

**Newham
Monitoring
Project**

Annual Report 1998

Management Committee 1997- 1998

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Dedication

This annual report is dedicated to
Reuben Goldberg, 1952 -1997
Rita Sexious, 1939-1998
We mourn the loss of these true friends and comrades.

We will never forget the commitment they gave to the fight against racism, nor the inspiration they gave to the work of NMP.

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Appreciation

NMP could not have continued its work in 1997-8 without the commitment of the individuals and organisations listed below. We have been able to draw on their time freely given, energy, courage, personal experience, talent, skills and expertise, as well as financial support. Special thanks go to: Kura Nije and Aimee Sey for their contributions to the public meetings on the Lawrence Enquiry and the Oral Submission to the Enquiry: the massive public response to the Newham meetings would not have been possible without the unpaid work of Tanuka Chakroborty-Loha and Sukhraj Randhawa, in publicising and organisation of these events.

NMP Members and Volunteers.

Arthur Neslen, Adil Rehman, Adrian Swain, Aimee Sey, Alex Rees, Amrit Wilson*, Anita Bhardwaj, Anita Kirpal, Arati Banerjea*, Arun Mushiana, Benjamin Zephaniah, Bob Archer*, Cilius Victor, Curtis Ramcharan, Dave Landau, Revd. David Haslam, Estelle Duboulay, George Binette*, Gurpreet Mundy, Revd. Herbie Boudier, Ibrahima Jalloh, Janet Clarke, John Gladney, Keith Pattenden, Kem Herbert*, Kura Nije, Lorraine Martins, Manju Likhman, Marika Sherwood, Margo Sweeney, Pauline Rowe*, Peter Ashan, Phil Davies, Piara Powar, Raggi Kotak, Revd. Ray Collier*, Rhona Badham*, Richard Kirkwood*, Satwat Rehman, Sean Waterman*, Shazia & Kashif Chaudhry*, Simon Deville, Sonia Mehta, Sukhraj Randhawa, Sukhwant Dhaliwal, Supriya Thimmiah, Tanuka Chakroborty-Loha, Tom Mulrenan*

Supporting Organisations

Black & Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum, Newham Asian Women's Project, Columban Fathers -East London, SIA, INQUEST, Migrant Media, Bindman & Partners*, 2 Garden Court Chambers*, Young Samuels Chambers*, Churches Commission for Racial Justice*, Colin Roach Centre*, GreenNet, Coda International Training, Southall Monitoring Group, The Jewish Socialist Group, Service Printers, UNISON - Tower Hamlets*, CPSA DHSS Newham/Waltham Forest*, Bari FC, Black & Asian Studies Association.

*Denotes Financial donations.

The Impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

The past year has witnessed an unprecedented national debate on racial violence and policing in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. It has proven such a significant watershed as to constitute a turning point in the history of black people in Britain. The criminal justice system has never witnessed anything like it: after five years of campaigning, a black family has pushed the government into initiating a public inquiry into the police investigation of a racial murder. The results have been immense. Not least of these must be that the concerns and criticisms regarding racial violence and policing that NMP has voiced for nearly two decades (and indeed lost our funding because of) have been borne out by evidence given to the Inquiry.

The nation has been shocked by what the Stephen Lawrence Family Campaign has described as "an epic tale of police incompetence, corruption and racism" and all credit is due to the Lawrences themselves for their uncompromising search for the truth. With the support of a tenacious legal team and a dynamic campaign, the Lawrences have galvanised the public in a manner never seen before and NMP is honoured to have been given the responsibility of helping them in their campaign throughout the course of the Inquiry. The strength of the campaign has always been that it is a family campaign. No organisation could have substituted for that. In the tradition of NMP and other community-based monitoring groups, the needs of the family have been prioritised over those of the individuals and organisations that seek to associate themselves with the Lawrences for their own ends. Keeping the family at the forefront of the campaign has enabled them to push the issues of racial violence and police racism far higher up the political agenda than ever before.

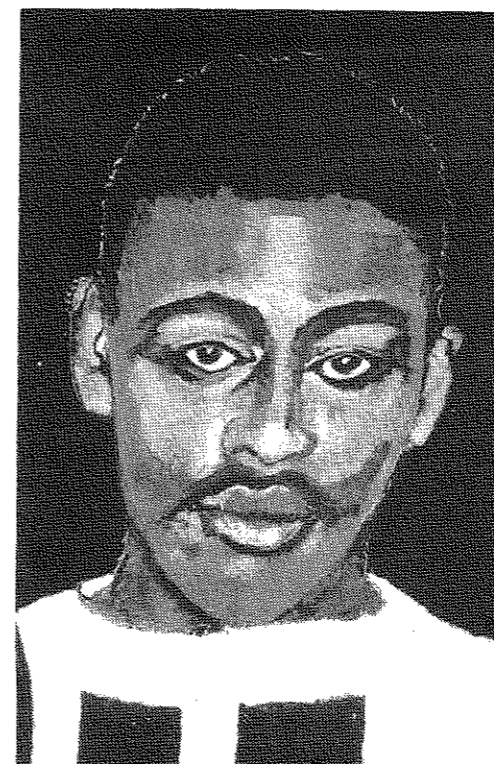
However, whilst this amounts to a tremendous achievement in terms of the fight against racism, it must be remembered that Neville and Doreen Lawrence have yet to receive the justice

they have demanded. For them the Inquiry has meant yet more struggle, pain and suffering and yet Stephen's killers continue to walk free, with no-one within the criminal justice system willing to take responsibility for that betrayal.

The five individuals who between them plunged a knife into Stephen Lawrence may have been named, millions may have seen their faces and heard the recording of their filthy racist talk on TV, but justice - possible only with Stephen's killers behind bars - has been denied the Lawrence family, as a result of the failure of the entire judicial system. It may never happen. All senior police officers responsible for the total failure to carry out the most basic investigative procedures are now retired and free to enjoy their pension, bar one officer whose employment status in the force changes daily. The third officer to head the murder investigation has been removed because of concern about his managerial abilities of former colleagues in the Flying Squad - themselves under investigation for corruption. From the murder till now there has been nothing less than a grotesque and perverse exhibition, watched by millions and confirming the experience of black people that has been denied for so long.

