47 per cent) and almost half of Black respondents strongly agreed or agreed (49 per cent) that they felt anxious or uncomfortable, returning to the area where they were searched.

By comparison, White adults were over twice as likely to strongly disagree that they avoid the area where they were stopped and searched (28 per cent) compared with Black (12 per cent) and Mixed ethnicity (14 per cent) adults, and just under one-third of White adults (31 per cent) reported feeling anxious or uncomfortable returning to the area.

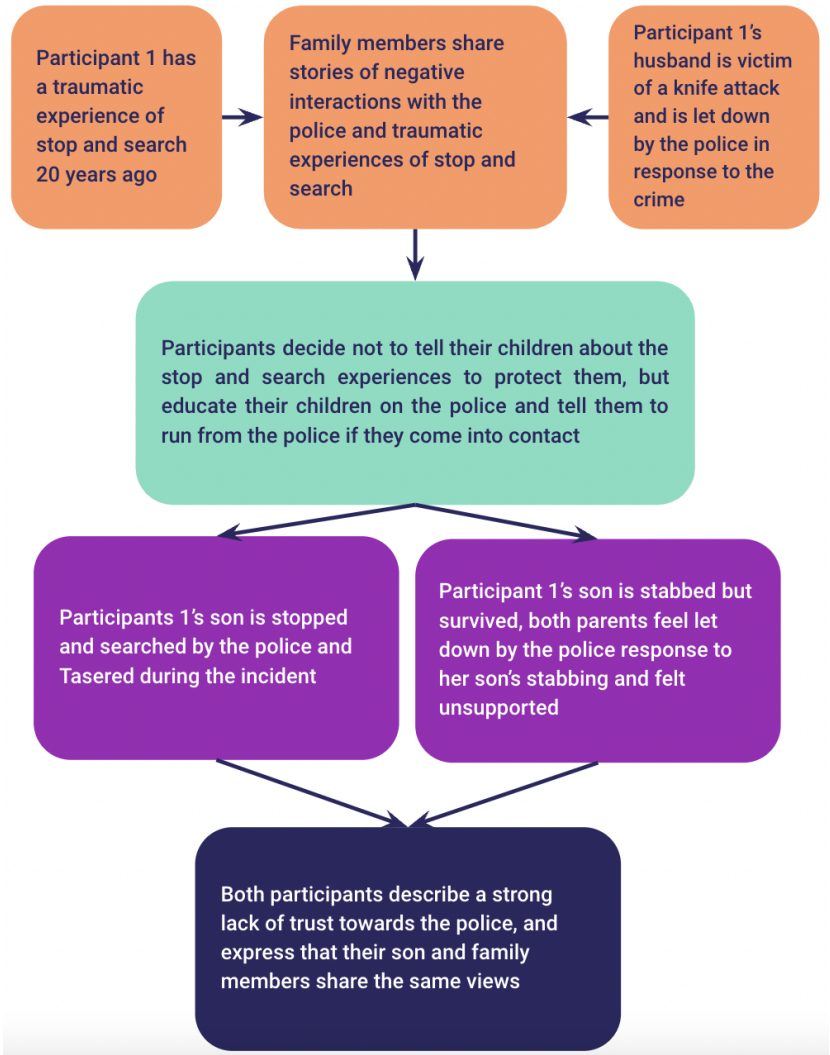
### *Trauma and distrust is being passed down through generations*

Overall, the longer a Black adult's family had been settled in the UK, the more likely they were to have found the experience of being stopped and searched traumatising; 43 per cent of first generation Black adults found the experience of being stopped and searched traumatic compared to 61 per cent of second generation adults. Second and third generation Black adults generally also held more negative views of the police. Out of our boosted sample of all adults (n=5455), 28 per cent of second generation Black adults and 31 per cent of third generation Black adults stated that they would express negative views when discussing the police with family and friends, compared to 20 per cent of first generation Black adults.

Over half (58 per cent) of the nationally representative poll sample of adults who have been stopped and searched reported that they have discussed their experiences with family or friends. When broken down further, Mixed ethnicity adults are the most likely to have discussed their experiences of stop and search (70 per cent), compared with 57 per cent of White adults and 67 per cent of Black adults. 15 per cent of Black adults and 16 per cent Mixed ethnicity adults in our sample (n=5455) had first heard about stop and search directly from their friends or family, compared to 5 per cent of White adults.

Black adults were also the most likely to have formally complained about their experiences of being stopped and searched to a police force or another official body (38 per cent), compared with 32 per cent of Mixed ethnicity and 30 per cent of White adults.

