

NMP's
24-hour
emergency
line



monitoring

project

newham monitoring project

Annual Report 2003-4

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Chair's introduction

As Chair, particularly in the last few months, I have been able to witness the changes and development of the vast work, which Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) does. Our commitment to engage the local community remains as strong as ever.

While reflecting on the past, the focus has been greatly on the benefits of current ventures. During this turbulent year, Newham Monitoring Project has continued to be a key organisation in aiding individuals who have suffered from racial and police harassment.

NMP has continued its involvement with a range of community based projects through its legal briefings and street advice about Stop and Search. NMP has also assisted other East London based organisations to make effective use of our Emergency Service. Future projects hope to utilise the skills of our volunteers in the arts and creative media industries in bringing NMP's work to a wider community. The challenges for our organisation are great - they always have been - but with the vehement escalation of naked racism, particularly towards asylum seekers and refugees, the work that NMP undertakes remains crucial.

A big 'thank you' to all staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make a difference and maintain the fundamental principles of NMP. I have admired the lengths that MC members would go to, being bowled over by their vitality, their unending loyalty and commitment has not gone unnoticed. Their contribution has been invaluable and an eye-opener. Particular acknowledgement goes to Asad Rehman who has chaired the committee in the past.

Not unlike many other projects, our continued funding is a key concern and I would like to express

our gratitude to all those who have provided financial support to NMP.

Finally, I would like to add that it has been a privilege to share and work with the staff and look forward to a more sustainable and secure future for NMP built on a shared vision.

Patrick Edwards
Acting Chair (October 2003-May 2004)
Newham Monitoring Project

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emergency service

In 1983, Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) set up the first Emergency Service of its kind in East London - a 24 hour service offering free, independent, confidential support for people suffering from racial and police harassment.

The Emergency Service ran until 1997 when NMP, due to financial difficulties was unable to sustain the service. But direct support for communities suffering racist attacks and police brutality has always been at the heart of NMP's work and so in June 2000 the Emergency Service was relaunched with renewed energy.

The emergency service is used because many individuals and families have a low expectation of the police and feel that their immediate situation is simply not a priority for them. It is significant that in the majority of cases when the police knew that NMP had been contacted via the 24:7 Emergency Service, the police responded differently to the individual family and victims of racial harassment. The service has become a lifeline for those experiencing violent and persistent harassment.

Since its relaunch, half of NMP's casework now comes through the Emergency Service. We currently have 68 trained and committed local volunteers, without whom the service would be unable to function. Volunteers take calls during weekday evenings and weekends and caseworkers will follow cases up with any action that needs to be taken during the week.

The Emergency Service's success is testimony that violent and persistent harassment is an ongoing problem in East London. In many cases the Emergency Service is used because too many individuals and families feel that the police are unresponsive to their needs and tend to trivialise experiences of racial harassment.

volunteer experiences

Volunteer 1

I started volunteering for the NMP Emergency Service four years ago when I was a student at UEL. I heard about NMP through University of East London Students' Union and had been involved in campaigns around the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in Newham.

Having someone very close to me suffer a violent racist attack prompted me to get more involved in supporting victims of racial attacks and police harassment.

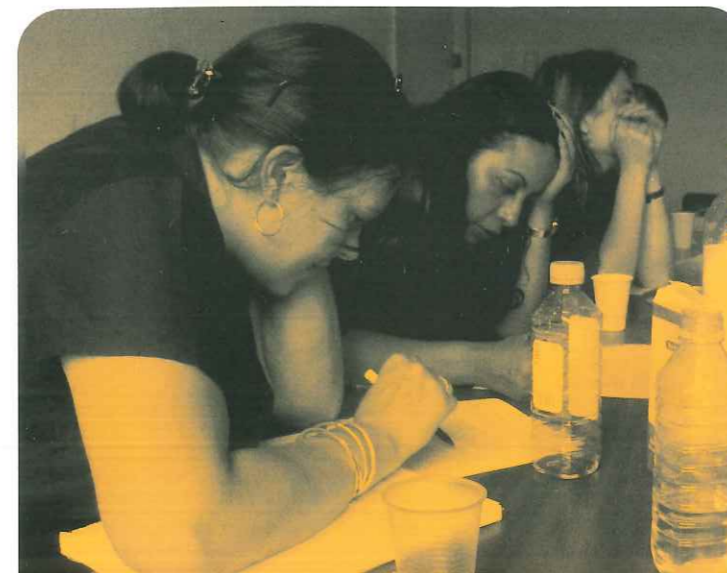
People are often relieved to find there's someone at the end of the line taking their experience very seriously.