Community support - public meetings packed out

In east London, the Stephen Lawrence Campaign evoked a massive response from the local community. In June 1998, 700 people squeezed into St John's Church, Stratford Broadway, to listen to Neville Lawrence; Myrna Simpson, mother of Joy Gardner; Sukhdev Reel and Kura Nije of the Ibrahima Sey Memorial Campaign. All gave graphic and moving accounts of how members of their family had been killed, and the nature of the subsequent police investigation. The June meeting came days before five youths widely believed to have been responsible for murdering Stephen Lawrence were to give evidence to the Lawrence Inquiry.



In October a second public meeting at St John's Church attracted 450 people, a day before the Inquiry was to receive oral evidence from the communities of east London. Neville and Doreen Lawrence's solicitor, Imran Khan, and Rajiv Menon, barrister representing Dwayne Brooks (who was with Stephen Lawrence when they were both attacked) gave the public an insight into the revelations that came out in the Inquiry hearings.

The large attendance at public meetings in east and west London, Birmingham, Bristol and many other places demonstrate that a raw nerve has been touched. The Lawrence case has forced the issue of gross injustice into the public arena in a way that has not happened after countless racist murders. As our joint written submission with The Monitoring Group (formerly Southall Monitoring Group) to the Inquiry states, "Once or twice in a generation, events force public institutions to address the consequences of their wholesale failure of the black community - the murder of Stephen Lawrence is such an event."

There is widespread revulsion amongst many sections of society about the murder and the complete inability of the police to respond even at a most basic human level. When the editor of the London Evening Standard openly criticises the police for institutional racism, even Scotland Yard's formidable PR machine is, for the time being at least, unable to mask this

sordid mess. How disgraceful then was the Newham Recorder's refusal to report or even mention the Newham meetings.

Police pursue damage limitation

How this impacts on community-based organisations remains to be seen. It is crucial we learn from previous state response to similar crises of confidence, such as the Scarman Report in the wake of urban rebellions of the early 1980's. Some time into the Public Inquiry, the police abandoned attempts at defending the indefensible. They were ready to take a slap on the wrists for their failure if that meant stopping suggestions that institutional racism was at the heart of the Metropolitan police. Sir Paul Condon could apologise to Neville and Doreen Lawrence in one breath and in the next absolve the Met of institutional racism. A few of his counterparts from other forces broke ranks to "confess" to institutional racism, only to enter a twilight of contorted logic by arguing that it only applied to a small(ish) part to the police force.

The key observation is that "institutional racism" is being talked about - again. It was this point that was resolutely rejected and buried by the Scarman Report twenty years ago, resulting in so little understanding of how racism permeates our institutions.

The police are engaged in a desperate attempt at damage limitation. Committees and sub-committees are being formed, community groups and individuals are being targeted for co-option (or is it networking?) The police, however, should not be surprised if principled anti-racist campaigners are deeply suspicious. Is this more than merely Operation Sweet Talk? Scepticism is further reinforced by experience. For example, on the day that the five chief suspects responsible for Stephen Lawrence's murder appeared before the Inquiry, an announcement that officers involved in the unlawful killing of Ibrahima Sey were not to be prosecuted slipped out, attracting little media attention.

In the wake of the Inquiry the following cases of gross injustice have received mainstream media attention:

In January 1998, Michael Menson, a young black musician, was set on fire in north London. He remained conscious for a week and

told both members of his family and hospital staff he had been attacked. His family desperately urged the police to interview him - but they refused. The police decided Michael had set himself on fire and that no crime had been committed. Vital 'scene of crime' evidence was never sought. Michael Menson died in February 1998. Despite scandalous non-disclosure of vital evidence to the family, an inquest returned a verdict of unlawful killing.

After a meeting with Home Secretary Jack Straw, the police apologised to the Menson family, a year too late, and a murder inquiry has at last begun.

In October 1997, Lakhvinder "Ricky" Reel, aged 20, and three Asian friends were racially abused and attacked in Kingston. Ricky did not return home. The racial incident was immediately reported to the police, who refused to treat him as a 'missing person'. Ricky's family and The Monitoring Group organised search parties for him, interviewed potential witnesses, and located CCTV footage of his last movements. After intervention by the local MP, Ricky's body was eventually found a week later in the Thames.

The police maintain that his death was accidental, despite the findings of an independent pathologist, and have ruled out racist attack or murder. Independent witnesses have alleged that investigating officers have said that they had to go through the motions because of the "stink" that the Lawrence family were causing, that black people were always causing trouble and pointing fingers over nothing. The Reel family have experienced rudeness, dismissive jokes, and callous insensitivity, greatly compounding their suffering.

Sir Paul Condon has refused to release a Police Complaints Authority report after the family complained of incompetence and insensitivity. The Reel family have urged Home Secretary Jack Straw to install a new team of officers to investigate Ricky's death.

Organising for justice after the Lawrence Inquiry

The message is clear from past experience. The thrust of community response should be in creating or supporting independent community based organisations which can be an

unconditional resource for many individual campaigns for justice. It is only through such organisations that communities have an independent means of obtaining advice and support. From that basis we can explore what the recently stated police commitment to anti-racism really means. The terminology on its own is meaningless. It will be tempting for many to enter new committees initiated by the police feeling that at last something is going to change and it will be equally tempting for organisations like NMP to believe that nothing will change. We need to know exactly what the terms of reference are. The purpose has to be clear, unambiguous, and above all transparent.

There have been dramatic changes to the demographic profile of the inner cities. This has changed the nature of many community based organisations, especially those whose remit, like ours has always been to serve all sections of the black community. Some have been lost to the community perhaps forever, entangled within the politics of the local state. The funding of independent organisations such as community advice centres, law centres, and racial harassment projects has suffered. Whether people have access to such organisations is a matter of luck. It is independent community based organisations who are still prepared to articulate the unpalatable, as the first and last line of defence.

A National Network of Monitoring Projects

During the final day of the Lawrence Inquiry, held in Birmingham, the panel spoke of the role of community based racial harassment monitoring. Describing the evidence they had heard from The Monitoring Group and Newham Monitoring Project they noted the national trend of local authorities cutting the funding of such groups for being, in their words "too confrontational" whilst the organisations saw themselves as simply standing up for the rights of victims. The panel put this point to the Birmingham Racial Attacks Monitoring Unit who confirmed the pattern of events and spoke of the way in which such groups are coming together to support one another through the Black Racial Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN).