**Example of generational trauma and distrust being passed down through a family:**




***Participant 1 discussing her experience of being stopped and searched***

*"This is like over twenty years ago now... I'll never forget (...) They stopped the whole bus, came upstairs, there's me and another Black girl at the top, but what they did, they came upstairs and they picked out all the White people and told them to get off the bus (....) So basically about twelve boys, like adolescents, and then the Black girl was at the front. And I was at the back. All of us at the top. All had to go all in the van together as well. So it's almost like he's saying that we've all done it, kind of thing… And I remember looking at these people thinking 'who are you people? I don't even know you are.' You might be Black, but I don't know you…"*

*"Now my son is one years old, he's with my neighbour, and you're taking me to a station, the first thing I'm thinking is, I need my phone call. Because I need to be able to call him so that he knows where I am. No phone call. No nothing basically just stuck in this cell. Like, just thinking what the hell is going on".*

**Several people in our focus groups described the long term trauma they or their family members had experienced as a result of being stopped and searched.** Two of these experiences are detailed below:

**Describing being stopped in London aged 17 and the impact it had on him:**

*"Every time I've been stopped has seemed worse, but in different areas. When I got stopped in London, I nearly peed myself. The amount of police that came round... It was really, really scary to me because I wasn't from London, I only had about two [family] members that live somewhere in London. So I didn't know anything. And I'd only gone there for a trip. And we were just going to do some sightseeing. And we left the house to go to look at Buckingham Palace or some stupid stuff... There was at least around about eight of them. There was one with [my White friend], and seven with me... Then they just walked away. And instead of us going sightseeing, I went back in."*

**Discussing how he wants things to change so his son has a better experience:**

*"The thing I want most is for him [my son] to be confident. I want him to look that guy in the eye. When it was me, I had my head down... I'm 50 years old, and this still affects me now. I don't want him to have that"*

Case study 1: Participant 2, Focus group 8

***Describing her brother's experience of being stopped and searched:***

*"Two years ago, my brother was stopped and searched, and they used force. They dragged him. He was drunk at the time, but they dragged him and were tossing him around. And he said he felt emasculated because it happened in front of his girlfriend at the time. And it caused a lot of like mental health issues for him because it happened like just before COVID (...) And then he didn't go out for a while, you know, he was just... a lot of it can cause a lot of mental health issues. Because he said he was literally just dragged around, like three men on him and he can't defend himself. And it was in front of his girl, so he felt very emasculated. Like he felt like he wasn't a man after that. He felt, you know, embarrassed, obviously scared."*

***Discussing how the experience has affected her brother***

*"It's very upsetting to hear the story, it's very, very upsetting because you can... you clearly see the person you love the most change night in front of your face; someone that likes to go out, someone that is so bubbly, someone that doesn't really care, not really watching the police. My brother has his master's, he's a good boy, he doesn't deserve that."*

*"Now when he sees the police. He's not scared but he's more like, 'I'm going back inside'. Like he's just, 'there's too many of them out today so I'm inside', and I'm like, you haven't done anything?"*

*"When you tell some people they kind of dismiss it, they're like 'oh that's silly, he was stopped and searched once' but that one time was enough"*

Case study 1: Participant 4, Focus group 1

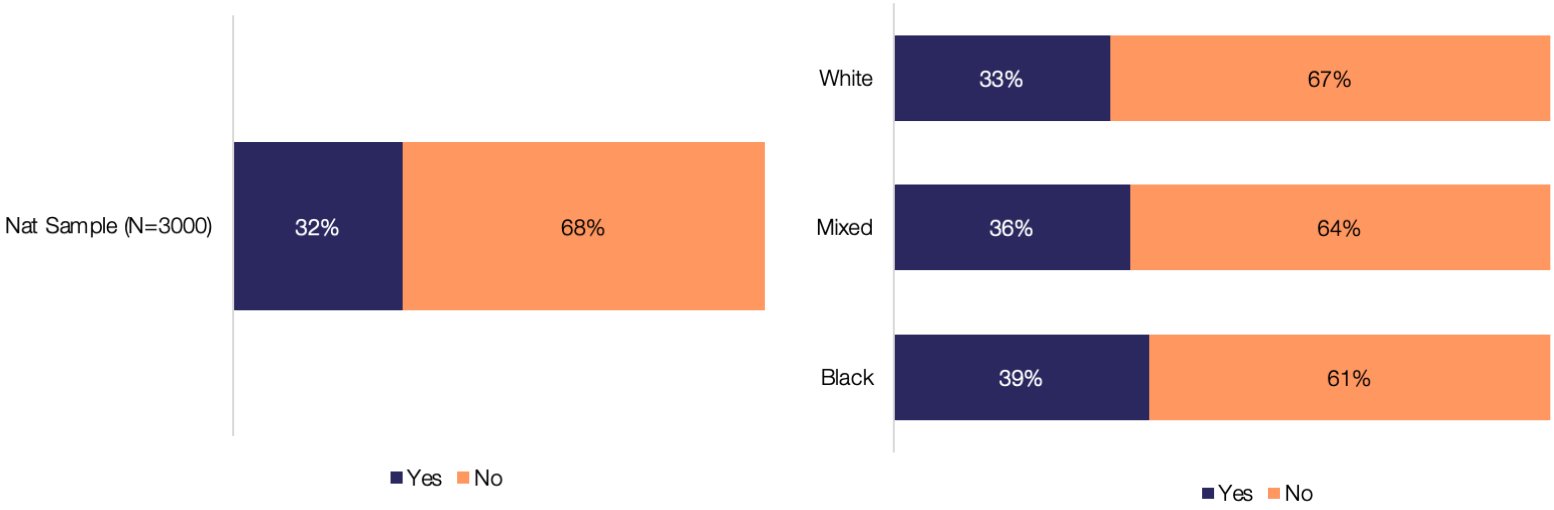
### *Use of force*

In our poll, around a third (32 per cent) of people who have been stopped and searched said that they had been handcuffed (see Figure 42). Black adults (39 per cent) and Mixed ethnicity adults (36 per cent) were more likely to have been handcuffed than White adults (33 per cent).