Volunteer 2

A man rang the ES because there were a gang of youths gathering outside his house who had been racially harassing him for some time. He had called the police but they had been dismissive and said they were 'too busy' to come by - this was despite the fact he had already reported the gang to them earlier that week. All he wanted was a police car to drive through his estate and show a presence. Armed with my volunteer manual I rang the police, explained I was from NMP and reported it as a racist incident.

They refused to come at first, saying they'd send an officer by the next day and then started to try and grill me instead. I knew they were trying to get me to back down, but I stayed on the phone and demanded they send a police immediately now and visit the man again tomorrow. They finally agreed. I rang the man back and whilst I was on the phone to him the police sent a car by and the gang dispersed. I rang him back a couple of times that night to check he'd had no more trouble and he hadn't.



24:7

Volunteers being trained for our 24 hour emergency line

casework

Objectives

Casework has been central to the work of Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) since its creation in 1980 to challenge racist violence and the indifference of the police and the local authority.

NMP has continued to provide practical help, advice and support to victims of racial and police harassment. Our work is unique in that the 'needs' and 'wishes' of individuals and families define our approach to casework. This means that they retain full control over their case and are involved and informed at every stage of the process. Our aim is to make sure that families receive an adequate and satisfactory response from the right agencies, whilst raising and highlighting gaps or inadequate service provision. As our cases have continuously highlighted, there is little use in having numerous racial harassment policies if none are put into practice.

Many of NMP's cases are serious, complex and can, in some cases last for a number of years. These cases involve lengthy interviews, numerous meetings with different statutory and non-statutory organisations and regular correspondence. Our wider community development and local networking has allowed us to build a strong base of contacts who are committed, aware and able to provide specialist advice on the issues being faced by our cases. Our volunteers, which include, previous cases, solicitors, community activists, emergency service volunteers and translators continue to provide support and assistance to NMP.

Casework takes into account the wider issues and concerns being faced by local communities. By tackling these issues and problems collectively we aim to strengthen and empower not only the individual but also the wider community. Certain cases have brought to light institutional failures and injustice which have led to family led campaigns.

