



Decriminalise the Classroom

A Community Response to Police in Greater Manchester's Schools

August 2020

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Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the contributions of all 554 people who responded to the online survey. Thank you for taking the time to share your views and experiences of police in schools. Whilst it isn't possible to detail each and every one of those experiences in the report, your accounts have nonetheless informed the writing of the report and will continue to inform our campaign for no police in schools.

Thank you too to all those involved in the wider No Police in Schools campaign [1] in Greater Manchester - the National Education Union North West Black Members Organising Forum, the young people, teachers, youth workers, students, academics, parents, and people from all walks of life. The campaign has grown since it began in March 2020, and, as this report attests, has often been the only meaningful source of information for the people of Greater Manchester about the introduction of school-based police officers. Solidarity, too, to those in other parts of the UK raising the alarm about this, and other issues of policing injustice.

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[1] <https://nopolicyinschools.co.uk/>
[2] <https://wecametolearn.com/>
[3] www.laentoronto.wordpress.com

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Executive Summary

The number of school-based police officers (SBPOs) across Greater Manchester is significantly increasing with at least 20 more officers being introduced for the 2020/2021 academic year. This is happening without due consultation with parents, teachers, young people, or wider communities. In response, this report explores the views and experiences of people who live and work in Greater Manchester in relation to police in schools. Drawing upon the survey responses of 554 people – including young people, teachers, parents, and community members – this report is by far the most comprehensive of its kind in the UK.

Key Statistics

- 95% of respondents reported that they have not been consulted on the plans for more police in Greater Manchester schools.
- Almost 9 out of 10 respondents reported feeling negative about a regular police presence, with 7 out of 10 of these respondents very negative.
- Almost 2 in 5 young people who responded to the survey attend or have attended a school with a 'regular police presence'.
- Almost 3 in 4 parents or guardians stated that they would have concerns about sending their children to a school with a regular police presence.

Exacerbating Existing Inequalities

- SBPOs are disproportionately placed in schools with a high proportion of working class students and young people of colour. This was a major concern for survey respondents who believe that this will exacerbate existing inequalities.
- Responses from young people who attend schools in Greater Manchester with a regular police presence suggest that officers act in ways that discriminate against students of colour, and particularly Black students.
- As well as Black and Asian and/or working class students, concerns were also raised about the negative impact that police in schools can have on disabled students; LGBTQ+ students; Muslim students; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students; and women/girls.

Stigmatising Schools

- A broad cross-section of respondents – including teachers, young people, parents/guardians, and community members – felt that a regular police presence would lead to the stigmatisation of a school.
- Seventy percent of young people said that schools with a regular police presence would be viewed more negatively by society than those without. Only 8% said that they wouldn't.

A Culture of Low Expectations

- Police in schools engender a culture of low expectations. This was a concern for many of the survey respondents. By demonstrating low expectations, schools can have an adverse impact upon the attainment and well-being of students.

A Climate of Hostility

- Responses to the survey show that the presence of police in schools create a climate of fear, anxiety and hostility for young people, particularly for those that are already marginalised.
- This climate of hostility negatively affects student well-being, mental health, and attainment.

Criminalising Young People

- Many are concerned about how SBPOs exacerbate the risk of minor disciplinary procedures escalating into criminal justice issues. Put simply, police in schools feed a school-to-prison pipeline.
- The presence of police in schools means that issues that would be best tackled through supportive mechanisms (e.g. counselling and mental health support) are increasingly becoming the purview of the police – an institution ill-equipped to deal with the issues some young people face.

Inappropriate Conduct

- Young people reported experiencing inappropriate police conduct in schools, including the use of offensive language, sexist victim blaming, the sexualisation of young people, and the communication of misinformation about sex education.
- Survey responses make clear that police officers in schools are often engaged in work – including teaching and mentoring – for which they are ill-equipped and poorly-suited.

Police Violence and Harassment

- Many survey respondents argued that wider cases of police violence and harassment, in Greater Manchester and elsewhere, raise real concerns about the presence of police in schools. This was particularly acute for young people with experiences of over-policing.

Imagining Education Beyond Police in Schools

- Respondents overwhelmingly suggested that they would prefer other roles – including a counsellor, youth worker, teacher or teaching assistant – to be resourced instead of a SBPO. Ultimately, the report shows that SBPOs have no place in our schools and we must be much more ambitious in imagining the future of education for our young people.

Introduction

This new school year sees an increase in the number of school-based police officers (SBPOs) in the UK. This sharp increase comes off the back of high-profile calls for more police in schools from political figures, including senior police officers, the Children's Commissioner, and a Select Committee on Serious Youth Violence. Against this backdrop, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, has pledged his commitment to ensuring that police become a permanent fixture in the county's schools, with a commitment to at least 20 more SBPOs in the 2020/2021 academic year.

Despite the momentum of these changes, there is scant evidence, locally or nationally, to suggest that due consideration has been given to the implications of more police in schools. Writing in the *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, the Educationalist Amanda Henshall has noted that 'little is known about officers' work in schools, or how they are perceived by pupils, head teachers, teachers and parents' [4].

As this report will go on to show, it is abundantly clear that, on the issues of police in schools, there has been little if any consultation with the public. Taking the voices of Greater Manchester's communities seriously, this report draws upon the views of 554 survey respondents from across Greater Manchester. In doing so, we offer a critical perspective on the growing normalisation of a police presence in schools. The evidence presented offers a stark warning about these changes and represents a clarion call for No Police in Schools.

Background

Whilst many would be forgiven for thinking that the presence of police in our schools is something new, the practice has a much longer history dating back at least to the 1950s, and gaining traction through juvenile liaison schemes in the 1960s and 70s. These earlier police-school relationships emerged as part of the State's dual concerns about youth populations and Britain's Black communities [5], and, like today, have been a site of strong community resistance [6]. It wasn't until 2002, however, that the links between police and schools evolved into the direct placement of police in schools as part of a cross-departmental 'Safer Schools Partnership Programme'. Since this point, 'partnerships between schools and police have remained' part of the schooling landscape in England [7]. It is noteworthy that the Safer Schools Programme was introduced in the context of New Labour's 'tough on crime' agenda. This agenda specifically targeted Black and working class communities driven by the penal populist idea of 'feral youth' and 'lawless children'.

[4] Henshall, A. (2018) On the school beat: Police officers based in English schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(5): 593-606.

[5] Gordon, P. (1984) Community policing: Towards the local police state? *Critical Social Policy*, 4(10): 39-58.

[6] Webber, F. (1983) Teachers in Uniform, *Race & Class* 25(2): 75-79.

[7] Lamont, E., Macleod, S. and Wilkin, A. (2011) Police officers in schools: A scoping study. National Foundation for Educational Research. Available: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PCOX01/PCOX01.pdf>

The renewed impetus for police in schools is largely driven by a racialised ‘war on gangs’ and is best understood in the context of a Conservative government vying to be the party of law and order with plans for more police, increased police powers, and more prison places. Representing a key component in a racialised school-to-prison pipeline [8], police in schools are a part of this picture. These realities are further compounded by SBPO’s increased role in counter-terror initiatives [9], particularly the Prevent duty - a deeply problematic and ineffective attempt to tackle so-called extremism that is underpinned by Islamophobia and disproportionately affects Muslim communities [10].

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests of this year have brought renewed critical attention to the role of the police in our societies and to the disproportionate ways in which policing impacts upon Black communities and other communities of colour. With thousands of people attending Black Lives Matter protests in Manchester this summer, there can be little doubt that these are issues here in Greater Manchester too. In the United States, BLM protests have sparked unprecedented conversations about the need to remove police from schools. In the report that follows, we show that there is an urgent need for such a conversation not only in Greater Manchester but more broadly across the UK.

Methodology

Between 26 June 2020 and 26 July 2020, we hosted an online survey via SurveyMonkey on ‘Police in Schools’. A link to the survey was widely shared online, particularly via social media and email, and the survey was accessible via the Northern Police Monitoring Project’s website. The only inclusion criterion was that the person completing the survey had to live or work in Greater Manchester.

With a total population of over 2.8 million inhabitants, Greater Manchester is a large combined authority and the third largest county in England. In comparison to both England and the North West, the county has ‘a higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils’ [11] and a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (a crude indicator of socioeconomic disadvantage) [12]. While Greater Manchester is a specific context, the arguments we make in this report should resonate across the UK, particularly in over-policed communities. Prior to data analysis, 20 survey responses were excluded because only the introductory demographic questions had been answered-

[8] The school-to-prison pipeline refers to the range of ways in which students are pushed out of school and into the criminal justice system. The way that this pipeline operates produces racialised outcomes.

[9] ACPO (2013) Prevent, Police and Schools. Available:

http://www.westhatch.essex.sch.uk/_files/users/6/E043930EE67D269733439336138FC547.pdf

[10] Alexander, C. and Shankley, W. (2020) Ethnic inequalities in the state education system in England: In: B. Byrne, C. Alexander, O. Khan, J. Nazroo and W. Shankley (Eds.) Ethnicity, race and inequality in the UK: State of the nation. Bristol: Policy Press.

[11] However, while the ethnic minority population is growing, at 80% (according to the 2011 census), the White British ethnic group remains overwhelmingly the largest in the region.

[12] Manchester Urban Institute (no date) Education statistics: Research and statistics relating to inequalities in Greater Manchester. Available: <https://www.mui.manchester.ac.uk/research/themes/spatial-inequalities-and-poverty/just-gm/overview/education-statistics/>

d but none of the main set of questions. As such, the excluded survey responses told us nothing about the respondents' views or experiences of police in schools. The report is therefore based on 554 responses, making this by far the largest UK study of its kind. Not all 554 respondents completed the survey in full – that is to say, some respondents chose to answer some of the questions but did not finish the survey in its entirety. This is called 'dropout attrition' and is common in online surveys. Dropout attrition was highest amongst young people (30%) and lowest amongst people self-identifying as an 'other' type of respondent (14%). For transparency, where quantitative data is displayed in this report, the total number of respondents answering the relevant question is provided on the right-side of each graph.

The survey asked a series of questions with regard to respondents' views on the presence of police in schools. In total, 420 respondents completed the survey from start to finish (73% completion rate), giving us a large, rich data set of views and experiences. On average, respondents spent eight minutes answering the survey questions. All quantitative (numerical) data from the survey was inputted into SPSS – a computer software programme – where we undertook univariate and bivariate analyses. Qualitative (textual) data was coded thematically – that is, we manually read each comment and looked for key themes raised by respondents. The names of schools and the gender of existing SBPOs have been removed as part of the anonymisation process. Throughout the report, we give particular prominence to the views of young people. We do so because we recognise that it is them that are directly impacted by an expanded police presence in schools, and their voices have not been heard.

Note on Terminology

In this report, we use 'people of colour' as a way to refer to groups who are racially minoritised - that is, those who are not racialised as white. We use this term not to obscure differences between non-white ethnic groups, but to recognise a shared (though not identical) experience of racism. We use this term, rather than alternatives (e.g. BME, BAME) because we recognise that this is a term that comes from communities of colour, rather than from the State. It has proved to be a term that is popular and recognisable amongst the young people we work with. Recognising the plurality within those designated as 'people of colour', where appropriate we also make reference to specific ethnic groups.

Report Structure

First, we provide demographic information about respondents to the survey (section 1). Next, we outline some of the key quantitative findings from our survey (section 2). We then consider the arguments made by respondents and the State in favour of police in schools (section 3), before moving on to look in detail at the key concerns about police in schools as they arise from our survey data and from the wider evidence.

These concerns are split into seven sections on: Exacerbating Existing Inequalities (section 4); Stigmatising Schools: Stigmatising Communities (section 5); A Culture of Low Expectations (section 6); A Climate of Hostility (section 7); Criminalising Young People (section 8); Inappropriate Conduct (section 9); and Police Violence and Harassment (section 10). Towards the end of the report we turn to Imagining Education Beyond Police in Schools (section 11), and then to look at how, in light of the evidence, we might move forward (Moving Forward Together – Next Steps and A Call to Action).