Adults who were stopped and searched in London were more likely to have been handcuffed than those who were stopped outside London; 38 per cent of adults in London and 39 per cent of Black adults in London who had been stopped and searched said they had been handcuffed, compared to 30 per cent of adults, and 36 per cent of Black adults outside of London.

When split by gender, 26 per cent of Black women and 42 per cent of Black men stated that they had been handcuffed, even when they felt they were complying with the search, compared to 36 per cent of White women and 30 per cent of White men.

**Figure 42: Responses to: 'Have you ever been handcuffed during a stop and search, even when you felt you were complying with the officer's instructions and were not hindering the search?'**




People who were surveyed also added comments about their experiences of the use of force and stop and search:

*"I listened when they told me to stop and I listened when they said lift my hands up, and I listened when they told me to take my clothing off. So why would they pin me to the ground and put on handcuffs? I felt horrible."*
Survey respondent

*"I have been cuffed and told to 'calm down' when everyone that knows me knows I am an introverted, calm, and composed individual and would never raise my voice or talk with disrespect to anyone."*
Survey respondent

*"I was being asked questions and I complied and in return asked for a badge number, but it resulted in me being handcuffed"*
Survey respondent

*"I was walking my dog late at night, in a local park, and was approached by an unmarked car and four plain clothes officers jumped out and demanded a stop and search due to cannabis being used in the area, a likely excuse. I complied as I was only walking my dog and had cigarettes, but they cuffed me regardless as one held onto the leash of my dog."*
Survey respondent

*"It was the worst experience ever, the police were shouting at me because I was crying because I was scared. I also begged them not to strip search me but they did."*
Survey respondent

*"I was beaten and sprayed with PAVA then handcuffed because a police officer kept tugging on my expensive coat and I asked him to stop."*
Survey respondent

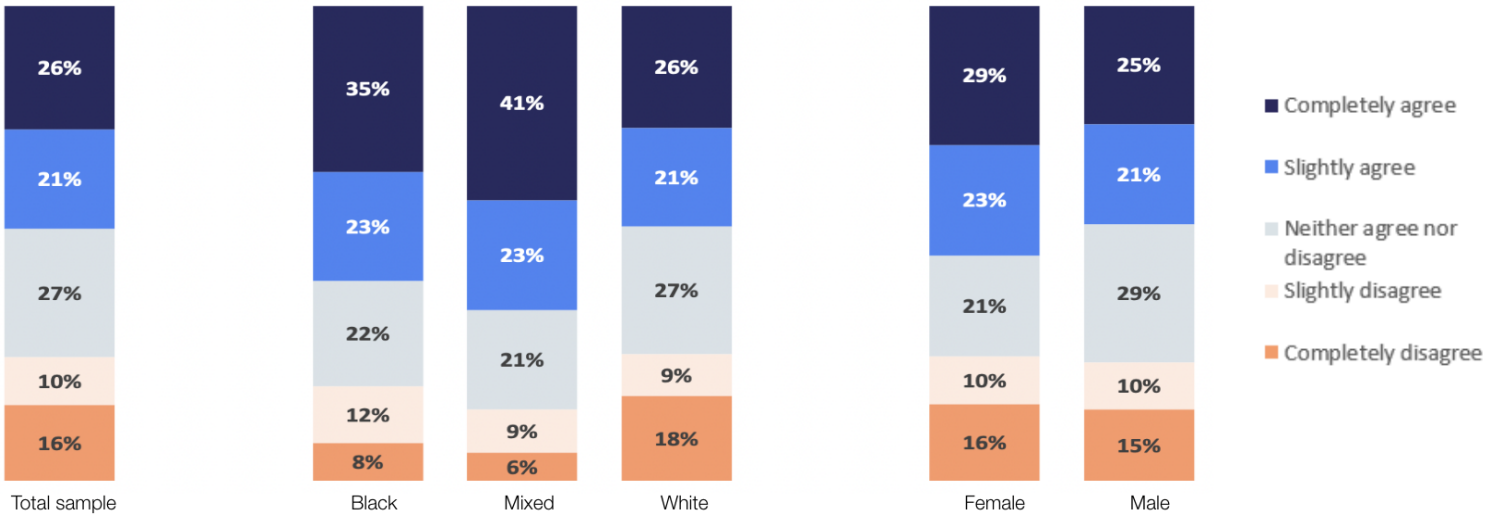
Similarly, a focus group participant described witnessing incidents of police use of force.

*"Two weeks ago, outside my house, these three young boys were like, on those electric scooter things. All of a sudden out of nowhere, two police vans full of police just come, drag one of them off. It was two Black boys and one White boy. Funnily enough, it was the White boy that they dragged off. [We] found out that someone had been stabbed in the area, and they matched the description, young children blah blah blah. So I know them, they live in the area and they're like 14, 15, in secondary school and they literally dragged him off, and started beating him up. And I was like, what's going on. I just happened to be up, looking out the window. I went outside with my neighbour. And then when we started getting involved I realised that their approach changed"*
Participant 3, Focus group 2

### *The impact of being stopped and search on trust in the police*

Regardless of whether or not force was used, results from our focus groups and survey indicate that the experience of being stopped and searched has a negative impact on an individual's trust and confidence in the police. Almost half (47 per cent) of all adults who had been stopped and searched felt that the experience had made them trust the police less (see Figure 43).

