# Met Police diversity workshops stir debate over meritocracy and fairness in promotions



Britain's largest police force, the Metropolitan Police, is under scrutiny for its approach to promoting diversity within its ranks. The force has initiated bespoke workshops aimed at helping minority and female recruits gain promotions, with a notable figure of 1,500 minority staff having undergone its mentoring programme. This initiative forms part of a broader strategy intended to overhaul the pipeline for advancement within the organisation, particularly for underrepresented groups.

In recent times, the force has faced criticism over perceived hiring practices that favour diverse applicants at the expense of others, especially following similar allegations against West Yorkshire Police, where hiring of white officers was temporarily halted. A former Metropolitan Police inspector remarked that the current promotion system appears to favour ethnic and female candidates through targeted workshops and coaching, suggesting that officers' actual performance may play a minimal role in the promotion process. He stated, “To me, positive discrimination is still illegal, divisive and creates victims,” indicating a growing concern regarding fairness and meritocracy within the police force.

Internal communications disclosed to the media highlight that candidates selected for these workshops are explicitly instructed not to share the details with their colleagues, a practice that some view as exclusive and problematic. According to one source, this strategy could foster a pervasive feeling of unfair treatment among white male officers, potentially positioning them as unseen victims of discriminatory practices. The claim demonstrates a tension between initiatives aimed at inclusivity and the principles of equality that many believe should govern opportunity and advancement in workplaces.

The Metropolitan Police defends this policy by underscoring its commitment to building a workforce representative of London's diverse demographics, a move articulated by a spokesperson who stated, “We want a workforce that looks and feels like the capital,” with the intention to better engage with communities and effectively address crime. Furthermore, the force released its Race Action plan, which claims to have supported disadvantaged ethnic minority individuals and acknowledges an improvement in promotion pass rates for black officers as a result of these Positive Action workshops.

Yet, the Metropolitan Police's initiatives come against a backdrop of increasing allegations of institutional racism and misogyny following a highly critical report by Dame Louise Casey. Her findings revealed pervasive discrimination within the force, noting that 12% of female officers reported experiencing harassment and a prevalent culture of bullying. Public trust in the police has also waned, with only half of the population expressing confidence in the force. Such outcomes indicate an urgent need for systemic reform, with calls for a more holistic approach towards officer support and community engagement.

Additionally, allegations of institutional anti-white racism have been raised following the introduction of 'black-only' awards aimed at recognising the achievements of officers of Black heritage. Critics argue that such initiatives could undermine the very objective they seek to achieve by creating further divisions based on race.

While the Metropolitan Police insists that all officers' potential can be nurtured irrespective of ethnicity or background, contrasting narratives emerge, such as the 2021 Employment Tribunal ruling, which found that promotions were awarded based on merit rather than race. However, individuals concerned about the policing culture maintain that the current emphasis on minority promotion risks diminishing the principle of meritocracy in favour of perceived equity.

The Metropolitan Police's commitment to change, reflected in its ongoing training initiatives for new recruits focused on equality and diversity, highlights the complexity of reforming a deeply entrenched culture. As the force continues its journey towards greater inclusion and accountability, the challenge remains to create an environment where all officers feel valued and fairly treated, irrespective of their background.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: (1)
2. Paragraph 2: (1), (4)
3. Paragraph 3: (1), (5)
4. Paragraph 4: (1), (3), (2)
5. Paragraph 5: (1), (4)
6. Paragraph 6: (2), (1)
7. Paragraph 7: (1), (4), (5)
8. Paragraph 8: (2), (3), (7)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14701401/Met-Police-blocking-white-males-workshops-promotions.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2023/may-2023/training-improve-internal-culture-sexism-misogyny/> - The Metropolitan Police has outlined its ambitions to become an anti-racist, anti-misogynist, and anti-homophobic organization. Recognizing past failures, the force has implemented training programs to improve internal culture. New recruits undergo training emphasizing equality, diversity, and inclusion, covering topics such as the Equality Act and the impact of discriminatory behaviors. The training is designed to instill professional standards from the outset and is continuously developed throughout the probationary period.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/21/metropolitan-police-institutionally-racist-misogynistic-homophobic-louise-casey-report> - A report by Dame Louise Casey found that the Metropolitan Police is institutionally racist, misogynistic, and homophobic. The 363-page report details disturbing stories of sexual assaults, with 12% of women in the Met reporting harassment or attacks at work. It also highlights a bullying culture and discrimination 'baked into the system'. The report warns that public consent is broken, with just 50% of the public expressing confidence in the force.
* <https://www.gbnews.com/news/met-police-institutional-anti-white-racism-black-only-awards> - Leaked emails reveal that the Metropolitan Police has introduced 'black-only' awards for officers. The awards, intended to recognize officers 'of Black heritage' who have shown leadership or excellence, have led to claims of 'institutional anti-white racism'. Critics argue that such awards based on skin color are discriminatory against white and non-Black officers who also deserve recognition.
* <https://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/news/met-police-did-not-make-racist-promotions/> - An Employment Tribunal ruled that the Metropolitan Police Service did not overlook black and Asian staff when promoting white officers. The case involved Commander Shabir Hussain, who claimed he was overlooked for promotion in favor of white colleagues. The Tribunal found that other applicants were more suitable due to experience or better performance at interview, and that the Met's policy and practice are designed to allow all members to fulfill their potential regardless of ethnicity or faith.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/23/met-trying-to-gag-critics-by-defunding-its-black-officers-association> - The Metropolitan Police faced criticism for plans to defund its Black Police Association (BPA), which supports officers suffering from discrimination and helps improve relations with London's black communities. Critics argued that the move would silence the force's only critical friend and undervalue underrepresented staff. The plans followed an internal and external review, but supporters of the BPA expressed concerns about the perception of the Met undervaluing underrepresented staff.
* <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09500170231199415> - A study titled 'Reproducing a White Elite: The Chief Officers’ ‘Club’ in the London Metropolitan Police Service' examines how senior white officers manage their career journeys. Through in-depth interviews, the study introduces the concept of 'social network volition', describing an invisible guiding hand that identifies, advises, and sponsors white officers who fit the existing leadership composition, thereby reproducing white dominance at the top of the organization.