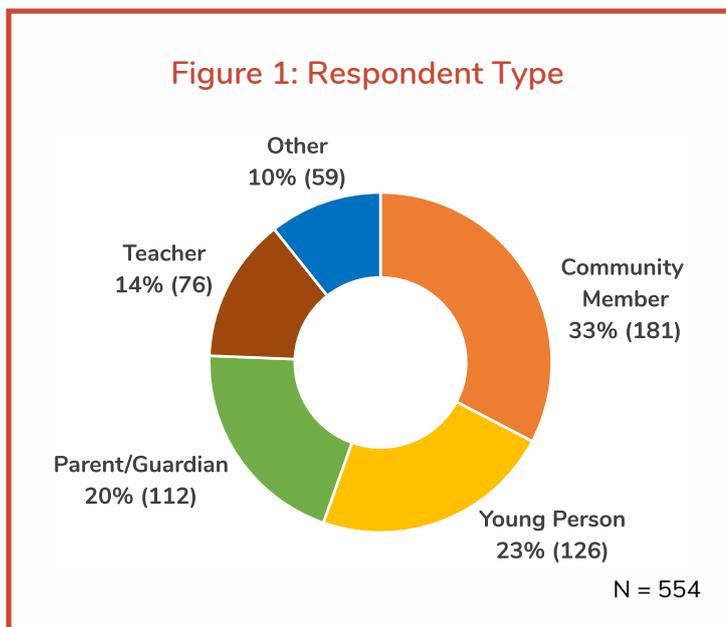


1 - Respondent Demographics

People from across all ten boroughs of Greater Manchester responded to the online survey.

Type of Respondents

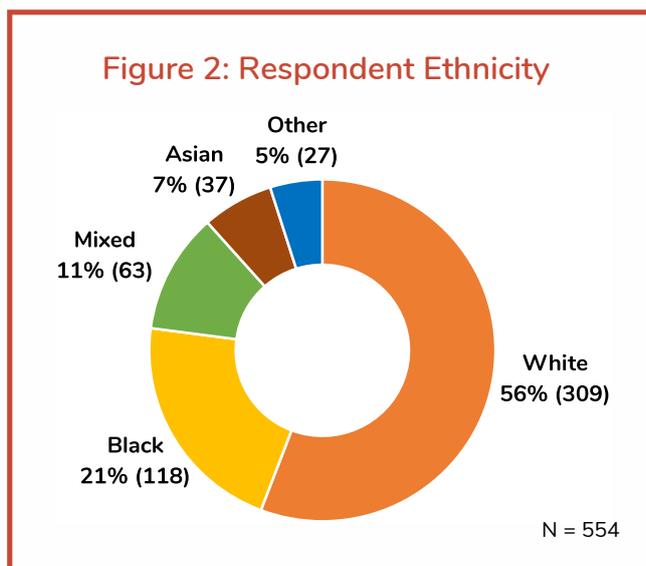
Through the survey, respondents were grouped into: 'Young People', 'Teachers', 'Parents and Guardians', or 'Community Members and Other' types of respondents. As Figure 1 shows, Young People (up to 24 years-old) made up 23% of survey respondents, Teachers comprised 14%, Parents or Guardians made up 20%, Community Members 33%, and 10% self-identified as an 'Other' type of respondent.



Of those self-defining as 'Other', over a quarter said that they were youth workers (27%) and almost a quarter (24%) said that they worked in a school in a non-teaching role. Drawing on such a broad cross section of survey respondents, this report is able to respond to the Educationalist Amanda Henshall's observation that 'little is known about' how school-based police officers (SBPOs) are viewed by students, teachers, parents, or head teachers [13].

Ethnicity

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of survey respondents by ethnicity. Over a half of all survey respondents identified as White (56%), and 21% identified as Black. A further 11% identified as Mixed, 7% as Asian, and 5% as Other. When asked to specify their 'Other ethnicity', some respondents noted that they would prefer not to say. Several respondents identified as pan-African, Afrikan, and African Diasporic.



[13] Henshall, A. (2018) On the school beat: Police officers based in English schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(5): 593-606.

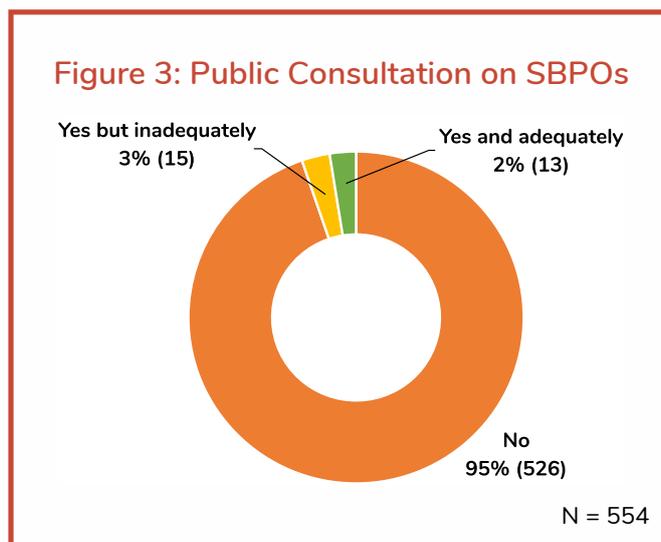
Age of Young People Respondents

Of the 126 young people who responded to the survey, just over three-quarters were between the ages of 17 and 24 years-old (76%). Almost a quarter were 11-16 years-old (23%), and one respondent was 4-10 years-old (>1%).

2 - An Overview of Key Survey Findings

A Lack of Consultation

As Figure 3 demonstrates, the vast majority (95%) of survey respondents have not been consulted on the plans to introduce more school-based police officers (SBPOs) in Greater Manchester. A further 3% said they had not been consulted adequately, leaving 2% of respondents who felt that they had been consulted adequately. This lack of consultation was reported relatively consistently across all respondent types.



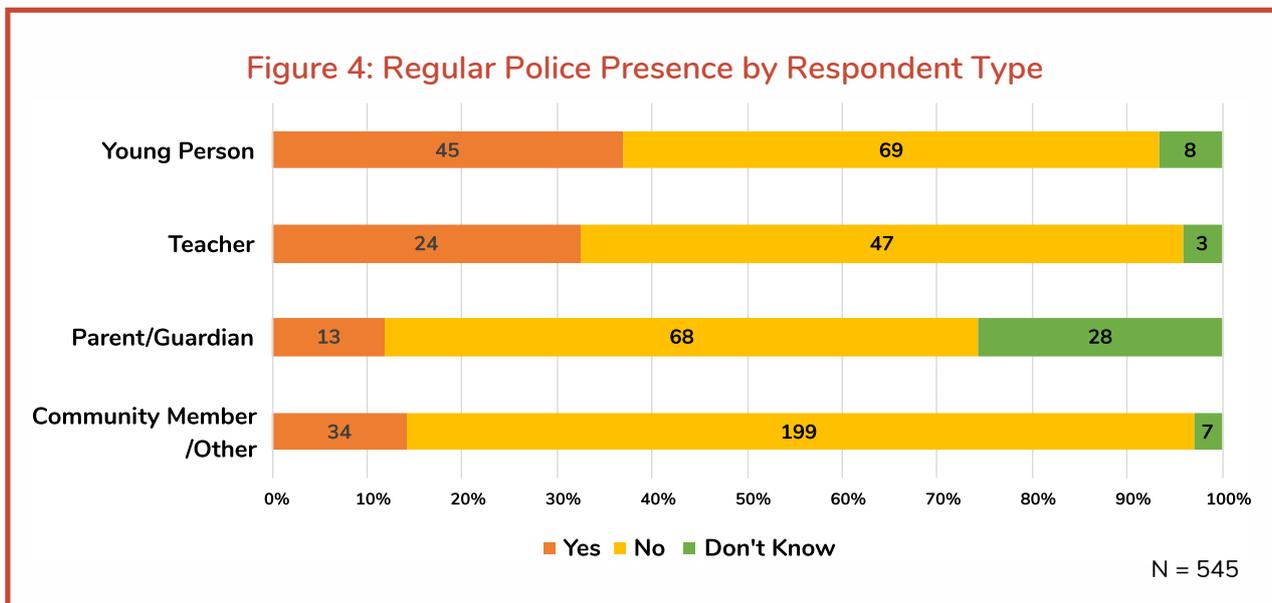
Respondents who noted that they had been consulted either adequately or inadequately were asked who they had been consulted by. Twenty-three respondents chose to provide an answer. The most popular response from respondents was that they had heard about the proposals for more SBPOs from Kids of Colour and Northern Police Monitoring Project, either at events or via (social) media (n = 10). Four respondents heard about the plans from friends or family; two respondents said they had been consulted by their head teacher; two already had a SBPO; two heard about it via the media; one from the National Education Union; one via their work; and one from the Local Authority.

In terms of consultation, therefore, the survey responses paint a picture in which there has been very little public discussion on the introduction of more SBPOs. Where this discussion has occurred, it has largely been left to community groups. With this in mind, it appears that Local Authorities, and the Combined Authority, have not given due consideration to the voices of the public by engaging in meaningful consultation. Moreover, the absence of proper consultation suggests it is highly likely that even those students, teachers and parents whose schools are set to be imminently affected, have not been consulted or even informed about the introduction of a SBPO to their school.

Existing Experiences of a Regular Police Presence in Schools

The majority of survey respondents (70%) did not have any experience(s) of a regular police presence in schools. However, just over a fifth (21%) of respondents did report experiences of a police presence in schools and a further 9% weren't sure whether or not there was a regular police presence. This data suggests that whilst the number of SBPOs in Greater Manchester is set to grow, for many people police in schools are already here. Moreover, that so many respondents were unsure if there was a regular police presence – particularly in the parent/guardian group (see Figure 4) – suggests there is a lack of clarity and openness about the role that police are playing in Greater M-

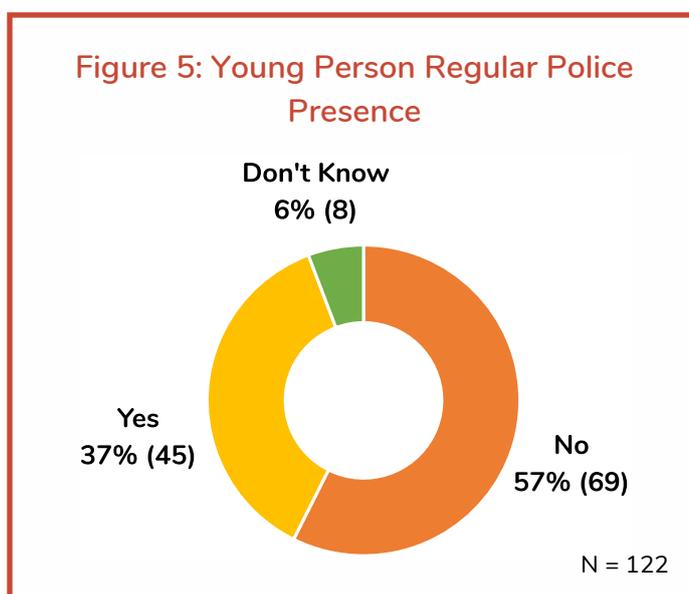
anchester schools. As Figure 4 shows, young people and teachers were more likely to report having experience(s) of a regular police presence in schools than parents/guardians, community members, and those identifying as an 'other' type of respondent. This indicates that parents and community members do not realise the extent to which there are police officers in their schools, which is perhaps unsurprising given the closer proximity of young people and teachers to schools.



Young People’s Experience of a Regular Police Presence in Schools

In Figure 5, we can see that over half of young people (57%) said that they did not or had not attended a school with a regular police presence, whilst 37% said that they had and 6% weren’t sure. Thirty-nine young people who attended or had attended a school with a regular police presence provided qualitative comments about their experiences. The vast majority of views expressed here were negative.

Only one view could be considered positive, but even that response concluded that ‘this won’t help’. The qualitative responses suggested that police officers in schools are viewed by young people as ‘intimidating’, ‘threatening’, ‘rude’, and ‘inappropriate’. Young people also perceived officers to be ‘very biased’, and young people of colour, particularly Black young people, to be treated particularly harshly.