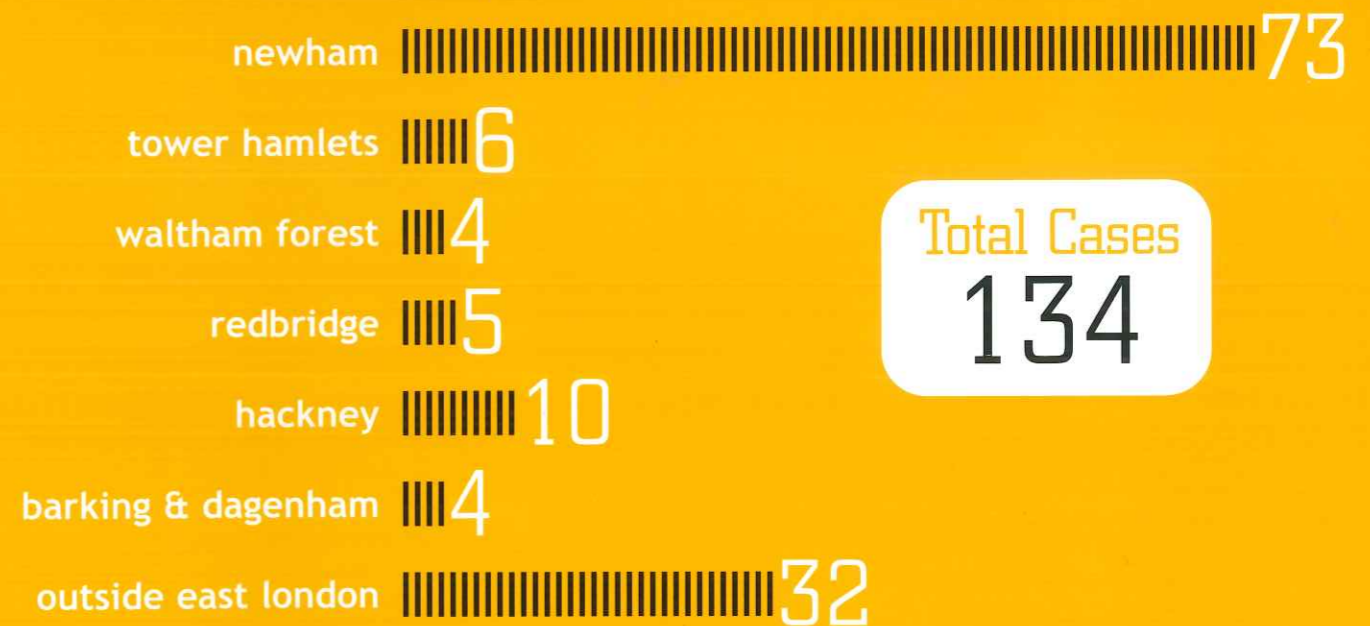
General

- Supporting and advising people suffering police or racial harassment.
- Ensuring that they are involved at every stage of the process and that they decide on strategies to resolve their case.
- Ensuring that individuals report all incidents to the police and that the police respond and take appropriate action, for example by arresting perpetrators and bringing appropriate charges.
- Putting pressure on statutory organisations such as local authorities and housing associations, to follow their own racial harassment policies effectively and making them accountable to the community.
- Making political representations to MPs, councillors and other regulatory bodies putting forward the concerns of individuals suffering racial harassment and raising awareness around the reality of police and local authority practices.
- Involving other voluntary and community organisations, as agreed with individuals and families, to increase pressure in exposing police and local authority inaction.

Police Harassment

- Ensuring individuals are aware of their rights.
- Ensuring all individuals receive reputable legal advice from sympathetic solicitors.
- Assist individuals to make formal complaints if police malpractice has occurred.
- Urge elected representatives and regulatory bodies to acknowledge and investigate the abuse of authority and malpractice.

Number of Cases by Area



Percentage of Cases by Type



Statistics

The total cases for the year have been broken down by area of work and region. Casework that does not fall into the category of racial or police harassment is defined as "other" which would include work such as immigration and asylum issues, discrimination in the workplace and monitored referrals to other organisations. The figures give no indication to numbers involved - many are families comprising several individuals and relatives. Also cases invariably are multi-dimensional and would have elements covering a range of issues, but for the sake of clarity have been recorded only once in a single category.

Racial Harassment

Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) has been assisting individuals and families suffering from racial harassment for 23 years. Our work is testament to the ongoing failure of statutory agencies, particularly the police and local authorities to deal adequately with racism and their failures to act and implement their own policies effectively.

Our communities receive no justice from detailed racial harassment policies that are circumvented, overridden or just plain ignored by their creators. The central aim of our work is therefore to monitor and pressurise the police and public bodies to act against racial harassment when it is brought to their attention and thus preventing families from having to endure prolonged racial violence.

The racial harassment statistics in this report do not reflect the full extent of racism in East London. Statistics cannot measure the impact of racial harassment on the lives of families and individuals, or the effect on their confidence and self esteem.

Housing

New Policies, Same Story.

An essential part of NMP's casework is to apply pressure on local authorities and housing associations to target and take action against perpetrators of racial violence and harassment.

They are however, notoriously slow to act in these circumstances. Newham Council has recently adopted a new policy in dealing with racial harassment, which it claims shifts the emphasis from those suffering racial harassment to the racists. The council's response now centres around

This is especially true with what is considered 'low level' harassment. Verbal abuse and criminal damage to property on a daily basis can be as devastating as physical attacks. Under-reporting of racial violence is still a problem and therefore statistics can only hint at the extent of the culture of racism that exists in East London.

This problem is made worse by a lack of confidence in, and even fear of, bodies such as the police - set up to protect us from racial violence. Many people have reported that, when ringing the police or local authority to report incidents of racial violence, they are immediately asked about their immigration status.

The experiences highlighted below hardly inspire confidence in those suffering racial violence to report it.

The central aim of our work is to monitor and pressurise the police and public bodies to act against racial harassment

taking action against perpetrators rather than rehousing victims.