BRAIN is a way of combining the limited resources of community based racial harassment projects who have a shared perspective and

purpose. Members hail from places such as Liverpool, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Leeds and Newcastle and includes NMP. Having met informally for over two years BRAIN was formally launched at a national racial harassment conference of over 400 people in October 1998. The conference, entitled The Betrayal of Stephen Lawrence - Grassroots responses and the way forward, was addressed by Neville and Doreen Lawrence and by the families of Ricky Reel and Michael Menson, and represent a unique coming together of monitoring projects to plan the way forward in the wake of the Lawrence inquiry.

A particularly positive relationship has been developed between NMP and The Monitoring Group (TMG). Both groups have been in existence for nineteen and twenty years, respectively. It is the first time both organisations have worked so closely on a single issue. We aim to develop this work based on practical issues and our ability to respond to events that affect the communities in which we are based.

Oral and Written Submissions to the Lawrence Enquiry

Victims of the most horrendous attacks spoke for themselves when the enquiry took evidence from communities in west and east London. NMP made, with TMG, a joint submission entitled "Time for Change." We also gave the panel a cross section of reports and case studies built up through twenty years experience. NMP was invited to send further specific recommendations, after our oral submission in east London, presented by NMP and the widow of Ibrahima Sey. The Panel requested details on policing and other statutory reforms. They indicated the testimony of people who have experienced racist violence, and been arrested themselves, or families who have to fight for every ounce of justice after a death in custody, was an eye-opener.

People at the public meetings held in East London were under the impression that the Enquiry was under the direction of the Lawrence family, this was not so. The enquiry was set up by the government who appointed the panel, the chair, Sir William Macpherson, and provided its administration. The history of submissions from grassroots organisations to similar enquires is not good. We tend to demand radical changes, dismissed as "extreme"

or "unrealistic" only because they challenge the entrenched racism of the police or the local state. If the Lawrence Inquiry does confront institutional racism in its recommendations, grassroots demands might be seen as what they really are: the equal right to justice and freedom from racist attack. Change requires sanctions and institutional procedures which can call actions to account. NMP and TMG decided to present a focused set of recommendations.

'Time for Change' Key Points of NMP's submission

- Abandonment of current Police Complaints Authority. An independent body to investigate the Police.
- Immediate suspension of all officers involved in a death in police custody incident
- 'Balance of probabilities' to be applied to police officers facing allegations of misconduct, not criminal evidence standards of proof. The Police to be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as all state employees.
- Prevention of retirement or resignation of officers avoiding investigation or sanctions
- Full disclosure of all material to relatives during an inquest, even if material is not used
- Legal aid for families to be represented during an inquest and to undertake independent assessment of forensic evidence and expert witnesses.
- CPS and police required to explain to victim reasons for not prosecuting their attackers
- CPS and police under a legal duty to provide information on progress of investigation of an offence against a victim.
- Racial Incident Units within the police force to be abolished with generic guidelines and procedures issued to all investigating officers in the police force.
- Racism to be a major focus of school discipline, anti-bullying, and anti-exclusion policies. Specific support for a curriculum which equips children to challenge racist ideas.

Copies of the full submissions are available from NMP

Tribute: Reuben Goldberg and Rita Sexious

Reuben Goldberg, 1952 -1997

Members of NMP were deeply saddened by the death of Reuben Goldberg, one of our most supportive volunteers and consistent activists. NMP workers had worked closely with Reuben in his role as a Race Equality Officer employed by Newham Council, from 1989. He always gave maximum support in fighting for remedies through the bureaucratic maze, for racial harassment cases raised by NMP. More than that Reuben was actively involved in NMP campaigns, particularly anti-fascism.

A packed memorial meeting organised jointly with the Jewish Socialist Group, was held in Newham in February 1998. Many friends and colleagues from Newham, London and Bradford paid tribute to Reuben in the presence of his mother Masha Goldberg and his immediate family. This truly was a celebration of his life and outstanding contribution to the cause of anti-racism.

Many of us had had little indication from this kind, gentle and shy man of the part he played in significant events. Reuben was involved in every anti-racist campaign in Bradford, going back to the beginning of the Seventies, particularly the Bradford 12, one of the first to succeed in putting the right of self defence on the national agenda, and as a Labour Councillor, instrumental in the sacking of Ray Honeyford, a national issue for anti-racists. Reuben for a period also ran a left wing bookshop in Bradford, which was the target of systematic attack from the NF.

Barry Mussenden from NMP paid tribute to Reuben's involvement in virtually every campaign from the time he arrived in Newham. If a picket was called to highlight an injustice, Reuben was there. Barry talked about his valuable and incisive contributions to meetings - short on rhetoric and full of good sense. Reuben helped in any way he could, and that included envelope stuffing shirked by many. He was incensed by Newham Council's withdrawal

of NMP funding, and the scurrilous and dishonest press campaign which accompanied it. He was as always a true friend in those awful months, even volunteering to clean up when NMP's premises were wrecked by a disastrous fire. A tribute also came from Pauline Rowe, describing how Reuben went out of his way to provide valuable information for the Claimants Union.

Warm memories came from close friends; Reuben was famous for a house crammed with his library, archives of papers, and disuse of the vacuum cleaner. A lifelong member of the Jewish Socialists, Reuben was deeply versed in progressive Jewish culture and politics. Reuben was an expert on the work of Heinrich Heine, the 19th Century Jewish Socialist poet. Socialist mourning songs, wonderfully sung in Yiddish by Meyer Bogdanski, a holocaust survivor, underground fighter, and member of the Jewish Bund, transformed the style of the synagogue cantor into a powerful and fitting tribute to a man who described himself as a "secular" Jew.

NMP is deeply grateful to Reuben's mother Masha, for ensuring that his wish to leave a legacy to NMP was carried out. We thank her and also members of the Jewish Socialist Group for creating an event which meant a lot to all who knew him. Reuben will be commemorated in Bradford, where his extensive library is to be housed, by an annual anti-fascist memorial lecture.

Rita Edith Sexious -1939-1998

Rita Sexious, a mother of three, grandmother, and a much loved and admired friend of NMP, sadly passed away last year. Rita first came to NMP in 1988. She and her family fought persistent harassment from neighbourhood racists in West Ham, and Canning Town.