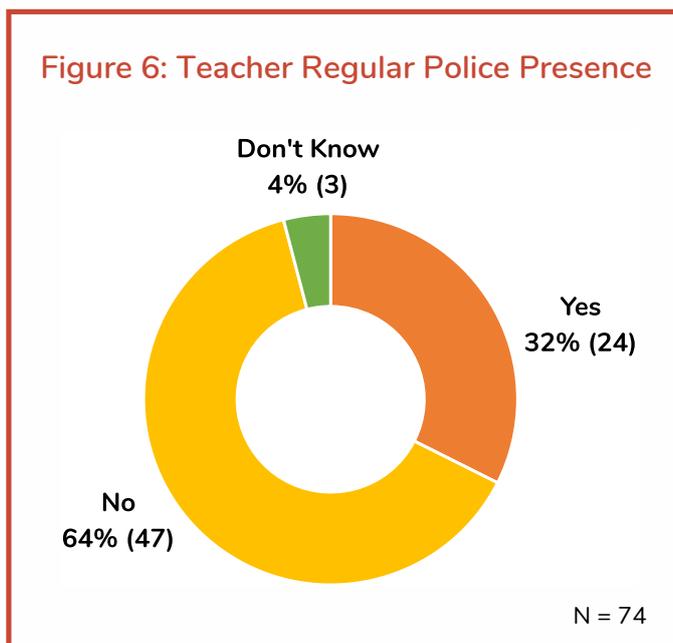


Teachers' Experience of a Regular Police Presence in Schools

As shown in Figure 6, 64% of teachers said that they do not work in a school with a regular police presence, whilst 32% said that they do and 4% weren't sure.

Nineteen teachers who worked in a school with a regular police presence provided written comments about their experiences. Three teachers expressed positive reflections; one noted simply that the regular police presence 'was good', another said their SBPO 'keeps a low profile and is respected,' and the third said 'it has generally been supportive' for students who have been threatened outside of school.

Whilst some responses were neutral, the majority of teachers' views here were negative. One teacher noted that students are 'automatically criminalised', another said 'it creates a general feeling of hostility and fear', and another said that a police presence leads to the 'dissolving trust between students and teachers.' Several teachers noted that police in schools are not conducive to the safe and productive learning environment they want to work in, and that 'few students feel supported and even protected by the police.'



Respondents' General Feelings Towards SBPOs

Overwhelmingly, respondents report feeling negatively about the plans to introduce more SBPOs into Greater Manchester schools. As Figure 7 demonstrates, 71% of respondents feel very negative and a further 17% feel somewhat negative. This means that, in total, 88% of respondents (n=369) have negative feelings about the plans to introduce more SBPOs in Greater Manchester.

In contrast, 6% of respondents feel in some way positive about the plans – that is, 2% feel very positive and 4% somewhat positive. Some survey respondents report feeling neither positive nor negative (6%).

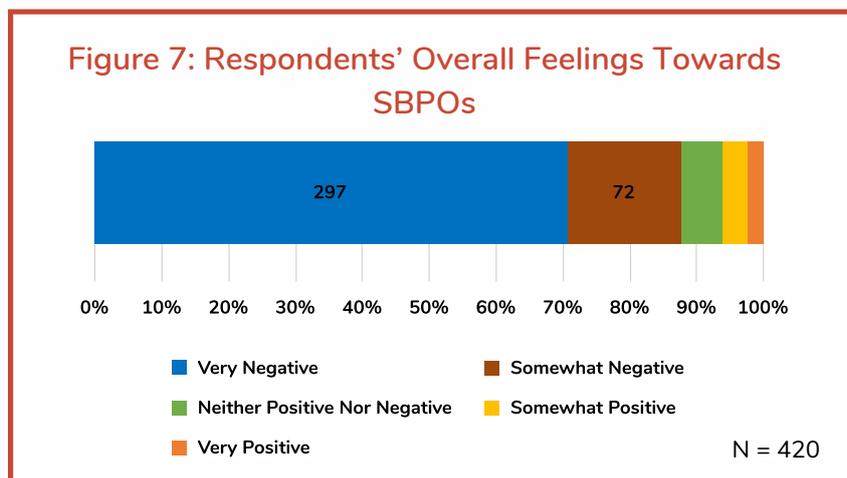
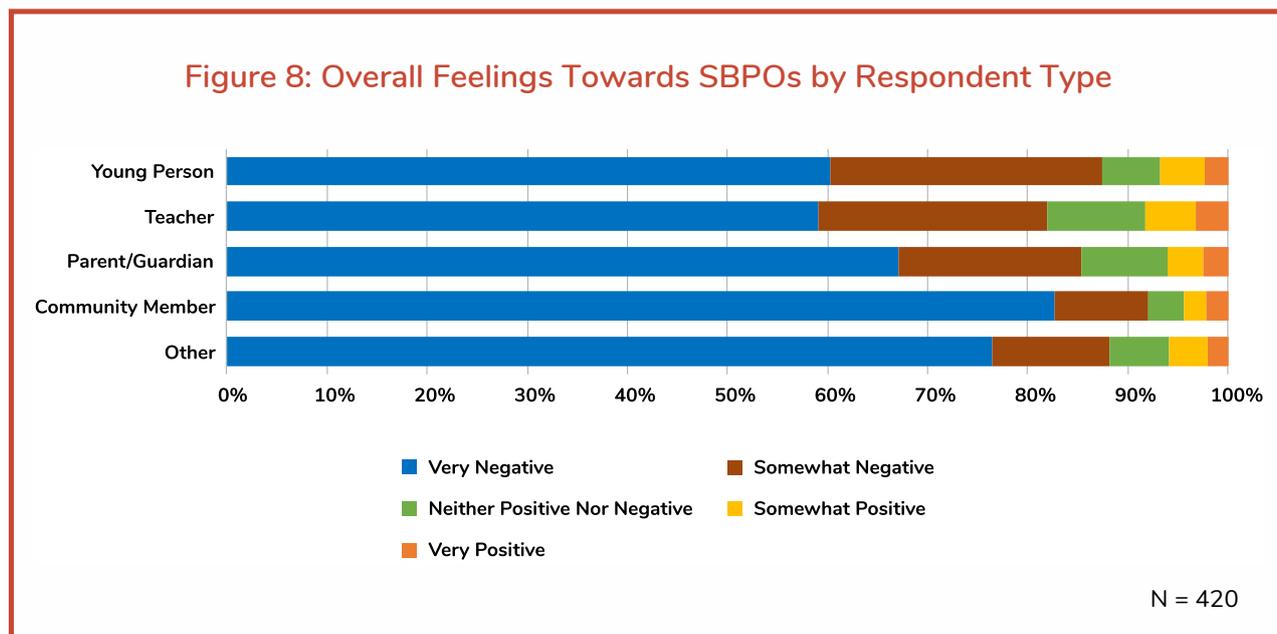


Figure 8 shows that all respondent types followed a similar pattern in terms of their feelings about the plans to introduce more SBPOs. The vast majority (87%) of young people reported feeling either very negative or somewhat negative about the plans, as did 85% of parents and 82% of teachers. The equivalent figure for community members was 92% and 88% for those self-identifying as an 'other' type of respondent. In what follows, we unpack the views expressed by respondents about the prospect of more SBPOs in Greater Manchester schools by exploring a range of key concerns in turn. Before we do, we reflect on the small minority of positive comments about SBPOs.



3 - Arguments Made by Respondents, and the State, in Favour of Police in Schools

As set out above, whilst the overwhelming majority of survey respondents reported feeling negatively about the plans to introduce more school-based police officers (SBPOs) into Greater Manchester schools, a small number were positive about the introduction of additional SBPOs. This group amounts to 6% of total respondents, or just over 1 in 20.

The views of this group of respondents can be understood to fall into three categories pertaining to safety, deterring violence, and improving police relations with over-policed communities. These views largely echo the arguments put forward by the State, specifically the Mayor's Office and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) under the auspices of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). We discuss each in turn below.

In terms of safety, some respondents suggested that SBPOs could make students feel safer in the school environment and increase school security in a positive way. These claims mirror those advanced by GMCA, who acknowledge a community desire for 'all educational establishments to be safe places' [14].

There were a small number of responses that suggested a police presence in schools could help to deter violence. These views echo the primary narrative offered by GMCA, as well as other advocates of police in schools – that is, the suggestion that a regular police presence in schools can play a role in reducing serious violence. The increased presence of police in schools is part of the Violence Reduction Unit and the Serious Violence Action Plan to reduce serious violence across Greater Manchester [15].

Lastly, there were a handful of responses that suggested that police in schools had the potential to help 'build relationships' and break down barriers between the police and communities. Advocates of police in schools argue that by taking a 'community-based' or 'neighbourhood policing approach', SBPOs would help to heal the long-standing poor relations between the police and some communities. Again, this is key to the arguments advanced by GMCA who state a desire for 'the police presence in schools to be a vehicle for building positive relationships between young people and the police', and for officers to 'be personable, approachable and to become figures of trust for the young people' [16].

There is existing empirical evidence that can be brought to bear on each of these points. Firstly, research has shown that the most serious interpersonal violence and harm experienced by young people is not perpetrated by other young people, but is largely do-

[14] Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2020) Serious violence action plan. Available: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3106/gm_violence_reduction_plan_final_amends_final.pdf

[15] See reference above.

[16] See reference above.

mestic in nature, perpetrated by adults (often parents and guardians) [17]. Moreover, and setting aside the much larger issues of State and institutional violence, much of the interpersonal violence experienced by young people occurs outside of the school environment, suggesting that SBPOs are an intervention that fails to get to the root of the problem. In addition, evidence from the United States suggests that (despite huge expense) the presence of SBPOs is largely ineffective [18] and has little impact in deterring crime or violence [19]. There is also robust evidence in the UK to show that policing has no deterrent effect on violent crime [20], and academics like Adam Elliot-Cooper have argued that investment in social infrastructure and support mechanisms, rather than policing, is a more effective way to tackle social problems [21]. We return to this latter point in Section 11. Lastly, wider research has shown that despite often being presented as benign, community policing has been ineffective in its purported aims, whilst being deeply harmful and insidious [22]. The effects of this mean that such approaches often feed into, rather than challenge, negative perceptions of the police.

In the sections that follow, we turn to consider the arguments set out by the majority of respondents who raised concerns about the presence of police in schools. These concerns speak back to – and at times undermine – the justifications being offered by the State, including those that have been set out in this section. Having been largely ignored by decision makers, the perspectives presented in the remainder of this report must be a critical part of the conversation.

[17] Devries, K. (2018) Who perpetrates violence against children? A systematic analysis of age-specific and sex-specific data. *British Medical Journal Paediatrics Open* 2:e00180

[18] Hirschfield, P.J. (2018) Schools and crime. *Annual Review of Criminology*, 1:149–169.

[19] ACLU (2017) Bullies in blue: The origins and consequences of school policing. Available: <https://www.aclu.org/report/bullies-blue-origins-and-consequences-school-policing>

[20] Tiratelli, M. (2018) Little – if any – evidence to suggest increased stop and search can reduce levels of violent crime, Policy@Manchester. Available: <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/posts/2018/02/little-if-any-evidence-to-suggest-increased-stop-and-search-can-reduce-levels-of-violent-crime/>

[21] Elliot-Cooper, A. (2020) 'Defund the police' is not nonsense. Here's what it really means, *The Guardian*, 02 July 2020. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/02/britain-defund-the-police-black-lives-matter>

[22] *The Sociologist*, Jas Nijjar, describes community policing as 'an iron fist in a velvet glove' See: Nijjar, J. (forthcoming) Police-school partnerships and the war on black youth, *Critical Social Policy*; also see: Tufail, W. (2015) Policing Muslim communities in partnership: 'Integration', belonging and resistance. In: N. El-Enany and E. Bruce-Jones (Eds) *Justice, resistance and solidarity: Race and policing in England and Wales*. London: Runnymede Trust; Gordon, P. (1984) Community policing: Towards the local police state? *Critical Social Policy*, 4(10): 39-58.