Once a pattern of harassment emerges, cases are referred to an enforcement team which has the power to gather information and evidence, speak to witnesses, take statements and where necessary prosecute or evict those responsible for perpetrating racial violence. Ultimately decisions to rehouse victims are taken by the enforcement team and generally a move can only be secured in life and limb situations. But does this approach provide the results we want?

Case 1: Mrs A

Mrs A is a council tenant residing in Canning Town with her four young children. She is a single parent, and for eight months has been subjected to crude racial and verbal attacks from youths in the local area.

She has suffered arson attacks on her property and has had her windows smashed. The harassment has continued beyond the family home. She has been verbally and physically abused while shopping in the local area, and her four year old daughter has been assaulted by racists and sustained a cut lip while on her way home from school.

To date, the council has failed to take any action despite Mrs A reporting all incidents. The police have installed a panic alarm in the property. Since our intervention into this matter the police have provided two supporting statements documenting the harassment and recommended that Mrs A is moved.

Working under the old system, the council agreed that Mrs A could not remain at her current address and decided that she needed rehousing urgently. However when the council adopted their new policy she was informed that she would not be moving. Instead, attempts have been made to trivialise the harassment. It was also claimed that the harassment was taking place in the surrounding area and not in the property, taking it outside the remit of the council.

The obstacle for Mrs A is that she has never been able to identify the racists, and therefore the

council has claimed it cannot act. After persistent pressure from NMP the enforcement team is now deciding on a course of action.

While this approach rests on the premise that victims should not have to endure upheaval and have the right to remain in their property, the policy places an incredible burden on those suffering racial harassment. They must first prove their case to the local authority and if the situation cannot be resolved, victims must make their own arrangements for rehousing, through the choice based letting or house swap schemes, which can be a very lengthy process.

Furthermore, this fails to take into account the fact that continuous harassment can be just as debilitating as serious physical assaults. Victims are being forced to live under constant fear. Those who cannot identify their tormentors will simply remain in their properties if it is decided that the harassment is not sufficiently serious to justify being rehoused.

Housing officers have also expressed these same concerns and with the demise of ALERT in Newham, the problem of under-reporting harassment has become greater. Under this new scheme, those suffering racial harassment will find that they will be forced to live under attack until they make their own arrangements for rehousing. The local authority has a responsibility to support and assist families such as Mrs A's and provide them with solutions, not obstacles which prolong their suffering.

Policing

The BBC documentary 'The Secret Policeman' was broadcast in October 2003 and showed a side of policing that, for a moment at least, shocked a wider public. Few in the black community were surprised at what they saw and heard. None the less, for many, the programme underscored the institutionalised racism that continues to embrace all parts and all levels of the police force.

Long before the Macpherson Report, the daily manifestation of institutionalised racism within the Metropolitan Police has always been central to the work of Newham Monitoring Project (NMP). The majority of people who come to NMP are not only disillusioned by the poor response of the police to racial violence and activity but also report incidents of police racism, abuse of power and malpractice.

Police Response to Racial Harassment

Every year NMP receives numerous complaints about police inaction or woefully inadequate police investigations into racial violence and harassment.

On the last day of the football season, local West Ham fans, emerged from a nearby pub and attacked a mosque in Canning Town. They racially abused worshippers and attacked their cars whilst accusing them of being terrorists. The police were called to the scene. Yet despite the presence of three police cars and a police van, three elderly men from the mosque, were physically attacked by the racists. One of the men is 76 years old. He was knocked unconscious and hospitalised, he suffered head injuries and bruising to his ribs. Another man had his front teeth knocked out. A restaurant nearby also had its windows smashed.

Despite the attackers being present at the time the police arrived, no statements were taken from the victims or witnesses. Shockingly there has been no subsequent investigation of the events. The perpetrators are known in the area and according to

The black community continues to be criminalised, victimised and humiliated. The tragedy of deaths in custody continues to receive insufficient attention.

Community Safety Units (CSU) were set up within the Metropolitan Police service to deal specifically with hate crimes in response to recommendations in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Unfortunately this has not had a positive impact on the way in which the black community is policed.

In fact, NMP still finds itself having to apply consistent and sustained pressure on the CSU to treat racial crime and harassment seriously and prosecute perpetrators of racial violence. Officers are still attending incidents without recognising racist motives or elements and can even be hostile to those who report these incidents. Approximately one third of NMP's cases relate directly to incidents where there has been police malpractice.