Rita was the driving force behind the West Ham Ethnic Welfare Group, a group of black tenants which achieved considerable success in reducing racist attacks. The leader of the official

tenants association was from a family responsible for much of the harassment. The group decided to form for mutual support, in 1991, after NMP arranged a meeting of individual families whose lives had been made a misery. The group pooled information on the identity of attackers, and its demands resulted in eviction warnings, provision of security equipment from Newham Council, and an increased police presence. Rita was assaulted on her doorstep by the father of the youths who had made a series of attacks on her family. She threw him off the premises. When she was later arrested by NORIS (Newham Organised Racial Incidents Squad), supposedly investigating the incident on her request, the group made an emergency protest, involving council representatives.

Truly a pillar of the community, Rita believed in bringing people together and fighting for justice. She would always look out for her neighbours and remained an unofficial 'caseworker' for NMP around Chargeable Street, Canning Town, for the rest of her life. An active member of the Claimants Union, she would often be found helping neighbours and friends with their benefit forms.

Rita's life was never easy, but she was always around if someone needed a shoulder to cry on. Rita enthralled us with accounts of her experiences which can only be described as rich and varied. We fondly remember her legendary hospitality.

A magnificent horse-drawn cortege was the family tribute to an adored mother and grandmother. Rita's funeral reflected her joy and love of life. It was truly a celebration of her life, reflecting her constant desire to include everybody. About eighty people led by the pastor of a local black church gathered in the chapel at Manor Park Cemetery. Close family, friends and neighbours, all generations had a story, a poem, a solo song, or a memory to contribute. A particularly poignant moment was the playing of 'A Bridge Over Troubled Waters'; not one dry eye remained.

Rita will be missed by many and will be continue to be loved by all.

Respect due.

Issues and campaigns during 1998

Unlawful killing - no prosecution

The circumstances of Ibrahima Sey's death in 1996 will be familiar to many members of east London's black communities. We have set out the details surrounding the death extensively in previous Annual Reports. It has also been the subject of significant local and national press interest. In summary, Ibrahima died after being arrested at his home in Manor Park following a domestic dispute. He was taken to Ilford police station where he was set upon by six to eight officers, who sprayed him with CS, which was then undergoing national trials that involved Forest Gate police. Ibrahima was then carried face down into the station, in contravention of the police's restraint guidelines, where he died moments later.

In early October 1997, an inquest jury found that Ibrahima had been unlawfully killed, a decision that his widow Amie Sey, other members of the family and NMP saw as a vindication of the campaign tactics used to highlight concerns about the death. Following the inquest verdict, the family awaited the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as to whether officers would be prosecuted. The CPS had been forced to re-examine their earlier decision not to prosecute following the jury's verdict.

The fact that not a single police officer has yet to be tried for any of the fifty or more deaths of black people in custody led the family to be pessimistic about the prospect of a prosecution going ahead. On 1st October 1998, their fears were confirmed as the CPS again decided not to press charges. The public statements of the CPS suggested that their principal reasoning was that was "no realistic prospect of prosecution." However, in a letter to Amie Sey notifying her of the decision, the Assistant Chief Crown Prosecutor made the assertion that,

"I have come to the conclusion that the actions of the police officers in attempting to restrain your husband were not unlawful."

Set against this, the unlawful killing verdict of the inquest jury was arrived at on the same basis as a criminal jury would make its decision. This raises the question as to why, if the inquest jury reached a verdict 'beyond reasonable doubt' (the criminal standard of proof), the CPS will not allow a criminal jury to decide for itself whether the police's actions were unlawful or not. It is any wonder that black communities have little faith in the criminal justice system when the government agency with the responsibility for prosecuting crimes so often acts as judge and jury in preventing charges being brought that are regarded by black people as being 'in the public interest.'

The campaign to seek justice for Ibrahima Sey, will continue as a central plank of NMP's work. Campaign members have already been involved in working with families of other black deaths in custody victims and will play a central role in bringing those families together over the next year. What is absolutely vital is that legal challenges are coupled with campaigning activities that ensure the key issues continue to be raised and kept firmly in the public eye.

Dying alone in a police cell

NMP has given periodic support to the only close relative in this country of Ahmed El-Gammahl, since his death in August 1996. The Inquest was in March 1998. He was found dead in a cell, after cries of severe pain and distress were callously ignored. Mr El-Gammahl was obviously mentally ill and should have been taken to hospital. Then at least there might have been an attempt to give emergency treatment. Complacency about procedures in cases of mental illness, and indifference to the racism which must have affected his chances of survival was a feature of the inquest itself.

After the Lawrence Inquiry, it seems the Police are quick to suggest reforms when a death in custody occurs. A Police Complaints Authority spokesperson states the NHS should always be involved when a mentally ill person is arrested,

to enable immediate admission to hospital. The Met now suggests a Rapid Response Patrol specialising in mental health.

Ahmed El-Gammahl, a brilliant research scholar from Egypt, had almost completed a Phd in Maths at London University. He died in a cell at Leytonstone Police station. Since then his uncle has pursued every avenue to find out the truth, and is disgusted with the inquest verdict of accidental death. He says examination of medical witnesses should have been far more rigorous.

It seems that Mr El-Gammahl suffered a sudden and severe breakdown. Police were called to an East London vicarage, where it was alleged he had attacked the vicar, who managed to lock him in a room. It was obvious to the arresting officers that Mr El-Gammahl was severely mentally ill, but he was said to be silent and in a state of exhaustion by the time a police surgeon examined him in the custody area. The arresting officers (from another station) did not inform the doctor of his mental state. He was locked in a cell, and later on, loud cries of pain and distress, (audible in a tape recorded interview with someone else), were ignored. He was found dead, when the next routine check took place.

It seems that a heart attack was the cause of death, and there was medical evidence of previous symptoms, but the issue for his Uncle and family in Egypt remains whether all possible steps that would have given him a chance of survival were taken, and the answer clearly is no. However, the coroner, Dr Harold Price, directed the Jury to verdicts of either Accidental death, or Accidental death, aggravated by neglect, but his concluding remarks were skewed in favour of the former. He seemed to favour the view that even if the police had responded to Mr El-Gammahl's cries, there would still have been little time for medical intervention that could have saved his life, but this remains an unresolved question.

His uncle is dissatisfied with second hand expert evidence that the police doctor need not have detected warning signs of heart attack some time earlier. Why was no effort made to ascertain the language Mr El-Gammahl was using, (he must have been too distressed to use English) or steps taken to get an interpreter. Even if the onset of a heart attack was too

sudden to be detected by the police doctor, if Mr El-Gammahl had been taken to a mental hospital, there might have been a chance of some medical intervention.