**Figure 43: Responses to 'Being stopped and searched has made me trust the police less'**



When broken down by ethnicity, 64 per cent of Mixed ethnicity adults (66 per cent of White and Black African and 58 per cent of White and Black Caribbean adults) agreed that the experience of being stopped and searched had made them trust the police less, compared to 58 per cent for Black adults (57 per cent of Black African and 61 per cent of Black Caribbean adults) and 47 per cent for White adults in our sample (Figure 43).

### *Disproportionate experiences of stop and search is not just a London issue*

Our survey findings suggest that the impact and experience of stop and search is overwhelmingly negative across the country. Although most stop and searches in the UK are conducted in London, and many of the high profile cases of stop and search in the news are carried out by the Metropolitan police, people in our sample who were stopped and searched outside London felt equally, if not more, traumatised by the experience than those in the capital.

55 per cent of Black adults stopped and searched outside of London felt traumatised, compared to 48 per cent in London. However, 34 per cent of Black adults felt they were treated with disrespect during a search outside London, compared to 37 per cent within London.

In addition, a higher percentage of adults outside of London agreed that the experience of being stopped and searched had made them trust the police less compared to adults in London. In our nationally representative sample of adults who had been stopped and searched, half of adults outside of London felt that the experience had made them trust the police less compared to 38 per cent of adults in London.

### *Black Caribbean adults' experiences of policing are particularly negative*

People from Black and other ethnic minority backgrounds in England are more likely to live in areas of higher deprivation and crime,[78] which may contribute to the disproportionality in stop and search and policing rates.[79] However, the latest ONS data shows that a higher percentage of Black Africans (15.6 per cent) live in the most deprived communities in England compared to Black Carribeans (14.1 per cent), as well as higher crime areas (17.9 per cent Black African vs 13.6 per cent Black Caribbean).[80]

Our survey findings demonstrated a **clear difference in experience *and* opinion for Black African and Black Caribbean communities.** As discussed in section 1, trust in the police for Black Caribbean adults was just 35 per cent, compared to 51 per cent for Black African adults. We see the same differences in experience across each key theme within this work:

[78] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *People living in deprived neighbourhoods.* GOV.UK. Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/people-living-in-deprived-neighbourhoods/latest#full-page-history

[79] Stott et al. (2021). *Understanding ethnic disparities in involvement in crime - a limited scope rapid evidence review.* Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. GOV.UK

[80] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *People living in deprived neighbourhoods.* GOV.UK. Available at: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/people-living-in-deprived-neighbourhoods/latest#full-page-history

Black Caribbean adults were **more likely to have been stopped and searched** (29 per cent) compared to Black African adults (23 per cent)

Black Caribbean adults were **less likely to feel they were treated with respect** (35 per cent compared to 46 per cent of Black African adults)

Black Caribbean adults were **less likely to trust the police** (35 per cent) compared to Black African adults (51 per cent)

This suggests that within Black communities, adjusting for crime and deprivation factors does not explain the disproportionality in stop and search experiences and trust and confidence in the police. The Black Caribbean experience of stop and search and policing is particularly negative and further action must be taken to understand what contributes to this disproportionality.

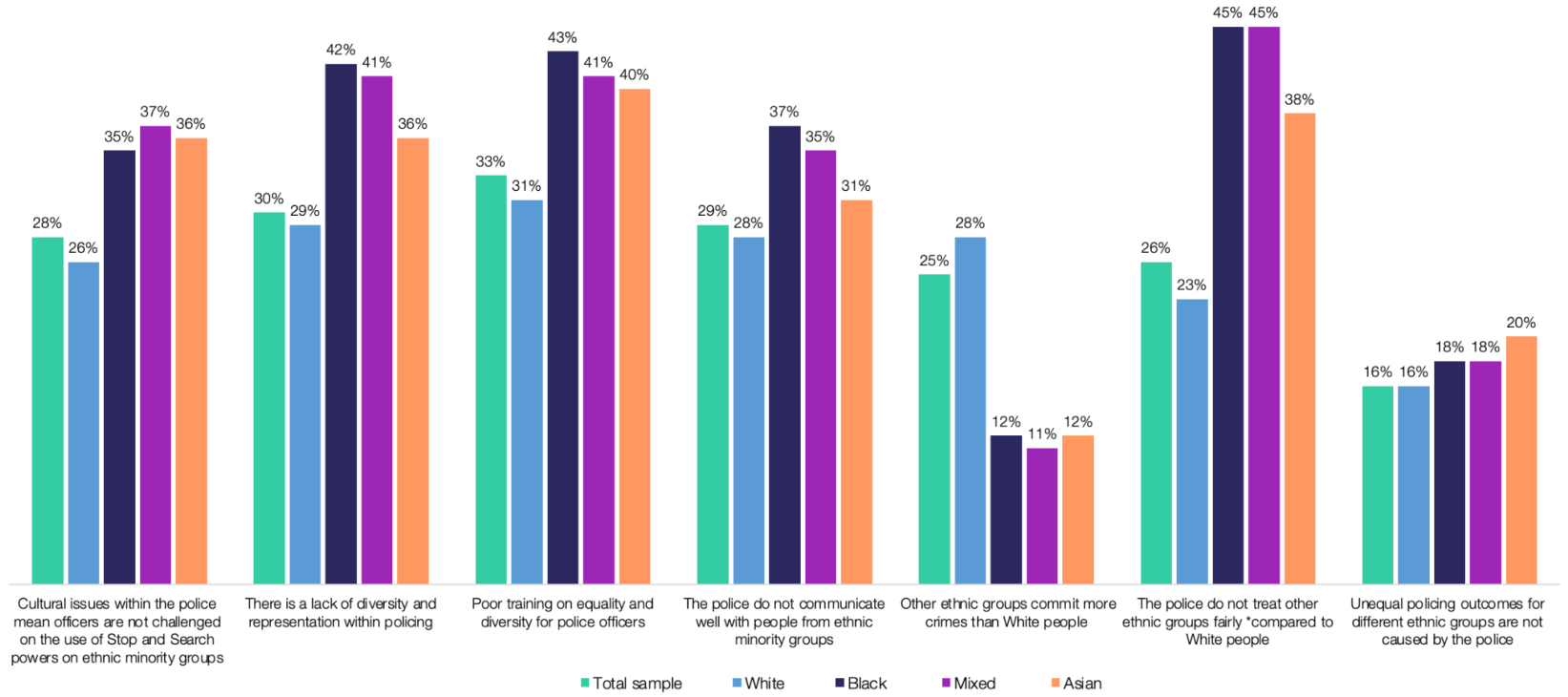
# Chapter 5. Disproportionality and policing, in context