4 - Exacerbating Existing Inequalities

Underpinning many of the survey responses was a widespread sense that the placement of police in schools would exacerbate existing inequalities. In the first instance, as respondents from across each group made clear, race and class inequalities are apparent in terms of where school-based police officer's (SBPOs) are placed:

'The police don't have a role in schools. If they do then why are they not in Eton and Harrow?' (Young Person)

'I can't imagine private schools or Grammar schools will have a police presence, although from experience I know that there is just as much, if not more, violence and drug misuse in these settings.' (Parent/Guardian)

These views reflect a recurrent theme in which survey respondents noted that SBPOs would not be appearing in all schools but rather, in schools more likely to be attended by working class students and students of colour. There is strong evidence to support this perception [23]. From the outset, therefore, the placement of police in schools is destined to produce racist and classist outcomes. This is not only manifest in the increased likelihood of police contact and criminalisation but also, as we discuss in the next section, in the increased risk of stigma, and subsequent culture of low expectations, that comes with the presence of SBPOs.

It is important to note, however, that SBPOs not only exacerbate inequalities between schools but also within schools. Many respondents pointed to wider evidence of institutional racism in policing, and to a lesser extent, racism in education. With Black people more likely to be subject to stop and search, police use of force including Taser [24], and more likely to be on ill-informed police 'gang' databases [25], it is hard to imagine how more SBPOs won't disproportionately impact upon Black communities and other communities of colour [26]. As so many respondents noted:

[23] Henshall, A. (2018) On the school beat: Police officers based in English schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(5): 593-606; Joseph-Salisbury, R. (2020). Race and racism in English secondary schools, The Runnymede Trust. Available: <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/education/racism-in-secondary-schools.html>

[24] Resistance Lab (2020) A growing threat to life: Taser usage by Greater Manchester Police. Available: <https://resistancelab.network/our-work/taser-report/index.html>

[25] Williams, P. and Clarke, B. (2016) Dangerous associations: Joint enterprise, gangs and racism, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. Available: <https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/Dangerous%20associations%20Joint%20Enterprise%20gangs%20and%20racism.pdf>

[26] A survey by the NEU's [National Education Union] North West Black Members Organising Forum found that, given the extent of police racism, teachers were also concerned about how this would impact upon Black staff. 76% of respondents who felt that police officers should not be based in schools, cited the risk of 'increased racial profiling'. The survey is set to be published later this year.

‘The police have historically shown racial and class prejudice in relation to over-policing and I believe it would be inevitable that they would do the same in a school environment.’ (Young Person)

‘We know that institutional racism is an issue in the police, and we should not further introduce this to our schools.’ (Community Member)

‘GMP [Greater Manchester Police] are an institutionally racist organisation with individually racist officers - it won't end well for our kids.’ (Parent/Guardian)

‘The police will certainly bring their race & class biases with them.’ (Teacher)

What respondents make clear, therefore, is that racism in the police is not the product of a few bad apples but rather, is deeply ingrained at an institutional level. Whilst the presence of institutional racism is frequently denied by the police [27], it is clear that respondents believe it is a defining feature of contemporary policing.

In an effort to point to the uneven impact that police in schools will have, the notion that ‘the police are institutionally racist’ (parent/guardian) was highlighted repeatedly across respondent groups. When we add into this picture the disproportionate rate at which some minoritised groups are excluded from schools, the evidence becomes ever more damning. Survey responses show that these issues already manifest here in Greater Manchester, and that the young people most likely to be affected, are not consulted leaving their lived experiences disregarded. It is notable that those young people who have already experienced police in schools were overwhelmingly critical of SBPOs, and their written responses highlighted racism as a key issue:

‘There was a police officer that was part of the staff at the high school I attended. Disliked by most students due to the more prominent attention they gave to students of colour.’ (Young Person)

‘[The officer] is persistently unnecessarily rude towards me and my other black peers.’ (Young Person)

‘The officer was petty and vindictive, treated black kids harsher, and relied on intimidation.’ (Young Person)

‘Police were hostile towards students and no efforts were made towards communication. POC [People of Colour] were targeted by the police.’ (Young Person)

[27] Forrest, A. (2020) Metropolitan Police chief denies force is ‘institutionally racist’ and pledges to listen to Black Lives Matter protesters, The Independent, 08 July 2020. Available: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/met-police-cressida-dick-racism-bianca-williams-stop-search-a9607671.html>



In addition to the wider evidence outlined above, these lived experiences of young people (of which there were many more) attest to the ways in which racism shapes the work of police in schools.

Survey responses suggest that it is Black and Asian students, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students, and Muslim students that are particularly susceptible to the negative impact of police in schools. Young people, parents, and community members all pointed to how SBPOs would exacerbate the way that Prevent [28] produces 'highly racialised surveillance of Muslim and South Asian pupils' [29]. Respondents also pointed out that alongside those facing racism, there are other groups who will be more harshly affected by police in schools:

'The police do not listen to: women, people of colour, queer people, disabled people, poor people or young people. This has been proven time and again by their interactions with myself and my peers. Police therefore should not be in schools where there are vulnerable young people, especially not if they have intersecting identities.' (Young Person)

'I would be concerned about attending a school with regular police presence. As a visibly queer person, the police are not my friends. I would also feel very unsafe for my BME peers, particularly my Black peers, if there was a police presence at school.' (Young Person)

'Scary. Impact upon LGBT+ students, particularly trans and gender non-conforming students, as they are also over-policed groups (particularly when they are BPOC [Black and People of Colour] and/or working class). This is even more particularly the case now that the government is looking to criminalise trans people's access to 'single-sex spaces.' Police also are some of the highest domestic abuse offenders and one of the most common allegations of police misconduct is of sexual violence. With this context, it's important to recognise that police are also more likely to be violent, dismissive and scary towards (particularly) young women (especially those who sit at intersections of marginalised identities)... Disabled people are also over-policed, particularly racialised disabled people, and the presence of police in schools raises this risk for so-called SEN [Special Educational Needs] and other disabled young people.' (Youth Worker)

[28] Part of the government's counter-terror strategy, Prevent purportedly aims to tackle so-called extremism. It places a duty on public bodies including schools, universities, the police, and the NHS. It has been widely condemned for the way it discriminates against Muslim communities.

[29] Alexander, C. and Shankley, W. (2020) Ethnic inequalities in the state education system in England: In: B. Byrne, C. Alexander, O. Khan, J. Nazroo and W. Shankley (Eds.) Ethnicity, race and inequality in the UK: State of the nation. Bristol: Policy Press.

At various intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, age, and religion, police in schools pose a threat to the most vulnerable in our societies. The responses to our survey, as well as the wider body of evidence on police in schools, raise a range of issues related to the exacerbation of inequalities and problematise the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's claim that police in schools 'support individual young people who are vulnerable' [30]. Whilst it is important to recognise that police in schools are a problem for us all, it is vital that we recognise that some will be more affected than others. Thus, in each of the following sections, we are mindful of how structural inequalities render some groups more vulnerable than others.

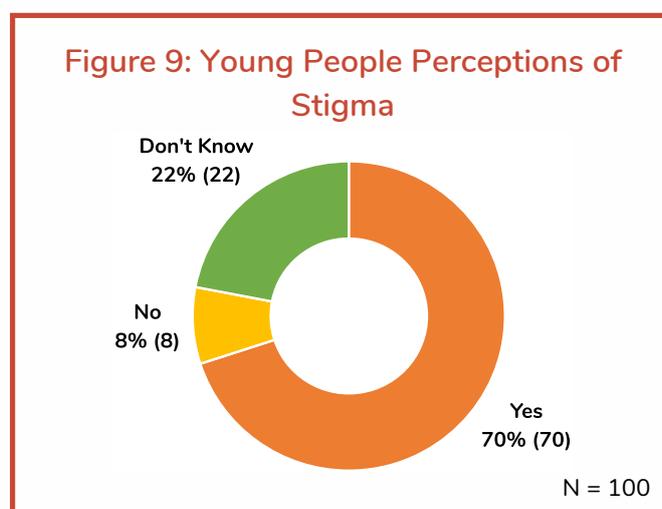
[30] Greater Manchester Combined Authority. (2020) Serious violence action plan. Available: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3106/gm_violence_reduction_plan_final_amends_final.pdf

5 - Stigmatising Schools: Stigmatising Communities

The stigmatisation of schools was a key issue that came up time and time again in the survey responses. According to Greater Manchester Combined Authority, at least 20 officers will be dedicated full-time to the schools of ‘greatest need’ across Greater Manchester [31]. As suggested in the previous section, and as respondents were acutely aware, how this is determined is undoubtedly shaped by classist and racist assumptions. Put more plainly, school-based police officers (SBPOs) are much more likely to be placed in schools with a high proportion of working class students and students of colour, meaning that any stigma will be more likely felt by those communities.

Through the survey, young people were asked whether they felt that society will view schools with SBPOs more negatively than those without. As Figure 9 shows, 70% of respondents answered yes, whilst 22% of young people weren’t sure and just 8% felt that schools would not be viewed more negatively.

As young people explained:



‘...if a school has police officers and other schools don't then it could lead to the community thinking that the school has some troubled youths who are so bad that they need police intervention. Especially, if it is a state funded and in a deprived area, it compounds the idea that these young people are not good enough and need the police to step in.’ (Young Person)

‘Society will likely view the role of police as a sign the school is a ‘problem school’. This is problematic as I feel it’s more likely the police will be instigated in schools in deprived areas.’ (Young Person)

Like the young people, responses from teachers suggested that the stigmatisation of schools was a huge concern. The vast majority of teachers suggested that schools with SBPOs will be stigmatised because of the police presence. As one teacher explained:

[31] Greater Manchester Combined Authority. (2020) Serious violence action plan. Available: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3106/gm_violence_reduction_plan_final_amends_final.pdf

'It's like that house on your road that constantly has a police car parked outside with officers knocking on the door to investigate yet another domestic incident. There is bound to be stigma for a school that needs a police presence compared to schools that don't need as much or have no need at all. A school that has this policing presence will undoubtedly be seen by some prospective learners and parents as a troubled school. The school could miss out on recruiting highly capable and diverse learners from across the community.' (Teacher)

Teachers and community members explained that the presence of police officers would lead the wider communities to assume that a school has problems with behaviour or criminality requiring a police presence. As the teacher quoted above explains, this will likely have implications for the school in terms of recruitment.

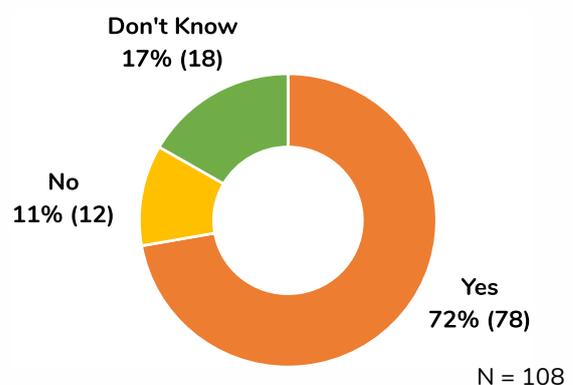
The idea that a police presence suggests a 'troubled school', a 'problem school', or a school that is 'dangerous' came up repeatedly: 'If they are not in ALL schools it suggests students at [a] given school are seen as 'problem' children', a teacher argued. In a similar vein, a community member warned:

'...it would be very difficult for a school with its own police officer to rid itself of a reputation for being a dangerous place.' (Community Member)

Another teacher noted that schools are 'generally already stigmatised by people's assumptions about areas and communities' and survey responses, as well as wider evidence, seem to suggest that the presence of an SBPO is likely to exacerbate that stigma.

The stigma that comes with a SBPO is reflected in responses from young people and teachers saying they wouldn't like to attend or teach in a school with a SBPO, and in the fact that almost three quarters of parents/guardians (72%) said they would have concerns about sending their child to a school with a SBPO. Only 11% of parents/guardians said they don't have concerns and 17% weren't sure whether or not they were concerned about sending their child to a school with a SBPO.