Case 2: Mr B, Mr C & Mr D [E16]

one observer NMP interviewed, witnesses were openly threatened in front of police officers. The police later claimed that there was no evidence to identify the suspects. In fact, one of the victims received a phone call from a police officer advising him to stay away from the area during football matches.

NMP is now assisting the men with a formal complaint against the police for their inaction as well as pursuing a claim under the Race Relations Amendment Act. This case is yet another example of the police failing to treat racist incidents seriously. In many cases it is only after sustained pressure from NMP that the police investigate and prosecute perpetrators of racial violence. In this case, the racists are sent a worrying message: that the police will take little or no action when black people are attacked.

Case 3: Mr E [E16]

On 6th March 2003, Mr E was violently assaulted by two white men with an iron bar and a monkey wrench.

He was hit repeatedly round the head and almost lost consciousness. He was hospitalised for a week, suffering injuries to his head, arms and legs. A statement was taken five days after the attack. Mr E informed the police of his attackers' names and address, as they were his neighbours. Mr E heard nothing more from the police.

Arrests were made over a month after the attack when the perpetrators themselves approached the police. They were both charged with Section 18 Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH with intent). During the investigation, there was a complete breakdown of

communication. Mr E was never even told that his attackers had been charged or that a trial date had been set. There was no investigation into the racial motive in this crime, despite NMP making several representations to the police.

During the trial the judge directed the jury to acquit the defendants on the GBH charges, and to consider the lesser offence of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH). Both men were found guilty. Shockingly, despite the judge acknowledging that this was a premeditated attack and its consequences had not been more serious only because of Mr E's own agility, both men were sentenced to community service and given a fine.

'Low level' Harassment

Victims who report incidents of what police regard as 'low level harassment', are simply seen as a nuisance and are often treated as such. Police officers tend to trivialise such incidents, and in some cases have been completely dismissive of

them even when they form part of a sustained campaign of harassment.

Case 4: Mr F [E12]

Mr F and his family have been racially harassed by youths in the local area for several months. The harassment has ranged from verbal abuse and threats to physical abuse including eggs thrown at their windows on a daily basis.

On one such occasion the police were called and an officer who had previously attended on a similar call came to the scene. He dismissed the incident by commenting that having eggs thrown at the window was not a 'big thing', and that the family should not be contacting the police after every incident. He stated that the family should be grateful that they were not being fire bombed. Contrary to the family's assertions he claimed that this did not constitute racial harassment.

This is clearly an unacceptable response. The police

seem to take no account of the compounding effect of continuous harassment, particularly on vulnerable members of the community. The police and local authority should be sending clear messages that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Instead, their track record does nothing to encourage people to report crime and effectively gives racists a green light. They break their own police procedures which state that a victim who perceives a crime to be racially motivated, that crime should be reported and recorded as such.

Since the intervention of NMP the police are now reviewing their response and taking the harassment seriously. Importantly, new investigating officers have been assigned to the case. Such cases only perpetuate the climate of distrust of the police among the black community.

Police Harassment

Over a third of NMP's cases relate to the issue of police malpractice, equalling the number of racial harassment cases.

In NMP's experience, the process of criminalisation often begins with a crude and racist excuse for a stop and search. A downward spiral of events soon takes place and leads to arrests wholly unrelated to the original pretext for the stop and search.

Subsequent criminal charges are often related to 'obstruction' or common assault upon the police officer conducting the search. A conviction is, of

course, entirely reliant upon the officer's version of events. In other encounters far worse treatment is handed out.

Case 5: Mr G [E12] Case 6: Mr H, Mr I [E12]

Case 5

As Mr G was walking down East Ham High street with a friend, he was approached by two police officers who pushed him to one side, saying they wanted to speak to him.

They gave no reasons as to why they were stopping him, despite Mr G's repeated requests and claims that he had done nothing wrong. One of the officers then pulled out a pair of handcuffs, Mr G lifted his arms in the air, and backed away to avoid being handcuffed. An officer then took out a can of CS spray. As they attempted to handcuff Mr G, he pushed them away, still adamant that this was unjustified. As he raised his hands in the air, he was struck on the leg with a baton and had CS gas sprayed into his face. Despite being in a crouched position on the ground and crying as a result of the CS gas, several officers arrived on the scene to restrain him. Some persisted in punching him while holding him down on the ground and he was then handcuffed. As he was lead into the police van an officer racially abused him.