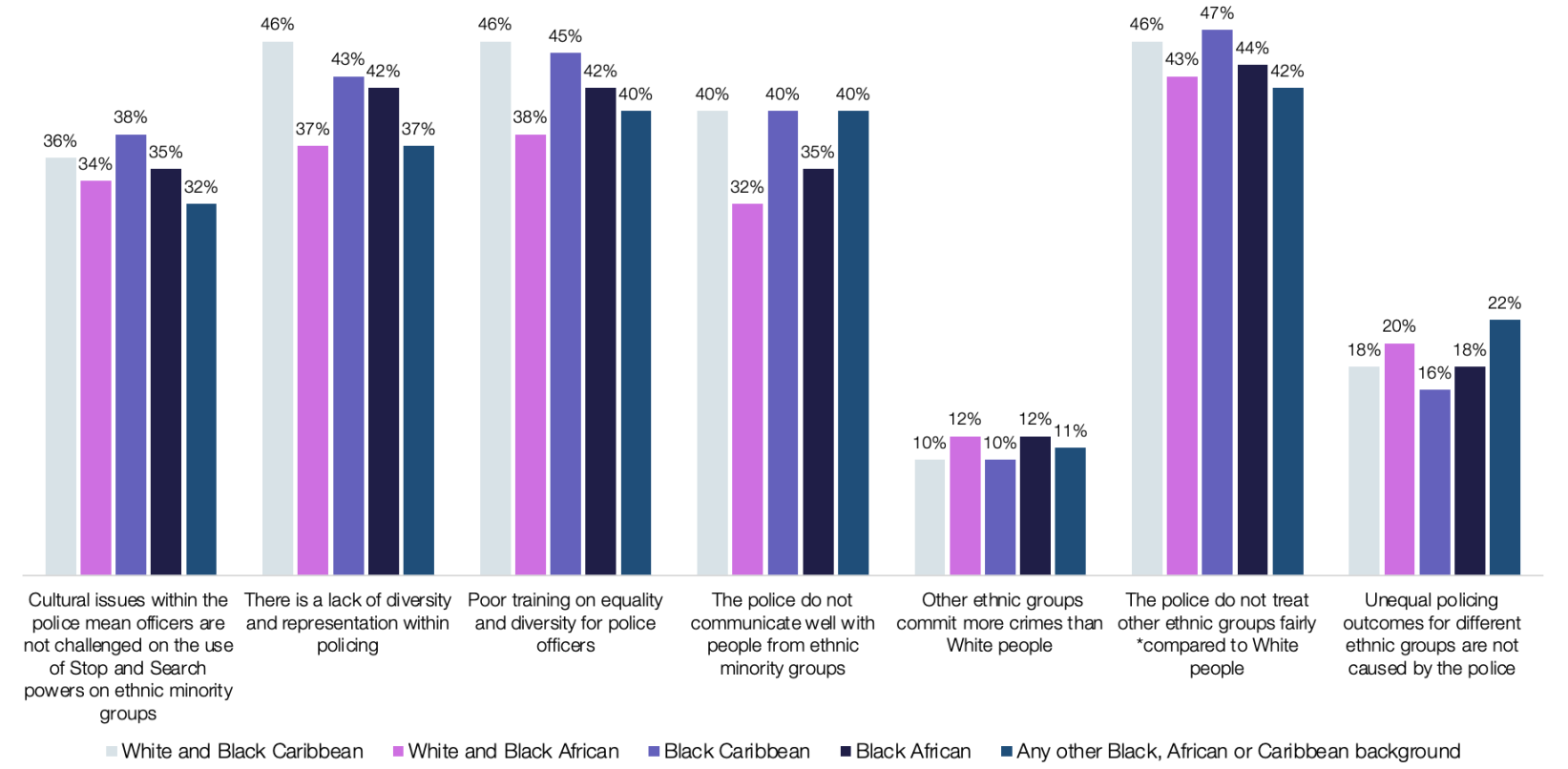
This chapter explores our polling and focus group findings with a specific focus on disproportionality.