Figure 10: Parent/Guardian Concerns About SBPOs



It is worth noting that the implications of stigmatising a school reach far beyond the school itself. A community member made this point:

'It suggests criminality of the school populous and the officers will undoubtedly be placed within schools with high % of BPOC [Black and People of Colour] youth and working class white youth. Communities who are already over-surveilled and over-policed. It suggests that these communities are a danger to school and civic life. It will deepen harmful stereotypes about people from these communities that encourage fear and distrust of these communities, which in cycle, works to justify the over-policing and surveillance. The cycle must be broken. Stigma of having police officers within these schools fuels this racist cycle.' (Community Member)

Thus, the stigmatisation of the school feeds the stigmatisation of certain communities, which in turn, feeds a 'racist cycle' with wide ranging implications. Within the school environment, the stigma feeds 'a culture of low expectations' that can impact upon the students and the learning environment of the school and it's to this idea that we now turn.



6 - A Culture of Low Expectations

The issue of stigma discussed above translates very quickly into concerns about a culture of low expectations within schools. Educational research has long since shown how low expectations can have a detrimental impact on the attainment (and well-being) of students and, significantly, that these low expectations are racialised and classed [32]. Across young people, teachers, parents and community members, survey responses show that there are real concerns about the message sent to students by the presence of police in schools.

One teacher warned that placing police in schools amounts to ‘setting low expectations of our students’, whilst another explained that this ‘could result in self-fulfilling prophecy and mean that children feel typecast/pre-judged due to [the] area they live in/school they go to.’ If the presence of police in schools transmits a negative message to students, there is a real danger of such messages being internalised and creating a barrier to attainment. It seems, therefore, that rather than tackling the multiple attainment barriers that many learners face, the placement of police in schools reinforce them:

‘It’s a culture of low expectations. Calls for SBPOs only seem to be in working class communities and [involve] very racialised language like gangs, drugs, knife crime.’ (Teacher)

As this teacher intimates, police in schools operate in a wider context where societal ideas of criminality are already shaped by racism - that is, Black people are already more likely to be assumed to be gang members, drug users, and perpetrators of (knife) crime.

Teacher (and societal) expectations of students from working class communities and communities of colour are already lower than they should be [33]. Moreover, students are often acutely aware of this. By putting police in schools, affected students are again being shown by society that there is an expectation not only that they won’t ‘do well’ in school but also, that they are likely to engage in criminal behaviour. As a young person suggested, students in schools with school-based police officers (SBPOs) will be viewed as though they are ‘bad, troubled’ and that ‘they will not make it in life or [that they will] go to prison’. It is important that we take warnings about ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’ seriously. As respondents explained:

[32] Gillborn, D. (2014) Racism as policy: A critical race analysis of education reforms in the United States and England. *The Educational Forum*, 78(1): 26-41.

[33] See reference above.

‘By labelling kids, you are basically expecting something to happen and eventually due to the internalisation it will, it does.’ (Young Person)

‘...the SBPO created the idea for the young people that they were already viewed as potentially criminal and needed policing as a result. This led to anger and frustration, as well as a lack of willingness to hold themselves to a standard of behaviour that they would otherwise have expected of themselves. I.e. If you already think I'm a criminal then I might as well do it anyway.’ (Youth Worker)

Taking self-fulfilling prophecies seriously means recognising that the message transmitted through a police presence is a harmful one that could feed the school-to-prison pipeline. The academic work of Karen Graham has shown that punitive interventions like these are often more likely ‘to produce delinquency’ than prevent it [34]. This is particularly the case when low expectations are combined with other practices of over-policing and criminalisation (see section 8).

As has been shown to be the case in the United States, it is likely that ‘students who have interacted with school police in negative ways, even for purely school discipline matters, are marked by peers, officers, and school officials as criminal’ [35]. Given evidence of the negative stereotypes that police, and teachers, hold about communities of colour, it is not a leap to infer that, even within schools, working class students and/or students of colour will be far more at risk of coming under the purview of SBPOs, and therefore more likely to be subject to their low expectations.

All of us want a culture of high expectations for our young people. The evidence from this survey resoundingly shows that the placement of police in schools is antithetical to the nurturing ethos hoped for in schools.

[34] Graham, K. (2016) The British school-to-prison pipeline: In: K. Andrews and L. Palmer (Eds.) Blackness in Britain. London: Routledge.

[35] ACLU (2017). Bullies in blue: The origins and consequences of school policing. Available: <https://www.aclu.org/report/bullies-blue-origins-and-consequences-school-policing>.



7 - A Climate of Hostility

Educational research shows that teachers hope to create a learning environment that is positive and inclusive [36]. However, as the survey responses suggest, the presence of a school-based police officer (SBPO) threatens to disrupt this, turning the school environment into one that is hostile and alienating. Added to existing school punishments – including detentions, isolation and exclusions, for example – this poses a real barrier to the positive development of young people. As one teacher said: ‘school is supposed to be a safe space of children to learn and develop’.

Of the 39 young people who answered the question ‘please tell us about your experiences of attending a school with a regular police presence’, 18 used words including ‘intimidating’ ‘scared’ or ‘threatened’ to describe experiences of a police presence at school. A Local Councillor also reflected on the impact that officers would have in this regard:

‘Police presence would lead to a more hostile environment and therefore an increase in negative and confrontational behaviours.’ (Local Councillor)

Views like these undermine the fallacy which underpins much of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority’s logic [37] that police in schools make students feel safer. As discussed in Section 4, these issues are felt particularly sharply by young people of colour. The following views from a young person demonstrate this:

‘In my own experience they were more active in dealing with students of colour, for justified reasons or not, they were more involved with students that were not blatantly white. It gave the school a less-safe feel. I think it’s too much and distressing for a place that is supposed to encourage healthy learning and growth.’ (Young Person)

It is clear therefore that young people believe that the presence of police in schools creates a particularly difficult and unwelcoming environment for people of colour.

Further contributing to this climate of hostility is the emergence of schools as sites of surveillance and intelligence gathering. This results in young people feeling uncomfortable and unable to express themselves:

[36] Joseph-Salisbury, R. (2020) Race and racism in English secondary schools, The Runnymede Trust. Available: <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/education/racism-in-secondary-schools.html>

[37] Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2020) Serious violence action plan. Available: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3106/gm_violence_reduction_plan_final_amends_final.pdf

'I would feel less comfortable. I would be worried if I expressed a view that wasn't in line with the state I would be treated differently or even policed about it.' (Young Person)

'I felt as though I was constantly being watched and that teachers would take more advantage because they knew police were there, on their side.' (Young Person)

These concerns about surveillance and intelligence gathering are well-founded [38], and were also echoed by other participants, including a community member who was concerned about the discriminatory logic underpinning such practices:

'Young people today have fewer opportunities to engage with counsellors, youth workers, youth clubs, after school clubs and with people who are meant to care for them without a lens of securitisation that Prevent and the Gangs Matrix have introduced. Adding police officers to the growing security apparatus emerging in schools will lead to young people being in fear of going to school.' (Community Member)

This respondent points to how police in schools expand deeply problematic and highly racialised interventions like Prevent and 'gangs' databases [39]. We return to discuss 'gangs' databases more in the following section.

Despite the widespread criticisms that exist around Prevent [40], teachers and community members predict that more police in schools will further exacerbate the harms Prevent has already caused in education:

[38] Nijjar, J. (forthcoming) Police-school partnerships and the war on black youth, Critical Social Policy

[39] See reference above.

[40] Nagdee, I. (2019) Reforming the Prevent strategy won't work. It must be abolished, The Guardian, 09 October 2019. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/09/prevent-strategy-abolished-secret-counter-terror-database>

'The police's role is to police. There is no place for this in school. We need to be able to talk about and address things like racism in a safe environment - how is this possible with police presence. It undermines teachers and will instil fear in parents. As with the Prevent agenda, there are several steps missing. I have worked with teachers who referred children to Prevent who said 'they didn't want to eat English food,' this required a supportive and open conversation - this should not have been a referral to the PVE [Preventing Violent Extremism] agenda because of lack of information and ignorance on the teachers part.' (Community Member)

As this community member implies, the entanglement of SBPOs with Prevent (as per 2013 guidance) [41] will only add to the culture of surveillance facing Muslim students. With schools and wider society already constituting hostile spaces for many Muslims, this should be of grave concern. The idea that the police undermine rather than engender safety was a common one across many of our participants. This offers an important retort to the logic of advocates of police in school – that is to say, for many in our communities, the police do not bring about feelings of safety.

We should also be concerned about the impact that police in schools will have upon migrant communities. Schools have a history of being used as sites of migration control [42]. This, coupled with evidence that police are increasingly being repurposed as border guards [43], suggests that the hostility of police surveillance will be particularly acute for those who have migrated and those who, by virtue of nationality/ethnicity, are seen as potential 'migrants'. The presence of police in schools will therefore further heighten the risk of easy pathways to deportation, also known as the school to deportation pipeline [44].

Respondents also raised concerns about the way in which the climate of hostility is created and maintained via the use of, exposure to, and threat of aggressive policing: 'SBPOs cause an unstable environment around children. I've even witnessed one threatening a year 7 pupil with putting them in handcuffs' (teacher). Particularly alarming is an experience shared by one young person about the use of police dogs:

[41] ACPO (2013) Prevent, Police and Schools, Available:

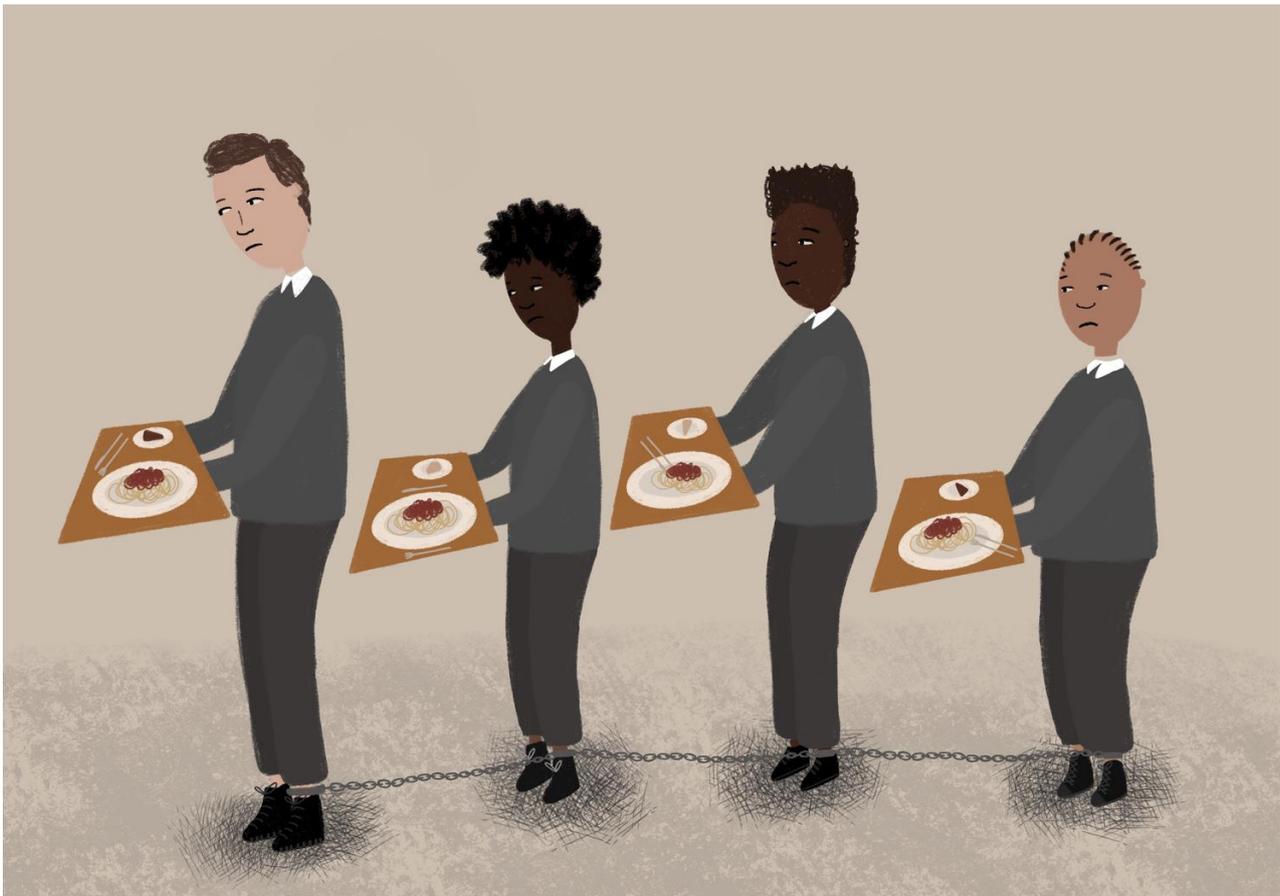
http://www.westhatch.essex.sch.uk/_files/users/6/E043930EE67D269733439336138FC547.pdf

[42] Against Borders for Children (2020). Available: <https://www.schoolsabc.net/>

[43] Joseph-Salisbury, R. (2019) Stop the scan: Turning police into border guards, Red Pepper, 07 July 2019. Available: <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/stop-the-scan-turning-police-into-border-guards/>

[44] Verma, S., Maloney, P. and Austin, D. (2017) The school to deportation pipeline: The perspectives of immigrant students and their teachers on profiling and surveillance within the school system. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 673(1): 209-229.