The coroner, Dr Price seemed indifferent to the vagaries of procedures for admission to mental hospital, which he said vary from district to district. Despite the verdict, he could at least have criticised the police for ignoring the obvious cries of severe distress. Their inaction smacks of callous indifference to cries of pain which must have been dismissed as unimportant ravings in a foreign language. Dr Price gave brief condolences, after the verdict came in just before lunch.

Dr Price (coincidentally the coroner for the death of Ibrahima Sey) remarked in court that witness examination at that Inquest had been far too long, but we know without aggressive examination by interested parties, the truth would never have come out. This applies to evidence given by the police and medical experts. Families cannot rely on a coroner to take on this role. Without the best legal representation, currently not legally aided, the Inquest system is skewed in favour of the police, who are always legally represented. The tactics of experienced police lawyers can easily obscure the search for truth.

A wholesale reform of the Inquest system is long overdue. In an interview in the Newham Recorder, to mark his retirement, Dr Price said complex medical evidence in the case of a death in-custody is too much for Juries. We disagree profoundly. It is the responsibility of courts to ensure that Juries have full access to all the evidence, and there should be an automatic facility for immediate and independent representation at post mortems. In this case too, the issue of racist treatment of people who are mentally ill remains, and calls for clear procedures to ensure that black people receive immediate and appropriate help, and do not die, either as Ibrahima Sey did, or as Ahmed El-Gammahl did, alone in a cell.

National Campaign Against CS Spray

The National Campaign Against CS Spray was set up by the family of Ibrahima Sey, with the support of NMP. CS spray was used after Ibrahima Sey was handcuffed inside Ilford Police station. An inquest verdict of unlawful

NMP: monitoring racism in Newham since 1980

killing has not been enough to shake the complacency of the Home Secretary or of senior police officers.

The aim of the campaign is to gather as much information as possible on the use and misuse of CS by the police, to back up pressure for a nation-wide ban on its use. During 1998, we have received press cuttings from around the country, used to compile Press Digests that have been sent to supporting organisations and also provided background information to journalists and lawyers. Apart from immediate affects of CS on the health of people, the propelling agent in CS canisters is known to be carcinogenic.

Ibrahima Sey's death has not been the only death involving the use of CS. There have been repeated incidents where CS spray has not been used as a 'weapon of last resort.'

- In 1997, Max Incera, a 73-year old Alzheimer's sufferer living in a care home in Hull, was sprayed with CS following a 'violent outburst.' His daughter described his arrest as "very heavy handed" and a formal complaint has been made against Humberside police.
- A six-year-old girl and a seven-year old boy needed hospital treatment after a CS spray canister was accidentally discharged during a police visit to a primary school in Norfolk.
- A 28-year old mentally ill man threw himself from a third floor window in Hebden Bridge after being sprayed with CS. Miraculously he survived. Relatives have made a formal complaint against West Yorkshire police.
- Mark Bell, who had a history of mental illness, hanged himself in the loft of his Scunthorpe home as police attempted to force entry, filling the loft with CS spray. His death is the subject of a Police Complaints Authority investigation.
- A police officer in Bedfordshire was charged with assault after spraying a pensioner, who had parked his car on a double yellow line, with CS. There was considerable anger at the jury's decision to acquit, and a rebuke from the judge at Luton Crown Court who told them they had reason to 'reflect' upon their verdict.

CS spray has been used repeatedly in ways that breach the promises made by the Association of Chief Police Officers before its introduction. The public was told that CS would only be used on armed, or violent individuals when all other means of safely securing an arrest had been exhausted. Even the PCA have admitted that "there is a tendency for it to be used to ensure an easy arrest." (Independent 12/8/98).

As more and more incidents emerge, the government has been forced to institute a safety review, which has yet to report. It has taken the heart attack of a City of London police officer during CS spray training to force the Police Federation, representing the lower ranks, to realise that CS is not as safe as they claim. Why, when members of public are hospitalised or killed, do the police fail to take the threat that CS poses as seriously?

Racist Violence in Football

At a time when high profile launches of projects raising the issue of racism in football have continued to take place in Newham, with little local community involvement, the spectre of racist violence still haunts black players competing in local amateur football. Local County FA and League administrators still refuse to recognise problems faced by black footballers. As long as this disregard of the problems of local players continues, members of our communities will continue to be prevented from enjoying recreational sport and progressing in professional football.

Bari is an predominantly Asian football club, established in 1995. The team play Sunday League football in east London. As reported in last year's Annual Report, in December 1997, Bari played away against Romside FC of the South Essex League, a team consisting mostly of white individuals. Before the match Romside players used racial abuse to intimidate the team, such as "Let's sort these fucking Pakis out", "bloody Pakis, go home". Romside were intent on assaulting Bari players, in full view of the referee. By the second half, Romside had assembled about thirty supporters, who escalated the harassment. A Molvisaab (Muslim priest) had his beard pulled and taunts made against Islam. Spectators spat and threw cans every time Bari got near the touchline. The Romside manager permitted his pitbull terrier to harass players. Bari's goalkeeper had coins thrown at him.

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At the final whistle, six Bari players were attacked at the changing rooms by Romside and their supporters. A struggle broke out as Bari players defended themselves.

The Bari Secretary was telephoned that evening by a police Inspector who threatened the entire squad with arrest. NMP were contacted and organised free legal representation, providing advice support at meetings. As a result the police dropped proceedings, but Bari were nevertheless charged with bringing the game into disrepute by Essex Football Association. In spite of NMP's representation and national media attention, Bari were found guilty by a panel of officials who ignored overwhelming evidence of racial violence.

At the hearing we were shocked to discover the referee had said that there had been no racial harassment or violence. This statement was made in spite of the sending-off of two Romside players and seven other bookings

NMP supported the club throughout the remainder of the season and agreed to sponsor them. In a joint initiative, community centres, youth clubs and schools were invited to play matches against Bari and receive information about rights for young people.