Despite the heavy handed conduct of the officers Mr G was charged with assaulting a police officer and a Section 5 public order offence (which covers 'abusive or threatening words and behaviour'). During his trial it emerged that the suspicion for stopping and searching Mr G arose as the police officers saw him giving suspicious looking items to his friend. What in fact they did see was Mr G handing his phone to his friend. The police officers

then went on to rehearse the same speech NMP has heard on countless occasions; that the excessive force used was justified due to Mr G's extraordinary strength and on account of the fact that the CS spray had no effect on him. The officer who sprayed Mr G in the face also caught himself and a 15 year old bystander. This officer called himself an ambulance yet Mr G was locked up for six hours.

Case 6

Laying bogus charges seems to be a classic police tactic particularly in situations where unjustified heavy handed tactics have been employed.

In another one of NMP's cases, even after agreeing to be searched but requesting that it take place away from public view, Mr H, a youth, was nevertheless treated aggressively, and violently pushed and shoved. When a passer by, Mr I, shocked by the treatment of the youngster commented that the police could not treat him in that manner, he was grabbed by one of the officers, and called a 'black cunt'. He was charged and convicted of a Section 5 public order offence. However Mr H was later acquitted for the same offence, therefore, Mr I was effectively convicted of a crime that did not occur.

It is increasingly worrying that as newspapers report daily on the potential of terrorist attacks in Britain, those institutions, such as the police, who we expect to provide us with law, order and above all protection, see the black community as a threat.

We have had to deal with negative stereotypes for decades, which have resulted in thousands being stopped and searched and even killed in police custody. The reality of policing on the street in our communities is alarming and disturbing. The result is hostility and fear towards the police. A striking and worrying example of this is the Terrorism Act 2000, which allows police officers to conduct a search on the basis of a suspect's ethnic origin, paving the way for openly discriminatory practises.

We are not asking for special treatment from the police, only that they do their job properly.

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support team

One-to-one support for people who have been racially harassed

The NMP Support Team was set up in May 2003 to offer an extra level of emotional and practical support to people who have been racially harassed, in addition to the essential casework assistance.

NMP's approach to casework is based on the principle that those who have been the targets of racial harassment should not be treated as victims. Instead, people must be allowed to have real and effective control over how they are represented.

Whilst many people come to NMP initially seeking practical support, they inevitably have emotional support needs too. Despite the variety of services available which focus on general emotional wellbeing - such as counselling - those addressing the specific and complex needs of someone who has been racially harassed are virtually non-existent. This lack of support leaves people disconnected from one another and can compound the isolation or depression often associated with racial harassment.

The Support Team uses volunteers to provide an accessible form of support to people who have been racially harassed, retaining the same principles of empowerment as NMP's casework. This works in a number of ways:

Overcoming isolation

The long-term and systematic nature of racial harassment can be a very isolating experience leaving people with low self-esteem, unable to trust after being let-down by the system, unresolved anger or depression. For those who have experienced racial harassment in or near their home, fear of leaving the house is common and results in further isolation. Support relationships concentrate on rebuilding the person's self-confidence to leave the house at their own pace.

Overcoming language barriers

Through broad advertising, Support Team volunteers have been successfully recruited from across the community and speak a number of languages. We are therefore able to extend support to those who do not have English for a first language.

Peer support on an equal footing

A central ethos of the project is that support relationships are non-hierarchical and volunteers are not 'separate' or 'different' to project users. Many of our volunteers have decided to volunteer because either they or someone they know have experienced racial harassment. For people using the service, being supported by someone who may have had similar experiences can help build trust.

Most volunteers also live locally. This promotes a wider understanding of racial harassment within the community and facilitates the development of longer-term supportive, non-professional relationships between those who have suffered harassment and other members of the community.

Practical support

While some people may wish to talk in order to reflect on or work through their experiences, others may find having someone to accompany them to the park, community centre or getting some help in sorting something practical out - like applying for a driving license - may be just what they need. Support relationships encompass both.

Longer-term view

In addition to supporting individuals and families, a broader aim of the Support Team is to increase awareness and understanding of the true effects of racial harassment in both the local community and wider social forums. From NMP's experience of offering this project, we also hope to be able to support the development of similar services.