'From the couple of times that the police have visited this year, they have been quite abrupt and some students - who have done nothing wrong - panic. On one instance dogs were brought in to sniff everyone in assembly to check for drugs and I imagine that for some that would have been scary, especially since in the assembly there was a mix of year 12 and year 10 students so some of them were still quite young. The school also warned us several times after this event that the police would be back with the dogs to keep checking - they never did. I think the school and the police were using this as a technique rather than an actual possibility. I understand that warning students about the dangers of drugs and gangs is vital however I believe on this occasion it could have been done in a more informative way and in a less intimidating manner. I think that if this was done on a regular basis we would no longer be in an education establishment more of a surveillance state. We are still children who come to school for education in academics and life and it is concerning that schools are used otherwise.' (Young Person)



Not only is the existence of this climate of hostility in young people's everyday lives concerning but so too is the normalisation of this environment: 'at first, I was intimidated by their presence, but over time you accept it as reality and get used to it' (Young person).

Of course, the climate of fear and hostility fostered by police in school has very real consequences for young people. In a context where anxiety, self-harm and suicide are rising amongst young people [45], survey responses conveyed a strong sense that the implementation of SBPOs will exacerbate the ongoing mental health crisis facing young people. As one young person shared:

'I think this will then also be incredibly harmful to some student's mental well-being and might cause some to rightfully retaliate to being policed, most likely meaning they will be labelled as badly behaved and violent.' (Young Person)

A similar sentiment was shared by another young person, who reflected on the way in which the anxiety induced by a police presence will be felt particularly acutely by some students more than others: 'I would feel more on edge and anxious about police being within the school, especially as a black person' (Young Person). This is unsurprising given the long history of police brutality towards people of colour generally, and Black communities in particular.

Whilst GMCA claim that the placement of police in schools has the potential to improve community relations with the police, respondents resoundingly disagreed. As one teacher noted, it is not the school's responsibility,

'...to improve relationships between the Black/Asian/Roma students at our school and the police - and I don't believe a police officer being based in a school would achieve that anyway.' (Teacher)

Attempts to improve community perceptions of the police should not come at the expense of a welcoming school environment, particularly when SBPOs are in fact creating a climate of hostility that harms, rather than improves, perceptions of the police. Echoing our suggestion here, in a survey conducted by the NEU's North West Black Members Organising Forum, 51% of respondents who said that police officers should not be based in schools cited 'damages community relations' as a key reason why [46].

[45] Weale, S. (2019). Mental health of pupils is 'at crisis point', teachers warn, The Guardian, 17 April 2019. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/apr/17/mental-health-young-people-england-crisis-point-teacher-school-leader-survey>

[46] Findings from the survey are set to be published later this year.

8 - Criminalising Young People

Activists, academics and others have for a long time raised concerns that school-based police officers (SBPOs) result in the increased criminalisation of young people and reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline [47]. These concerns were shared by many survey respondents. As one young person said, 'everyday schools are looking more like prisons and adding police officers really highlights this idea.' The evidence shows all too clearly that police in schools can result in young people being 'fast-tracked into the criminal justice system' (Parent).

In particular, a common concern expressed in the survey was that the presence of police in schools is likely to result in minor behavioural issues being treated as, or escalating into, criminal issues. This is evident in the following accounts:

'I feel that matters that should be dealt with by teaching and pastoral staff are escalated unnecessarily to the school police officer. This almost criminalises normal school behaviour.' (Parent/Guardian)

'Police officers in schools are likely to change the way staff deal with student discipline. A dispute between students, which would have been resolved by a counsellor or teacher, will become a police matter. The result is that more young people will end up with criminal records and will be channelled into the criminal justice system later in life.' (Community Member)

Central here is the idea that police officers in schools do not concern themselves only with 'criminal' matters but rather, engage in net-widening – a process through which more young people are brought into the criminal justice system. This is also part of a picture in which those in power are increasingly turning to punitive responses to solve social problems that would be better solved by other means (for example, by a counsellor). With the harms of the criminal justice system widely documented, the 'intersection between the education and policing/criminal justice system' (Community Member) is a deeply troubling one.

Both parents and young people had experience of police involvement in disciplinary situations in schools. One parent recalled a situation in which:

'The police officer was brought into a meeting about my child's behaviour within school, and not for any criminal offence or allegation. Intimidating my child and attempting to intimidate me.' (Parent)

[47] Graham, K. (2016) The British school-to-prison pipeline: In: K. Andrews and L. Palmer (Eds.) Blackness in Britain. London: Routledge; American Civil Liberties Union (2020) School to prison pipeline. Available: <https://www.aclu.org/issues/racial-justice/race-and-inequality-education/school-prison-pipeline>

Many young people and parents agreed with the respondent above that the involvement of police in minor disciplinary situations invoked fear. As one young person said, 'it was really just for fear factor and threats'. Others raised concerns about criminal outcomes being imposed upon young people. One teacher, for example, worried about:

'...potentially seeing an increase in arrest for minor offences that schools wouldn't ordinarily take further action on.' (Teacher)

Burdened with a criminal record, young people's educational and employment opportunities may become limited, 'feeding the school-to-prison pipeline' (teacher). The presence of police in schools means that rather than preparing young people for fulfilled lives in society, our schools are priming some young people for prison.

Drawing upon evidence of institutionalised racism in the police and the over-representation of Black people in prison, as well as the realities of which schools will have a police presence, respondents were clear that certain groups of young people would be more likely to be considered criminal than others. As a young person said:

'I fear that racial profiling and racial stereotypes of black and brown kids being 'criminals' and 'thugs' will affect police's judgement in schools.' (Young Person)

Several other young people reflected on how the 'gang' narrative is central to the criminalisation of young people, and – given its racialised nature – particularly young people of colour. One Black young person, for example, reflected on her experience of how a disagreement between her and another student was incorrectly assumed by a police officer in school to be 'gang-related':

'...the police officer sat me down to tell me that "if I carried on like this, I'd be seeing [their] face a lot more and that I would end up nowhere in life." [The officer] also asked me what gang I belonged to or was affiliated to. [They] didn't have [their] body cam and was extremely patronising. [The officer] was referring to an altercation that happened between me and another female, which was NOT gang related but this was an assumption made by teachers and police. The other female didn't face the same repercussions. This altercation also led to the school flagging me to social services (not the other female).' (Young Person)

The framing of young people of colour as ‘gang’ members can have serious consequences [48], in the case of this young person, a referral to social services.

The gang narrative facing young people of colour feeds into and is fed by gangs databases, like the one compiled by Greater Manchester Police’s Xcalibre Task Force (anti-gangs unit). Gangs databases have been proven to target Black people disproportionately [49], and as shown through the outreach work of Kids of Colour, some teachers also contribute to racist gang narratives. As the Sociologist Jas Nijjar has shown, the police’s racialised ‘war on gangs’ fundamentally underpins renewed efforts to place police in schools, and – through surveillance and ‘intelligence’ sharing – SBPOs become yet another weapon in the State’s arsenal for criminalising Black young people [50]. The ever-tightening links between police and schools extends the risk to young people and their communities, a notion highlighted by a community member:

‘The school has SSP [Safer Schools Partnership] [51] meetings every week with the officer in attendance, information is shared around possible gang connections, but I am unsure whether this intelligence comes from the police to the school or the other way around. I have seen Xcalibre [GMP anti-gangs task force] in school but have been unable to get to the bottom of why they are there’ (Assistant SENCo)

Here, the respondent points to the two-way process of intelligence gathering and sharing between the school and the police, and in so doing, the ways in which young people are increasingly being placed under surveillance across all areas of their lives.

[48] Williams, P. and Clarke, B. (2016) Dangerous associations: Joint enterprise, gangs and racism, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. Available:

<https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/Dangerous%20associations%20Joint%20Enterprise%20gangs%20and%20racism.pdf>

[49] See reference 48.

[50] Nijjar, J. (forthcoming) Police-school partnerships and the war on black youth, Critical Social Policy

[51] A Safer School Partnership is a formal agreement between a school or partnership of schools and police to work together. It is often through such a partnership that school-based police officers operate.



9 - Inappropriate Conduct

American and Canadian activists campaigning for 'Police Free Schools' have been working to build awareness of modes of oppressive policing – such as sexual harassment and assault – that often sit outside of the more visible and more discussed forms of discriminatory policing [52]. Clear through this survey, is an emerging theme that begins to mirror their findings of inappropriate police conduct in schools. This is perhaps most evident through the use of inappropriate and offensive language:

'They [the officer] would also use excessive language in meetings towards students even calling them 'sluts' and 'slags'.' (Young Person)

In addition, the use of police officers in Greater Manchester to 'educate' young people on sensitive topics through assemblies is producing problematic dialogues, including victim-blaming: 'when I was a victim of a crime, they told me how I should have avoided being a victim', one young person explained. Issues were also raised around the sexualisation of young people:

The police [officer] once came into an assembly in uniform and said that girls cannot wear short skirts as it would be their fault if a man looks underneath or takes a photo, and that it is uncomfortable for male teachers. [The officer] saying this made me uncomfortable.' (Young Person)

'[The officer] told the girls they needed to stop wearing skirts so short that their underwear and tampon strings could be seen.' (Parent/Guardian)

Evident in accounts shared by those with direct experience of police in schools, is that the separation of a police officer's personal outlook (and arguably views shown by the police as an institution) is not detachable from the 'guidance' they offer young people.

In some cases, respondents reported that officers are giving misinformation and unsuitable or unhelpful insight. This was reflected in views shared by one young person, and further articulated by an adult working in sex education provision:

'[The officer] discussed upskirting in an inappropriate unsupportive way. [They] once said, I can't remember in what circumstances, I'll put my stab vest on and I'll have you.' (Young Person)

[52] ACLU (2017) Bullies in blue: The origins and consequences of school policing. Available: <https://www.aclu.org/report/bullies-blue-origins-and-consequences-school-policing>



'We had one very negative experience of a police officer communicating through large assemblies in one school, inaccurate information about the legalities of Youth Produced Sexual Imagery.' (Educator in Schools)

As wider evidence has shown, using police officers as educational staff when they are not trained educators means their commitment to tackling crime too often takes precedence over supporting young people [53]. This was further evidenced by the following accounts in which respondents note officers take a criminalisation rather than education-orientated approach to student sexual activity:

'Regarding consent [the officer] threatened that if [they] found out kids were having sex [they] would put them on the sex offenders register but did not discuss contraception, safe sex etc.' (Parent/Guardian)

'Young people tell us the police officer at their school keeps a list of those having sex under 16 and that people have been taken to court over it.' (Outreach Worker)

[53] Coon, J.K. and Travis III, L.F. (2011) The role of police in public schools: A comparison of principal and police reports of activities in schools. *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, 13(1): 15-30.

The reversion to criminalisation is commonplace and is exacerbated by confusion (among students, staff and officers themselves) over the boundaries of the role of school-based police officers (SBPOs), and the fundamentality of criminalisation to the role of the police. In addition, the wider authoritarian nature of policing represents a barrier that makes SBPOs unappealing mentors or teachers for many young people, particularly those from over-policed communities. This is an important point that undermines the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's suggestion that mentoring might be an important role for police in schools [54]. The mention of list making here again raises concerns about formal and informal databases that criminalise rather than support, this has been noted as a concern in the US [55], and in the UK [56].