## *What do the public think causes disproportionality in stop and search figures?*

As part of our survey, we asked people what they thought the main reasons were for the differences between ethnic groups in rates of stop and search. Overall, they pointed to a lack of diversity, poor training, and poor communication with ethnic minority groups as the likely causes. Just under half (45 per cent) of both Black and Mixed ethnicity respondents felt that the police not treating other ethnic groups fairly compared to White people was one of the main reasons for disproportionality (Figure 44). 28 per cent of White adults felt that disproportionality arose because other ethnic groups committed more crimes than White people. That view was shared by only 12 per cent of Black and Asian respondents and 11 per cent of Mixed ethnicity respondents (Figure 44).

**Figure 44: Responses by ethnicity to: 'In your opinion, which of the following are likely to be the main reasons for the ethnic differences in the likelihood an individual will be stopped and searched by the police?' (On next page)**

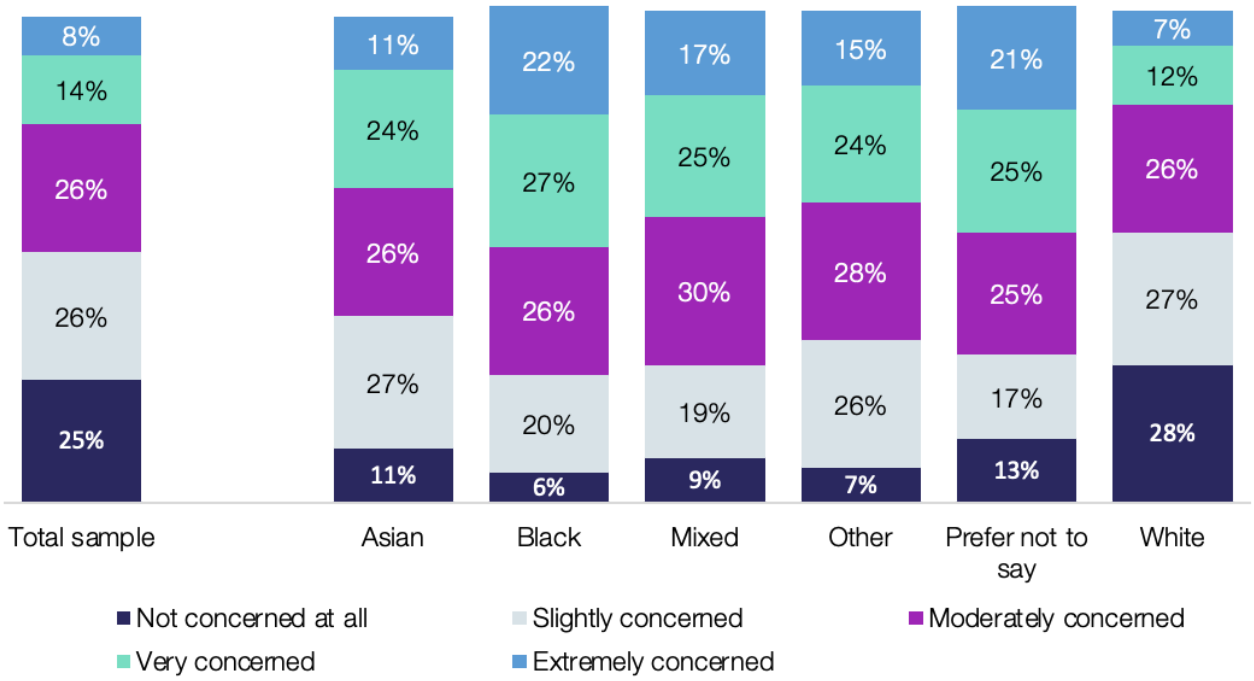

28% 26% 35% 37% 36%
30% 29% 42% 41% 36%
33% 31% 43% 41% 40%
29% 28% 37% 35% 31%
25% 28% 12% 11% 12%
26% 23% 45% 45% 38%
16% 16% 18% 18% 20%
Cultural issues within the police mean officers are not challenged on the use of Stop and Search powers on ethnic minority groups
There is a lack of diversity and representation within policing
Poor training on equality and diversity for police officers
The police do not communicate well with people from ethnic minority groups
Other ethnic groups commit more crimes than White people
The police do not treat other ethnic groups fairly *compared to White people
Unequal policing outcomes for different ethnic groups are not caused by the police
Total sample
White
Black
Mixed
Asian


36% 34% 38% 35% 32%
46% 37% 43% 42% 37%
46% 38% 45% 42% 40%
40% 32% 40% 35% 40%
10% 12% 10% 12% 11%
46% 43% 47% 44% 42%
18% 20% 16% 18% 22%
Cultural issues within the police mean officers are not challenged on the use of Stop and Search powers on ethnic minority groups
There is a lack of diversity and representation within policing
Poor training on equality and diversity for police officers
The police do not communicate well with people from ethnic minority groups
Other ethnic groups commit more crimes than White people
The police do not treat other ethnic groups fairly *compared to White people
Unequal policing outcomes for different ethnic groups are not caused by the police
White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
Black Caribbean
Black African
Any other Black, African or Caribbean background