However, this was not to be an isolated incident, for there were further serious racist assaults on Bari during a match against Wanstead Holly in November 1998 in which a number of players were severely injured. The police were called and arrested four Wanstead Holly players. The following extracts from a letter to the Sunday and District Football League set out what happened:

"One Wanstead Holly player was booked for violent conduct and another was sent off after he stepped on our goalkeeper's arm purposefully and then hit one of our players in the face. During a minor scuffle ... which the referee was dealing with, the sent-off player and his team mates attacked our goalkeeper and one of the defenders alongside him. The Wanstead Holly team and their supporters (who invaded the pitch) ... stamping, kicking, punching and flogging the



Bari FC

two Bari players with a corner flag, hitting the linesman over the head with the same object, as well as racial jibes and taunts throughout.

Of the Bari players attacked, one was knocked unconscious with injuries to his back, ribs, head and face, another had large cuts above his eye and severe bruising and a third had concussion from the beating. All had to be taken by ambulance to hospital.

As a player in a predominantly Asian team I find it difficult to understand and accept that the racist violence, taunts and thuggery that go on in these matches still go unpunished by the Leagues and local Football Associations. Bari joined this league on the information that this was a "friendly" league and that we would not be subjected to the same form of racial abuse and violence encountered in the South Essex League. It seems that we were misled and/or teams are aware that they shall go unpunished.

The Bari FC experience illustrates the deep-rooted racism that exists at the lower levels of football, which have been untouched by the focus on professional players and the Premier Football.

NMP's campaigning and casework during 1998

Infrastructure

NMP was extremely fortunate in being able to appoint an Acting Project Manager on a temporary, part time contract, with extensive experience in management, administration, fundraising and the specialist nature of our work. We were able to rent a small office in Stratford, with access to a meeting room. This has enabled the facilitation and co-ordination of NMP's voluntary activities, servicing the monthly management committee meetings, financial administration, and the infrastructure needed to fundraise for current activities and for the future.

Monthly management committee meetings have focussed largely on business, followed by open meetings (See next section). Both have been a forum for evaluating NMP's current role and planning future strategy.

Casework

NMP has been able to provide a limited casework service to NMP users predating March 1997, some others who have contacted us via community groups, telephone contact, or via NMP volunteers. This has been carried out by Committee members and volunteers with extensive experience of casework, rights advice and legal qualifications. We could not offer a full casework service without full time staff, who can provide intensive support in the long term.

We have retained our previous telephone number, which is well known, but have not publicised a casework service as such. Our policy is to refer any callers on to local authority racial harassment services, (or other agencies as appropriate) but we are aware they do not provide the kind of support which requires open criticism of statutory authorities. The need for a casework service which also provides independent and specialist support for victims of police harassment, and a community development approach to fighting racial harassment and injustice remains.

The cases include police harassment, the consequences of racial harassment made worse by local authority incompetence, housing or other welfare needs which arise from racial harassment and violence, and others described elsewhere in this report. Further examples are:

- The urgent rehousing of a family after a death in Police custody, with the assistance of Stephen Timms, MP.
- Advising a family rehoused in substandard accommodation after years of racial harassment, in an outstanding legal claim against Newham Council,
- Arranging legal representation and referrals to specialist advice agencies.

Newham's history of racial violence has included racist murders of which some, such as Eustace Pryce in 1984 and Panchadcharam Sahitharan in 1991, have resulted in NMP launching national campaigns. However, for every such murder there are literally thousands of so called 'low-level' incidents where peoples lives are made a misery on a daily basis. These incidents, if left unchallenged by the authorities, can escalate into violent assaults and create the climate where racist believe they can get away with murder. The case of the SK family is typical of this trend.

The SK family have suffered racial harassment at their corner shop for the past four years. Two individuals in particular have been identified as the chief perpetrators although other associates and members of their families have also been responsible for some of the incidents. The original harassment and verbal abuse was deemed by Forest Gate Police to be low-level despite security camera evidence of abuse such as "you're Asian, you're shit, you're nothing" and threats such as "I'll tear your head off...I'll beat the shit out of you".

The Emergency Service Planning Group

By Summer 1998 we found it increasingly difficult to sustain an adequate rota of volunteers for the 24 hour emergency telephone hotline. Discussions at the management committee and NMP open meetings identified the need to re-focus the service, provide up to date, higher level intensive training, evaluate its organisation and criteria for follow up, and recruit new volunteers. It was decided to suspend the 24 hour service, whilst retaining the existing number (as above) for callers during office hours.

A working group of management committee and NMP volunteers has been preparing the ground work for the relaunch of a telephone hotline operated by a rota of community volunteers, for victims of racial attack and police harassment. The service will provide immediate advice, support, and back up calls to other agencies. In future it is hoped that funding for staff will service infrastructure for the service and casework support to enable long term follow up, with a linked network of local volunteers.

The group has been working on how the service will function, information, training and support systems.

The group has planned an outline programme of initial training for new volunteers, refresher training for experienced volunteers, and regular refresher courses for all volunteers. New volunteers will receive one to one supervision and support from workers and/or experienced volunteers. Specific training will be provided for individuals, or small groups, or in refresher courses, where gaps in knowledge are identified.

- A pool of solicitors will be recruited to provide appropriate legal expertise and offer emergency assistance as part of the referral system.
- Recruitment of volunteers. The group has identified a demand for training from informal approaches to community groups and interested individuals in East London, and there is already a waiting list of potential volunteers.
- Prior to relaunch the emergency service will

When arrests were eventually made one of the perpetrators was convicted of causing actual bodily harm by breaking Mr K's nose in a racist attack. Ever since the SK family have been subjected to reprisals from that young man's friends and family.

Mrs SK video taped the youths lighting a fire in her rear garden. A firework was subsequently thrown into the shop in an incident which was recorded on security camera and witnessed by two customers. The reaction of the two police officers in attendance was for one to say "nobody's been hurt so we can't take any action" and for the other to say "there's no damage...all we can do is go and have a word with them".

This has effectively acted as a green light for continued and escalating harassment and intimidation. Over the past year NMP has supported SK and his family through the trauma of threatening telephone calls, damage to property and, most recently, a violent CS spray attack by two white youths. SK has been the victim of both racial harassment and robbery, but given that both are perpetrated by a group of local racist youths and their associates, he makes little distinction between the two forms of attack

SK has been in contact with the police, the council and Alert but in each case they appear to view him as the problem. This is because his distrust of the authorities (quite understandable given his previous experiences) makes him reluctant to sign statements or hand over video footage without some form of advocacy and support as provided by NMP. It is a classic case of the distressed victim being viewed as "awkward", "difficult" and "unhelpful" - adjectives that are very familiar to the Lawrence family and thousands of other victims of racial harassment.