The problematic nature of much of the work of police in schools is exemplified by the re-traumatising of young people through the sharing of inappropriate content. In the following account, a parent reflects on their child's experience:

'During a talk about knife crime I was told the officer showed the children graphic images of victims as a means of deterring children to carry knives. Children were then given the option to look at picture of dead victims...my child decided not to but reported feeling like there was expectation to do so. This is totally inappropriate for children. The school, to the best of my knowledge, did not check out if the content of the lesson may be especially triggering for children who may have experience of trauma or violence.' (Parent/Guardian)

Whilst scare tactics are frequently used to discourage offending – particularly by police officers – these attempts to shock young people out of committing crime have been evidenced not only to be ineffective, but to constitute an intervention that actually increases crime [57], and induces trauma. Given that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) recently extolled a commitment to ensuring a better understanding of trauma across its workforce [58], and to the provision of 'trauma-informed support', concerns about the propensity of SBPOs to induce or exacerbate trauma must be taken seriously.

[54] Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2020) Serious violence action plan. Available: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3106/gm_violence_reduction_plan_final_amends_final.pdf

[55] Taylor, E. (2013) Surveillance Schools. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[56] Nijjar, J. (forthcoming) Police-school partnerships and the war on black youth, Critical Social Policy

[57] College of Policing. (2015) 'Scared straight' programmes. Available: <https://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=2>

[58] See reference 54.

Another concern raised by respondents lies in the interviewing of young people alone in school settings. Through Kids of Colour's outreach, it has become clear that this is a real concern of young people and families. Evidently, young people are frequently not being afforded the same rights when policing takes place within the school gates and inappropriate conduct amongst officers prevails:

'My eldest daughter had a terrible experience at [a school] where onsite police officers conducted an illegal interview with her on school premises and without my knowledge. During this interview they threatened to throw my daughter in the back of a police van. There were 5 members of school staff in that room, none of whom protected my daughter from this vile and abhorrent abuse of power. I removed my child from school at the age of 14 to protect her from institutional racism from both the police and the school.' (Parent/Guardian)

'On multiple occasions young people under the age of 18 were searched in a glass box room visible to everyone without parent permission or knowledge.'
(Young Person)

When we look to the communities of Greater Manchester, we frequently find experiences that showcase the discriminant over-policing of young, frequently black, men. In the school context, we have growing concerns about how SBPOs will turn education into a key site for the over-policing of young women: over-policing, that accounts like those above begin to show, takes on a worryingly sexualised nature.

10 - Police Violence and Harassment

Police violence and brutality was often cited by survey respondents and this was a key factor in the creation of a climate of fear and hostility explored in Section 7. Respondents made reference to Black Lives Matter protests, and viral videos that had shown the police nationally, and Greater Manchester Police specifically, engaged in acts of violence, brutality, harassment and intimidation:

‘[With police in schools] I would be constantly reminded of all the videos I saw online of police officers inappropriately attacking people who look like me. I would feel very anxious, with the pressure of exams and schoolwork in general it would not be fair to have this anxiety on top of me making learning an extra burden.’ (Young Person)

‘Given the countless cases of police brutality and murder in the UK and especially in Manchester, I would not feel safe.’ (Young Person)

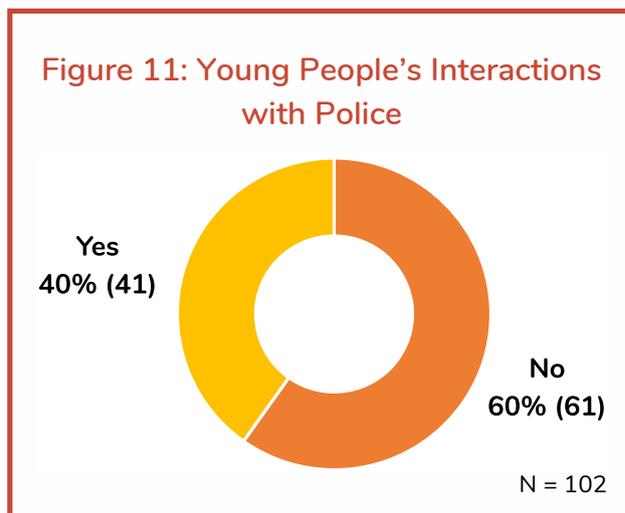
There was a prevailing sense that the wider conditions of police violence and harassment would translate into the school environment, placing particular groups of students at risk (and living in fear of that risk):

‘How would she [respondent’s daughter] be able to reach her potential or feel safe, especially as she is now aware of police brutality? How can I promise her she is safe if she is in a school with a police officer?’ (Parent/Guardian)

‘It is clear by the many cases of police brutality that black people are inferior in the eyes of the law, it should be clear that an increase in police [being] present in schools, especially working class, would be a wrong decision.’ (Young Person)

As we have explored elsewhere, it is clear that respondent concerns about institutional racism amongst the police generally shape people's concerns about a police presence in the school setting.

Whilst, as shown in Figure 11, 60% of young people noted that they had not had any interactions with the police outside of school, 40% had. Those who had experienced policing were near-unanimous in arguing that these interactions – often of harassment, violence and intimidation – made the prospect of more police in schools a concerning one. One young person noted that the ‘police are brutal outside school’, while another pointedly asked:



‘If the police don’t treat people right outside in public and abuse their powers what makes people think that behind the closed doors of schools and teachers’ silence they’re going to act accordingly?’ (Young Person)

‘My interactions with police outside of schools makes me doubt their ability to de-escalate situations with vulnerable children.’ (Young Person)

Once again, we see young people challenging the dominant narrative advocated by proponents of school-based police officers (SBPOs) that a police presence in schools makes young people feel safer.

It is important to note that this is not only a discussion about what is to come but also about what is already here. As the following quote demonstrates, for those young people already attending schools with a regular police presence, the issue of police harassment and intimidation is already prevalent:

‘Too much power for no reason. Threatened students in corridors for no reason and searched them for no reason and, even when proven wrong, wouldn’t apologise and would just leave the scene.’ (Young Person)

For this young person, the conduct of the SBPO amounts to an abuse of unjustified power and an unwelcome intrusion on the school environment. In some cases, this harassment was noted to extend beyond the school environment:



'The officer stationed in my school made it very clear [they] would monitor our social media without us knowing and could see everything we were doing in and out of school. [The officer] continuously brought up our behaviour, even when there was no real reason for it. It can be very stressful for 11-16 to be pressured by a police officer as well as head of year and head teachers.' (Young Person)

In addition to encroaching on students' lives outside of school, this respondent also notes how harassment can be facilitated by teachers, be that through action or action.

Evidence from the United States shows that a normalised police presence in schools poses real risks of police violence, including sexual violence, to which those from minoritised groups are particularly vulnerable [59]. This was a danger that students were acutely aware of:

'I would be very afraid. Especially as a black female. I have seen videos being shared online of police officers in America manhandling and inappropriately arresting an 11 YEAR OLD GIRL. It made me feel so uncomfortable and upset she was crying like a baby, crying out for her mum and the police officer kept violently pushing on her and touching her - she just wanted to feel safe. After seeing a video like that being filmed on a school campus, as a black person I would have a lot of anxiety if I kept seeing police around my school my thoughts would be "what if this police officer could do this to me" etc. It doesn't matter whether it is a different country, the fact that I saw the disgusting treatment of a child by a police officer creates a lot of fear. I would feel very unsettled and uncomfortable to be in school which is not fair.' (Young Person)

Comments like these make clear that we not only need to consider the direct impact of police violence and harassment, but also the unsettling impact that its potential holds for young people - that is, fear of such violence is harmful to young people.

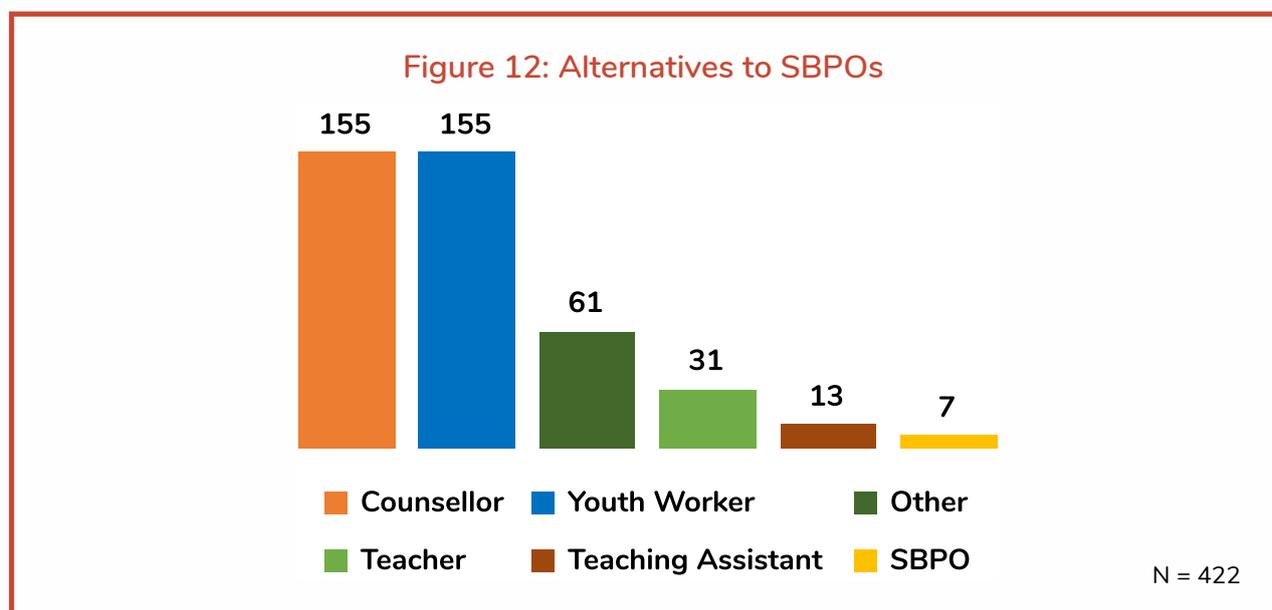
We submitted a freedom of information request to GMP to find out whether SBPOs carry Tasers in schools, or whether there are any regulations or guidance against SBPOs carrying Tasers on school grounds. We are yet to receive a now long overdue response.

[59] ACLU (2017) Bullies in blue: The origins and consequences of school policing. Available: <https://www.aclu.org/report/bullies-blue-origins-and-consequences-school-policing>.

11 - Imagining Education Beyond Police in Schools

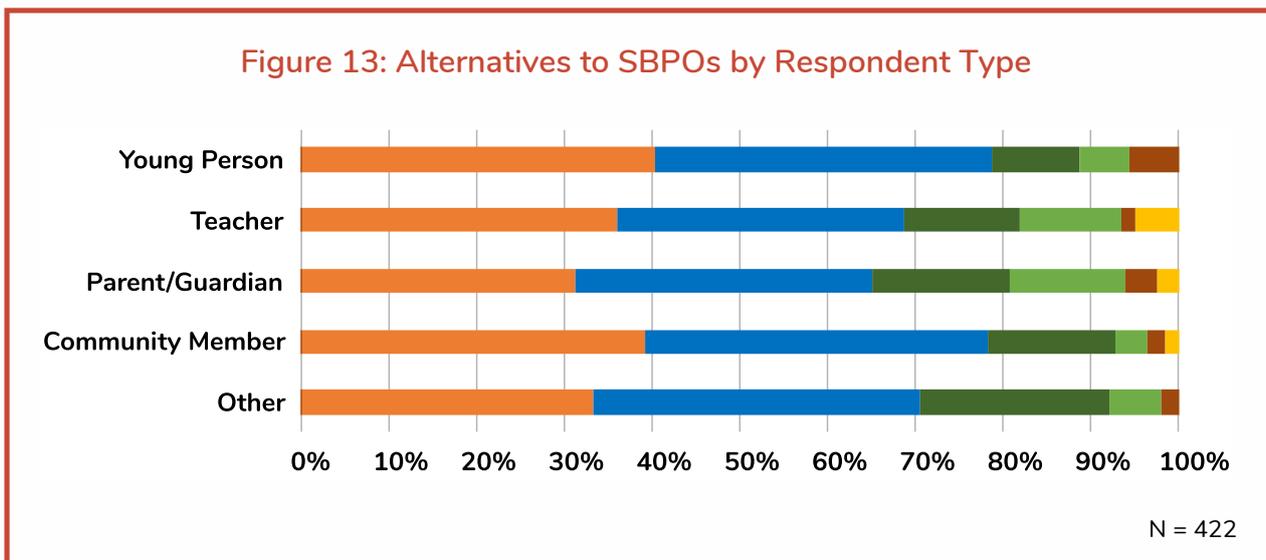
‘A culture of understanding, support, care and good relationships is needed to keep children safe, not penal enforcement.’ (Parent/Guardian)

We asked respondents what one additional role they would employ if they were responsible for school budgets from a predetermined list: Counsellor, School-based Police Officer (SBPO), Teacher, Teaching Assistant, Youth Worker, or Other. Although seven respondents (2%) said that they would employ a SBPO, all other roles were far more commonly selected.