### *Concern over disproportionality within the use of stop and search*

From our survey findings and the focus groups it is clear that the public are concerned about disproportionality. As part of our poll, participants were told: "In the 2011 Census, 87.2 per cent of the population in England and Wales were White British, and 3 per cent were Black; however, according to 2020-21 stop and search figures, 59 per cent of all people stopped and searched by police were White, and 20 per cent were Black". After being given that information, 19 per cent of White adults were extremely or very concerned about the racial disproportionality of stop and search, compared with 49 per cent of Black adults (Figure 45). Of the total population, 75 per cent were concerned about disproportionality and 58 per cent moderately to extremely concerned. Concerns over disproportionality were highest among Black respondents, where 75 per cent were moderately to extremely concerned, highlighting the importance of this issue in Black communities.

**Figure 45: Responses to: 'How concerned are you about the ethnic differences in the likelihood an individual will be stopped and searched by the police?'**




Evidence from our focus group findings suggest that Black adults feel disproportionately targeted by stop and search.

> *"The people that you actually should be stopping, they're not… You're not going to see him out, you're not going to find them and stop and search them. You're not going to find them out in the streets."*
> Participant 7, Focus group 4

*"If we as Black people dress a certain way, we attract attention. White people wear the exact same thing, it doesn't attract attention. But that's the way the police are."*
Participant 3, Focus group 6

*"What is the positive that's come from stop and search, because all I've ever heard is that Black people are disproportionately stopped and searched... period. That's the only thing I associate with it."*
Participant 2, Focus group 4

*"I think it's about quotas. I think the police are probably under pressure to say, X amount of crimes were committed, we arrested X amount of people, and X amount of people went to jail, so therefore we can justify our existence and the money we get."*
*Participant 5, Focus group 5*

*"[The police] have to go to Black neighbourhoods and arrest them, because they are the easier targets (...) Either consciously or subconsciously, I believe a lot of it has to do with, 'go to Black urban areas'…"*
*Participant 2, Focus group 5*

### *Social media amplifies concern over how officers approach stop and search*

Social media is increasingly becoming a source of information around issues such as stop and search. Our polling showed that 3 per cent of our nationally representative adult sample first heard about stop and search from social media. For White adults it was 2 per cent; for Black adults 9 per cent.

Several people in our focus groups described the impact of social media on their views of stop and search and policing. Being exposed to content that depicts negative or extreme stop and search scenarios provoked feelings of fear and concern they would be treated the same way. Several participants felt that negative media coverage directly and indirectly drained confidence in the police across Black communities:

*"I think to be quite honest, it is social media and seeing how, like (...) with the videos that are coming out on Facebook, on Instagram, and they're like, 'Okay, well, this person looks like me, is in the same area as me, this person does the same things that I do'. And they can relate a lot. That's how they do it. Young people do understand by relating. And so if there's no positive imagery on those networks, which they use, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and all of this is negative experiences. There's no positive experiences whatsoever for them to see. So for them, it's all negativity."*
*Participant 8,* Focus group 3

*"Like prior to social media, I really felt safe around the police, like no issues whatsoever. And that's really made me think differently"*
Participant 8, Focus group 4

*"They [the police] arrested someone and then they had like, the whole of them, like creating a barrier around, loads of people were filming it. I think one man did something, he spat on the police or something and they literally dragged him out of his van and started hitting him in the head. And actually, the person who was hitting him in the head was an ethnic minority. And there's so so many videos like that out there. (...) I do remember actually [seeing another video] when there was a female police officer, and a male one and actually, the male was caught off guard, and they started really hitting, really laying into him. And the female officer was screaming 'help me, help me, help me', but the empathy I felt for that was not the same as if I saw someone else. And I think it's because I've seen so many videos like the first one."*

Participant 1, Focus group 1

It is important to mention that despite being exposed to negative footage of stop and search on social media, most participants in our focus groups had direct or indirect experiences of stop and search.

*"Everybody I know who's Black has been stopped by the police, and searched. Everybody. Even my mum, my mum, who is a doctor"*

Participant 3, Focus group 7

Out of the 59 adults in our focus groups, 57 had either been stopped and searched themselves (32) or had family members and friends who had been stopped and searched by the police (25). In these focus groups we did not sample for Black adults who had specifically been stopped and searched.[81] While the visibility of negative stop and search footage online offers an explanation for growing public concern over the use of stop and search powers, it does not explain ethnic disproportionality in stop and search rates, or differences in the level of trauma caused by stop and search. Within our survey, Black people whose families had lived in the UK longer, were less likely to have first heard about stop and search from social media (9 per cent of second generation and 7 per cent of third generation Black adults) compared to 12 per cent of those who were the first in their family to live in the UK. This indicates that there are factors beyond the spread of negative footage online affecting the perspectives and experiences of stop and search among Black communities.

[81] *Individuals were eligible to participate in the focus groups if they were aged 18 or above and self-identified as Black. No prior direct or indirect experiences of stop and search were necessary for participation in the focus group; however, participants were required to know what stop and search was.