It appears that the police are again waiting for another serious assault to take place before considering taking action. There is clearly a need for greater recognition amongst the police of the disproportionate affect that low level crime has on the victim when it is racially motivated and an acknowledgement of the wider impact on the local community and the potential for such incidents to escalate into serious assaults.

require; a volunteers manual with up to date information including relevant legislation, referral and monitoring procedures; a system for monitoring trends in types of cases, the response of other agencies, and feedback from users on the effectiveness of the service; design and dissemination of publicity.

NMP Supporters Meetings

Since the last AGM monthly meetings for NMP volunteers, supporters, anyone interested in becoming involved and management committee members, have been crucial to maintaining the campaigning arm of NMP, and supporting other aspects of our work. Without the voluntary commitment of a core of twenty attending regularly, the activities described in this report would not have been possible.

The meetings provide a forum for planning and organising campaigns and local events, maintaining links with community groups and local issues, networking and exchange of information on local and national issues, discussing the work of NMP and plans for the future, and keeping a wider group informed of the work of the management committee.

Those attending the open meetings (and many other volunteers) have been involved in the following:

- **The Lawrence Inquiry.**

Publicising the Inquiry to encourage NMP contacts and the local public to attend. Regular leafleting to publicise two public meetings in Newham on the Inquiry, throughout the borough. The refusal of the Newham Recorder to notify or report these events had no impact on the massive public response. (The grounds for refusal were "not of local interest", and "a Wednesday event is old news").

- A stall publicising the Inquiry at a benefit event for Newham Parents Centre, Stratford Town Hall, starring Benjamin Zephaniah. Doreen Lawrence spoke briefly and received a standing ovation.

- Attending the National Conference on 'The Betrayal of Stephen Lawrence' organised by SIA (National Development Agency for the Black Voluntary Sector). The Conference launched the Black Racial Attacks

Independent Network, with representatives from voluntary organisations and community campaigns throughout the UK. Speakers included Neville Lawrence, and members of the Menson and Reel families.

- **Anti-fascist campaign in the May local elections.**

Fifteen volunteers leafleted all wards in the South of Newham. Volunteers picketed the election night count. The BNP continued its facade of respectable electioneering.

Our aim was to alert black voters and others to the need to exercise the vote, and to use it to positively for anti-racism as far as possible. Our publicity included criticism of Newham Council's stance to restrict housing refugees which undermines its publicity against racist harassment and violence.

Reuben Goldberg's careful analysis in 1995, (in his capacity as a council Race and Housing Research Officer) of voting returns for the BNP, local Conservatives and Independents promoting the racist message, showed people choose to make a "positive racist vote", not a protest vote against Newham Council. The racist vote remains consistently high in Newham.

- **Asylum and Immigration Rights**

Members have provided updates on legislation, national, and local campaigns to stop the deportation of Refugees and Asylum seekers in Newham, supported by a network of Church organisations.

Policy Developments in Newham

The business approach to racism

In the autumn of 1997, Newham Council was in the process of selecting our 'successor' as its funded organisation tackling racial harassment in the borough. The way the selection was conducted - through tendering for a service contract - pointed to the new business oriented direction that council-funded anti-racism would take in Newham. As Council services continue to be contracted out, (Housing benefit and the Homeless Unit are to be run by a large Company) the bid from Estate Management UK Ltd, based in Waltham Forest, was the one most likely to succeed. Over a year after NMP's funding had been withdrawn, its operation, 'Alert in Newham' (known simply as Alert), opened an office in Forest Gate. It has become clear that Alert's role is very different to that which NMP provided for 19 years.

How independent?

Alert cannot claim to be an independent monitoring project. In reality, it is less the successor of NMP than a privatised version of Newham's former Race Equality Officers (REOs). The Council's new racial harassment policies and procedures, describe Alert as a "Corporate Racial Harassment Investigation Support Provider". Its remit, from the collection of statistics to the convening of racial harassment panels, mirrors the work of the REOs. Providing support for victims of police harassment and outreach work to promote and raise awareness of anti-racism, specified in the draft invitation to tender for the contract, have been dropped. Yet, police harassment and racial harassment are not separate areas of work, for example, victims of racist assaults have frequently been arrested or charged.

Alert is neither independent or open to the community in ways that are essential to a voluntary sector group like NMP. NMP has been contacted by solicitors acting for a Newham resident, deemed 'intentionally homeless' for refusing a property in an area felt to have a history of racist violence. Alert would

neither confirm or deny the degree of racial harassment in the area; as legal action was being taken against Newham Council, stating it could not help because the Council provides its funding.

Getting information about Alert itself has been equally difficult. When Newham Council was asked for details of quality and performance targets set for the new "Corporate Racial Harassment Investigation Support Provider," Chief Executive Wendy Thomson replied that "business contracts are matters of commercial sensitivity and not issued to the public." A letter to Alert's Operational Director, John Seddon, asking for clarification, has never been acknowledged or responded to. It seems the only way Newham residents can find out about the way Alert operates is to visit Companies House and find out how much profit the company makes from the suffering of those experiencing racist violence.

Yet Alert has been consistently presented as part of the voluntary sector. Newham Council's Police Community Consultative Group (PCCG) have gone as far as breaching its own constitution in order to allow the company to become a member. Though the PCCG was fully aware that Alert has neither a management committee or a constitution, and is far from being a 'not-for-profit' organisation, it was co-opted without opposition. It was pointed out that this decision was 'ultra vires' and therefore open to legal challenge, so the PCCG retrospectively changed its rules, flouting the most basic rules of conduct for a body paid for from public funds. The PCCG which is supposed to represent the views of local people now has another member representing no section of the community within the borough.

Figures for racial harassment in Newham have soared in the last five years. Community organisations and the victims of racial harassment must be in a position to be able to hold the statutory services who are charged with

NMP: monitoring racism in Newham since 1980

responding to such intimidation to account. Accountability is achieved through a range of responses ranging from campaigns, protest, community action, public criticism, petitions, pressure on individual departments or elected representatives, constructive criticism, and liaison with frontline council officers.

Equally victims of racial harassment, and unfunded community organisations have a right to make demands on, or criticise voluntary sector funded organisations. Those whose remit is to work unconditionally for the interests of its users are the best placed to respond to immediate issues and improve their services.