As Figure 12 shows, Counsellor (37%) and Youth Worker (37%) were the most popular choices. Sixty one respondents (14%) selected ‘Other’ and offered written comments. Several of these responses suggested any of the above options except for police officers, with others highlighting the need for ‘pastoral support workers’, mental health workers and more disability and learning support. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the impact of a decade of ruthless cuts to education, numerous respondents here suggested that schools needed simultaneous investment in all, or several of these roles, often with the telling caveat of ‘except police’.

These findings mirror those of a recent survey of teachers conducted by the National Education Union’s North West Black Members Organising Forum [60]. While we asked respondents about their suggested alternatives, we acknowledge that this question inadvertently legitimises the role of SBPOs, positioning it as a viable option alongside other more welfare and education-oriented support. This sends our thinking down a path in which the criminal justice system is seen to hold some form of fundamental relevance within the school gates. Based upon the evidence throughout this report, we firmly maintain that it does not.



The survey responses shared throughout this report show clearly that we have arrived at a point where SBPOs are untenable, and alternatives must be considered. As summarised by one young person, ‘if children are in school to be educated, what are police for?’. The normalisation of SBPOs, and the ease with which the role is now discussed, speaks to broader problems surrounding the direction in which our education system is heading.

Spurred by Black Lives Matter protests, we now find ourselves at a critical juncture. We have the opportunity, and the duty, to reimagine the purpose of education. As this report establishes, the presence of police in schools is an unwanted development and must be opposed. However, the discussion surrounding the employment of SBPOs provides a lens through which we must examine the entire education system. It is necessary for us to reflect on how we have come to consider our schools as an acceptable site for policing, surveillance, and authoritarianism.

[60] The NEU’s North West Black Members Organising Forum’s survey was sent to all black NEU members in the North West, and to all members in Manchester, Tameside, Trafford, Oldham and Bury. To be published later this year, the survey found that 83% of respondents suggested that ‘increased funding for pastoral support’ would be a suitable alternative to school-based police officers. 83% similarly said ‘increased youth provision in the community’ would be a suitable alternative, whilst significant numbers also chose ‘increased funding for mentors’ (62%), the ‘presence of school based psychotherapist’ (61%), ‘increased funding and access to employment (59%), and ‘resourced and organised school restorative justice’ (57%).

In a year that has made the world reflect on both interpersonal and institutional racism, the education sector must be transformed into a pivotal site for building a just society.

Additionally, that we find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic that has drawn attention to the depths of race and class inequality across the UK [61], further underlines the pressing need for change. As one respondent noted:

'Schools need more counsellors and staff in pastoral roles, especially post-Covid, and this should be the priority, not putting police officers in schools. Schools should be places of care and growth, not punishment and fear.'
(Community Member)

Evidently, there is a clear demand from young people and adults alike for more pastoral and safeguarding services, and we support those calls. However, as movements to defund the police build globally, we must ensure that we remain equally critical and vigilant about proposed alternatives. Oppression does not sit solely within the context of policing and the broader criminal justice system. Nor, therefore, does abolition. Reflecting on recommendations to shift funding from policing to 'child welfare' (or as she appropriately renames it 'family regulation') in the US, Dorothy Roberts states:

Abolitionists must also ask, however, whether the recommended reallocation of money and authority will reduce and not increase other parts of the state's punishment regime. Will the redirection move us toward or away from the more equal and humane society we envision? [62]

These words feel particularly pertinent with regard to the alternatives put forward with this report. Whilst social work and other services with a responsibility to safeguard young people are often put forward as important alternatives to policing, we must remain mindful to how they too can play an equally devastating role in the criminalisation of marginalised communities. We see this all too clearly when multiple agencies come together [63] to record and share information about young people 'at risk' of 'gang crime' or 'county-lines' [64]. Surveillance practices and the control of young people becomes seemingly 'justified' under the guise of child protection [65].

[61] Keval, H. (2020) Race, class and covid-19 – not an equal opportunities contagion, Discover Society, 16 April 2020. Available: <https://discoversociety.org/2020/04/16/race-class-and-covid-19-not-an-equal-opportunities-contagion/>

[62] Roberts, D. (2020) Abolishing policing also means abolishing family regulation, The Imprint, 16 June 2020. Available: <https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/abolishing-policing-also-means-abolishing-family-regulation/44480>

[63] Legane, R. (2019). Schools-based Police Officers in Manchester: The Impact on Young People, Communities and the Future of 'Education', Unpublished MA Dissertation, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University

[64] Nijjar, J. (forthcoming) Police-school partnerships and the war on black youth, Critical Social Policy

[65] Wroe, L.E. and Lloyd, J. (2020) Watching over or working with? Understanding social work innovation in response to extra-familial harm. *Social Sciences*, 9(4): 37.

With this in mind, we must be holistically working towards an anti-racist education, recognising the answers to the concerns raised in this report do not sit solely with the replacement of one oppressive tool with another. This is to say that any additional teacher, counsellor, or youth worker who enters a school must be racially literate, and committed to anti-racism, as must the school in which they work. Without these foundations, any interventions are destined to fall short of what we urgently need. As Professor Angela Davis states:

If we want to break the school-to-prison pipeline, if we want to abolish the prison-industrial complex, if we want to create schools that nourish the intellectual imagination of younger generations, then we have to dismantle the structures and ideologies of racism, and we need to start right now [66].

It is fundamentally important that across the UK we call for #NoPoliceInSchools. As Britain is policed by an institutionally racist police force, no educational institution with a police officer stationed in it can claim to be committed to anti-racism. As one teacher noted: ‘unless the police force is known for being a workforce that everyone can rely on for safety, unconditionally, they have no place in a school where children are growing up rapidly’.

[66] Robinson, C.K. (2018) Angela Davis: “Education must not be sacrificed at the altar of profit”, People’s World, 19 June 2018. Available: <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/angela-davis-education-must-not-be-sacrificed-at-the-altar-of-profit/>

**NO POLICE
IN SCHOOLS**

Moving Forward Together – Next Steps and A Call to Action

Report Summary

The overwhelming evidence presented in this report shows that the people of Greater Manchester harbour grave concerns about the path that has been imposed. This is a path to an increasingly harsh and punitive society, in which our schools are being turned into places of surveillance, criminalisation and punitive authoritarianism – rather than supportive learning environments from which young people prosper.

The additional school-based police officers (SBPOs) are being ushered in without public consultation, and often without public awareness. We can only speculate as to the reason for this. Perhaps those in power simply do not care about the views of Greater Manchester residents. Perhaps they know, as this report confirms, that they will get answers that they do not want to hear.

The evidence we have presented makes clear that this issue cannot be resolved with a few tweaks to the system. Nothing short of the abolition of SBPOs will do. As we have shown, there are clear and more productive ways forward in this regard: we must be much more ambitious in our imaginations.

Next Steps and A Call to Action

In Greater Manchester, Kids of Colour and Northern Police Monitoring Project will continue, alongside our allies [67], to campaign for #NoPoliceInSchools. We feel even greater conviction in doing so with the contributions made here by respondents, and we emphasise that, in such a short report, we are unable to reflect the depth of concerns shared by the community. However, the evidence presented should raise an alarm. We are currently in ongoing discussions with the Alliance for Education Justice in the United States, and the Latinx, Afro-Latin-America, Abya Yala Education Network in Canada. We are learning lessons from their actions as they call for ‘Police Free Schools’. The evidence they have shared with us offers a stark warning about the pathway that we are on, a pathway that no child or young person should be subjected to:

[67] The No Police in Schools campaign is led by KoC and NPMP, alongside the NEU North West Black Members Organising Forum, young people, teachers, youth workers, students, academics, parents, and people from all sorts of other walks of life.

Words to the UK from the Alliance for Educational Justice and the Advancement Project

'The National Campaign for Police Free Schools is a network of twenty-three organizations leading local campaigns in nineteen cities across the United States and Canada led by the Alliance for Educational Justice and the Advancement Project. We are a multiracial formation of abolitionists, grounded in our respective freedom traditions. #PoliceFreeSchools, like abolition, is a practical organizing tool and a long-term goal. Together we believe removing police from our schools is a seed for removing them from our communities. This is a global struggle and we must support each other to win. We, at the National Campaign for Police Free Schools, stand in solidarity with the No Police In Schools Campaign. Together we will win.

The National Campaign for Police Free Schools is an abolitionist effort led by Black and oppressed youth in the United States to liberate education and to transform themselves and the society through its schools. To abolish policing infrastructure, culture and practice in schools is to confront the violent history of slavery and colonization of Black and oppressed people through education. It is the rotting root of its present neo-colonial version, the School To Prison Pipeline. Like slavery and colonization, neo-colonization is a global experience. Thus the resistance to it must be international as well.

Education is the earliest form of state violence Black and oppressed youth experience around the world. State violence is government power that hurts or harms; and this includes any set of conditions that limit or restrict the chances of young people to lead successful and healthy lives. Black and oppressed youth can not learn where they are not safe from all forms of violence, including state violence. Police are not placed in schools to protect them but because they are seen as criminals, predators and problems to be thrown in jail. The violence is in the system, not the students.'

www.wecametolearn.com

Inspired by this warning, we must build on the work of anti-racist campaigners and educators that have come before us and continue to challenge the UK's education system today in its entirety. Kids of Colour has employed two young people as project officers to develop ideas around anti-racist education and police abolition with other young people from across Greater Manchester. All will learn from the expertise of those leading the way across the UK and more widely.

From you, we ask for the below actions, locally and nationally, to support our demand for #NoPoliceInSchools. Find more information at www.nopoliceinschools.co.uk

SHARE THIS REPORT

Join us on social media to share the report using the hashtag #NoPoliceInSchools. Look out for the arrival of hard copies and accessible versions.

CONTACT YOUR MP

To date, the MPs we have raised concerns with have provided stock responses or informed us they only have evidence that supports the implementation of SBPOs. Write to your MP using our template and include this report.

CONTACT MAYOR OF GREATER MANCHESTER, ANDY BURNHAM

We have had previous dialogue with the Mayor on this topic. Despite our concerns, plans continue to put 20 more police into Greater Manchester's schools in the 2020-21 academic year. Write to the Mayor, include this report and demand alternatives to police in schools.

HOLD SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNT

Use this report as a tool to hold your local schools to account. Whether there is a presence of SBPOs or not, this report evidences that their role must be opposed now and in the future. Contact head teachers, governors and parents associations. If you are a teacher, use our union motion template created by the NEU North West Black Members Organising Forum and contact us for support.

SIGN OUR PETITION

While we campaign in Greater Manchester, this is an issue that will affect young people and communities nationally. Sign our petition via our website.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Lived experiences help us to build a growing picture of the impact of police in schools. If you would like to share an experience (old or new) of a school-based police officer or regular police presence in your local school, use our online form.

Kids of Colour

www.kidsofcolour.com

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Northern Police Monitoring Project

www.npolicemonitor.co.uk

@npolicemonitor