The Support Team so far...

Set up in 2002, we are currently on our second round of volunteer matches. Over 130 people have expressed an interest in volunteering and we now have over 20 trained volunteers. We are working with community groups, refugee groups and other support organisations to encourage broad participation - through volunteering or using the project - of people across East London.

policy watch

The Independent Police Complaints Commission

In April 2004, a new Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) took over responsibility for handling police complaints from the thoroughly discredited Police Complaints Authority (PCA).

Its creation stems from concerted criticism over the years from groups like NMP, from lawyers and from relatives of those who have died in police custody about the way complaints against the police are dealt with. These culminated in a call for a new system in the Stephen Lawrence report. Recommendation 58 called for "the Home Secretary... [to] consider what steps can and should be taken to ensure that serious complaints against police officers are independently investigated..."

Promising to implement the Lawrence Inquiry recommendations in full and faced with the opportunity to enact genuine change, the government unfortunately started from a position that fundamentally ignored the real reasons for public disquiet about the PCA and the system of handling complaints. Rather than making a clear break from the past, the government has chosen former PCA members to make up a third of the new IPCC's Commissioners.

By clinging to the fiction that public confidence and trust have been undermined mainly by the way the complaints system operated, the government has been able to ignore the overwhelming public support for the basic idea that police officers should not be investigated by other police officers. Whilst there are a number of important changes to the rights of complainants, the new IPCC is no more 'independent' than the system it replaces.

As literature produced by the IPCC acknowledges, most complaints will continue to be investigated by the police. Whilst there is now a legal requirement to keep complainants informed of the progress of an investigation, the police continue to be under no obligation to provide a copy of the investigating

officer's report. If a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of an investigation, they can appeal to the IPCC but there is no right of appeal into serious incidents such as a death in custody that are now managed by the IPCC's own investigators.

Unfortunately, these IPCC investigation teams include seconded senior police investigators and a mix of 'police and non-police members.' Even with the deliberate recruitment of members of the liberal establishment as Commissioners, it is impossible in such circumstances to describe a complaints body staffed by current and former police officers as genuinely 'independent of the police'.

At such an early stage in the IPCC's activities it is impossible to be certain how it will conduct itself in practice. When activists from NMP joined the United Families and Friends Campaign delegation to meet IPCC Chair Nick Hardwick in March 2003, he seemed to offer a genuine commitment to make the best of the new system that the government had created.

In the aftermath of the BBC documentary 'Death on Camera', which broadcast in April 2004 CCTV footage of Christopher Alder's last moments on the floor of a police station custody suite in Hull, the Home Secretary instructed the IPCC to review that circumstances of Christopher's death. This was manifestly nothing more than government spin, an attempt to try and manage the negative publicity that the documentary had generated. Christopher's family knew that an IPCC review could consider only "lessons to be learnt" from the case and would not force the officers who watched Christopher die to answer the questions they have avoided over the last six years. They therefore urged Nick Hardwick to demonstrate the IPCC's alleged 'independence' by referring the case back to the Home Office and thus forcing David Blunkett to instigate a public inquiry. The IPCC refused and the Alder family is now boycotting its review. At its first public test in the first month of its existence, the IPCC has singularly failed to demonstrate that it is any different than the PCA.

Campaigns

Deaths In Custody

Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) continues to play a central role in supporting and developing the United Families and Friends Campaign (UFFC). The campaign is a coalition of relatives and friends of those who have died in police custody, in prison and in secure psychiatric care.

Being part of the campaign has included extensive involvement in the organisation of the National Demonstration Against Deaths in Custody in October 2003 and this year's Remembrance Procession to Downing Street. This is an area of work that receives no funding and our commitment has been to provide the time and energy of NMP activists to help UFFC grow.

During 2003, the pressure that families involved in UFFC have brought on the Government and authorities has undoubtedly pushed the issue of custody deaths higher up the political agenda. UFFC was the first organisation that the new Independent Police Complaints Commission's chair, Nick Hardwick, met in the transitional year before the IPCC took on the responsibility for police complaints from April 2004.