The eviction of perpetrators is the best deterrent strategy for reducing racial harassment in the long term. Newham Council has evicted two such families in the past year, through the use of a legal witness scheme and surveillance hardware operated by Alert. Statutory services are better placed to provide such resources and have the legal muscle to pursue successful prosecutions.

However, the distinction between statutory and voluntary services has to be clear and transparent. NMP has maintained a clear working relationship with voluntary sector services including the SRB funded project led by Newham Council for Race Equality, but we find it impossible to describe Alert as anything other than a devolved sector of statutory bureaucracy. As such, it must be prepared to receive the same close scrutiny that Newham's Race Equality Officers once experienced.

The Council cannot simply proffer 'commercial sensitivity' to avoid such scrutiny. To do so prevents local people from knowing what steps are being taken to ensure that fewer families have their lives blighted by racist bigotry in our communities.

Big Brother IS Watching

Following the huge rise in CCTV cameras in Newham, a 'facial mapping' system called 'Mandrake' that Newham Council and the police are piloting will, it is claimed, be able to secretly check the faces of 1000 people per second against a database of known criminals with an high degree of success. People living in towns and cities have their image captured by street cameras and security videos an average of



Newham Council wins yet another award

55 times a week. Cameras exist to record a crime as it takes place and to provide evidence. What makes the new 'Mandrake' system operating in Newham different is that faces are matched against a library of images provided by the police. Everyone's face on a street with CCTV cameras can be checked, whatever they are doing. It is claimed that only convicted criminals, actively involved in committing crime, will be entered onto the system and that it has an 80% success rate. Chief Superintendent Dave Armond of Forest Gate Police Station has said that:

'if people are not committing a crime they have nothing to fear.'

Somehow, with police's record of wrongful arrests and unsafe convictions, that's not very comforting.

Why should local people worry?

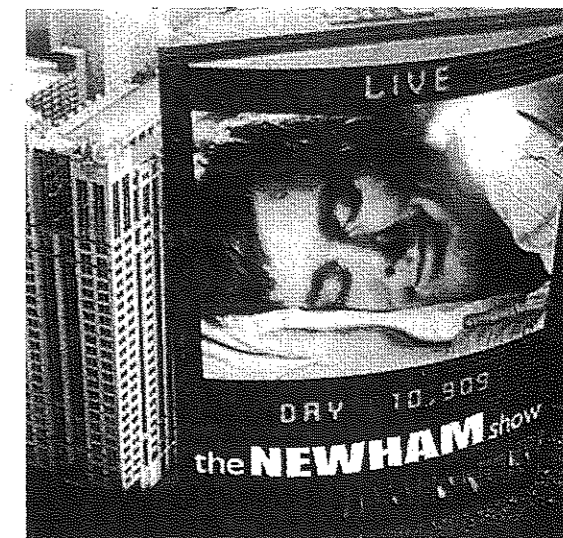
- An 80% success rate means a one in five chance of being incorrectly identified and wrongfully arrested.
- The claims made by the manufacturers of 'Mandrake', who are keen to promote their system, seem anyway to be wildly optimistic. Security camera footage is notoriously poor-quality, which is why it is so rarely used in prosecutions.
- Council staff who operate the system are given only faces and an index number. They have no way of knowing why a person is being targeted and whether the reason is

NMP: monitoring racism in Newham since 1980

legitimate. The police are accountable to no-one outside of their own ranks when adding an individual to the system.

- Why should our right to privacy, to get on with our lives without being spied on, be taken away because of the minority who commit crime? It is bad enough that people have to live in fear of crime, without also having to give up their basic civil liberties. What next? Hidden cameras in every home? After all, you never know what mischief might be hatched behind next door's curtains, do you?

The use of a system costing £65,000 will inevitably be widened. The police and the council have admitted as much. Who knows what it may be used for in five years time? You could be targeted because you have friends or family with criminal records. Or if you have been arrested but not charged. Perhaps you may be added to the system if you attend a meeting about a controversial local issue, such as the building of a road. In Brightlingsea in Essex, campaigners against the cruel transportation in crates of animals for slaughter were regularly filmed. The same has happened to those



protesting against the movement of nuclear waste through heavily populated areas.

The point is, we will never know

Those who collect information on us will keep it for future use. That's what spies have always done. When the papers talk about privacy, it's always about protecting the rich and famous - the Royal Family, politicians, film stars. Sometimes we can all sympathise when the press intrude too far. But if THEIR privacy is important, what about OURS?

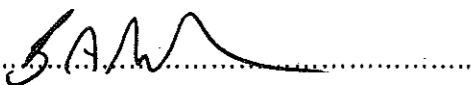
NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 1998

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1997</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Current Assets			
Debtors and Prepayments	7	0	27,237
Cash at Bank and in Hand		23,484	12,495
		<u>23,484</u>	<u>39,732</u>
Creditors : Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	8	(5,224)	(21,389)
Net Current Assets		<u>18,259</u>	<u>18,343</u>
Capital & Reserves			
General Reserves	10	18,259	18,343
Designated Reserves		0	0
		<u>18,259</u>	<u>18,343</u>

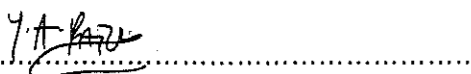
The management committee have taken advantage of special exemptions conferred by schedule 8 to the Companies Act 1985 applicable to small companies in the preparation of the financial statements and have done so on the grounds that in their opinion the company is entitled to those exemptions.

These financial statements were approved by the Management Committee on 20th September 1998

and signed on their behalf by



B. Mussenden - Chair



Y. Patel - Treasurer

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1998

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1997</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Income			
Grant Income	2	1,500	107,488
Other Income	3	26,268	4,271
Total Income		<u>27,768</u>	<u>111,759</u>
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	4	6,960	86,435
Other Operating Costs	9	20,878	38,663
		<u>27,838</u>	<u>125,098</u>
(Loss)/Profit on Ordinary Activities before Taxation	5	(70)	(13,339)
Taxation	6	(13)	0
(Loss)/Profit on Ordinary Activities after Taxation		<u>(84)</u>	<u>(13,339)</u>
Transfer from/(to) designated funds	10	0	0
General Reserves at 1 April 1997		<u>18,343</u>	<u>31,682</u>
General Reserves at 31 March 1998		<u>18,259</u>	<u>18,343</u>

All of the company's operations are classed as continuing. The company had no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus for the year. The movement on reserves is shown above and in note 10