## Conclusion

It has already been well established that when it comes to confidence in policing there is a gap between the attitudes of Black people and the general population. The role of stop and search within that is complex: our research has revealed that Black people have deep misgivings about the way stop and search is carried out - even if there is support for its use in principle. It is really concerning that so many people who had been stopped and searched told us that the experience was humiliating and traumatic. However, both our focus groups and survey suggest that Black people were equally, if not more, concerned about the service they received from the police and how officers engaged with them, especially when they were seeking help as victims or witnesses. That suggests that lower confidence is as much to do with a perceived failure to protect Black communities as it is about heavy-handed policing. This is evident across all ethnicities, but it is particularly prominent among Black Caribbean communities.

Our findings indicate that in principle, there is support - across all ethnicities - for the police having the right to conduct stop and search as a tool on specific grounds, such as possession of weapons or Class A drugs. However, that support should not be interpreted as a blank cheque: it depends on stops being intelligence-led (rather than random) and conducted fairly, effectively and proportionately. Sadly, that is not the reality for Black communities. It is clear from our findings that adults who have been stopped and searched, and Black adults in particular, do not experience stop and search to be well communicated, explained or respectfully and fairly carried out. Black Caribbean and Mixed ethnicity adults in particular were more likely to say they found the experience of being stopped and searched traumatising and humiliating.

Further action is needed to improve the trust Black and Mixed ethnicity adults have in how stop and search is conducted and in the police more broadly. Our findings indicate some have experienced racial trauma, due to repeated exposure to bias and discrimination in their dealings with the police and being stopped and searched.[82] That is especially true for groups within Black communities who have lower than average levels of trust in the police, including younger adults, second or third generation Black communities and Black Caribbean communities. The clear difference in experience within Black communities suggests that the disproportionate use of stop and search is one of several factors contributing to declining trust and confidence in the police.

From our focus groups and polling, it is clear that both Black communities and the general public are concerned about disproportionality. Three quarters of Black adults and nearly half of the general public (48 per cent) were moderately to extremely concerned about disproportionality in stop and search. Improving experiences of stop and search may go some way to improving trust and confidence in the police, but there are wider issues of racism, disproportionality and inequality that feed into the lack of trust which must be addressed at the same time. Lower levels of trust in

[82] Carter, R. T. (2007). *Racism and psychological and emotional injury: Recognizing and assessing race-based traumatic stress.* The Counseling Psychologist, 35(1), 13-105

the police among younger adults is a particularly important finding; it suggests trust and confidence in the police may continue to decline for future generations.

There is no shortage of recommendations to the police on how to address these problems, and we do not in this report seek to make more.

This report has set out the key findings from our research with adults in England and is not intended to produce specific policy recommendations, but there are some measures we believe merit urgent consideration:

- Ensuring greater transparency of searches
- Improving training for police officers, particularly around disproportionality and communication during searches
- Bolstering scrutiny of searches and misconduct
- Taking action to minimise the trauma and long term impact of negative stops and searches
- Developing strategies for targeted and effective engagement with communities to rebuild trust in the police

Our second report will focus on understanding more about young people's experiences of stop and search. Detailed proposals for reform will be set out in our final report. But it is clear from our research that trust is the key. There are opportunities which could be grasped quickly if police strengthened relationships with communities, listened closely to their concerns and worked with them to tackle problems together.

# Annex

**Table 6: Regression results showing the estimated impact of characteristics on trust in police**

| Characteristic type | Characteristic base comparison *(base level chosen by alphabetical order)* | Characteristic | Estimated effect on trust in police *(model value)* | Significance ($p<0.05$) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | | | Increased (0.004) | Significant |
| Ethnicity | Asian | Black | Decreased (-0.325) | Significant |
| | | Mixed | Decreased (-0.198) | Significant |
| | | Other | Decreased (-0.367) | Significant |
| | | Prefer not to say | Decreased (-0.195) | Not significant |
| | | White | Decreased (-0.078) | Not significant |
| Gender | Female | Male | Increased (0.089) | Significant |
| | | Non-binary | Decreased (-0.878) | Significant |
| | | Prefer not to say | Decreased (-0.125) | Not significant |
| Previously been stopped and searched | Yes | No | Increased (0.399) | Significant |
| | | Not sure | Increased (0.395) | Significant |
| | | Prefer not to answer | ≈ (-0.057) | Not significant |
| Education | A-level | Degree | Increased (0.080) | Significant |
| | | Doctorate | Increased (0.291) | Significant |
| | | GCSEs | Increased (0.032) | Not significant |
| | | Masters | Increased (0.227) | Significant |
| | | Prefer not to say | Increased (0.007) | Not significant |
| Region | East Midlands | East of England | Decreased (-0.049) | Not significant |
| | | Greater London | Decreased (-0.163) | Significant |
| | | North East England | Decreased (-0.007) | Not significant |
| | | North West England | Decreased (-0.061) | Not significant |
| | | South East England | Decreased (-0.050) | Not significant |
| | | South West England | Increased (0.017) | Not significant |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Wales | Decreased (-0.078) | Not significant |
| | | West Midlands | Decreased (-0.063) | Not significant |
| | | Yorkshire and the Humber | Decreased (-0.064) | Not significant |