However, families continue to face a system that actively places barriers in their search for the truth about their loved ones' deaths. For example, the inquest into the death of Roger Sylvester, who died in police custody in January 1999 was finally held in 2003. After four weeks of evidence, it took the inquest jury just two hours to decide that Roger had been unlawfully killed. However, the family now face a judicial review of this decision brought by the Police Federation and only by accident discovered that the Metropolitan Police Authority had agreed to support this with taxpayers' money. Moreover, whilst the Crown Prosecution Service had decided in 2000 that on the balance of probabilities, Roger had died from restraint-related asphyxia, it yet again ruled that there was 'insufficient evidence' to bring a prosecution. Despite ten unlawfully killing verdicts since 1990, there has yet to be a successful prosecution of police officers and the prospects of justice for the Sylvester family therefore do not look particularly promising.

The one prosecution case that has been brought in the last year followed concerted pressure from the family of Christopher Alder, who died in police custody in April 1998. UFFC supporters attended the trial held in Middlesbrough in April 2003 and were horrified at the way that the prosecution case was conducted. The campaign wrote to the Attorney General warning that its muddled, half-hearted presentation of the evidence looked like a deliberate attempt to fail and that if urgent action was not taken, the prosecution would collapse. Within five days of UFFC's warning, the CPS' incompetence led to exactly that outcome.

The most urgent issue in the struggle for justice is the failure of the state to punish criminals within its employment. Families and their supporters have begun to seriously discuss whether the only way that the truth can emerge about custody deaths is for the CPS to be bypassed and private prosecutions brought. The costs of such actions are enormous and will need considerable support from justice campaigners and the anti-racist movement. Meanwhile, as more people die in police custody, such as Mikey Powell in Birmingham in September 2003, NMP is working with the United Families and Friends Campaign to organise a series of meetings around the country that can bring families together. The aim of these gatherings is to encourage mutual support and an inclusive debate about placing even greater pressure on the government over the next year. We predict that the failure of the criminal justice system will lead, within the next eighteen months, to the first ever private prosecution for a death in police custody.



Against War, Against Racism

Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been the direct consequence of the destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York, 2001. Other nations have been threatened with war and tens of thousand of civilians have been killed, wounded, made homeless or turned into refugees.

In the UK, we have seen massive erosion of civil liberties under the cover of anti-terrorism legislation. This has also fed and legitimised acts of racism especially against the UK's Muslim communities.

NMP is affiliated to the Stop the War Coalition as part of its wider campaign against racism. It is black communities in the UK and abroad who have borne the brunt of the fall out from the World Trade Centre attacks. By exposing the racism at the heart of this war and the measures to combat terrorism, we aim to draw a wider public into a deeper and more honest appraisal of events and what must be done to secure a more humane and just society.

On March 29th 2003, 10,000 Newham residents took to the streets to protest against the war in Iraq. The demonstration, which NMP helped build for, formed part of a global day of local actions against the war.

The Newham demonstration was the largest of its kind across the UK. The march, which started from outside Forest Gate Police Station, gathered protesters on its way as it lead past normally busy shops on Green Street, Plashet Grove and East Ham High Street. It concluded in Central Park, East Ham, with a rally of speakers including George Galloway MP, local Muslim leaders and Asad Rehman of NMP.

Large numbers of young people with hand-made placards were amongst the most energetic and vaciferous of protestors. Contradicting the myth that young people have little interest in politics and current affairs, the protestors had no lack of confidence in giving voice to their views and concerns.

Stop & Search Campaign

If you are African-Caribbean you are eight times more likely than your white counterparts to be stopped by the police, if you are Asian you are four times more likely to be stopped by the police.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry put the spotlight on police practices of Stop and Search, but since then we have seen a backlash amongst the police force and Stop and Search figures have actually increased in places like Newham and Tower Hamlets. A worrying trend is that on a number of occasions police officers have used anti-terrorism legislation in Newham to stop and search people.

NMP held a number of meetings with local organisations, including refugee community groups, youth centres and the local university to discuss people's experiences of being stopped and searched. From these meetings, it emerged that young people

needed to know their rights when being stopped by the police and needed encouragement to report the incident. We ran workshops at a number of local groups, including schools to raise awareness on the rights people have when they're being stopped and searched and to highlight how they can use the Emergency Service in such incidents. We produced Stop and Search leaflets encouraging people to keep a log of their experiences and handed these out with 'Know your Rights' cards outside local train stations, colleges and in schools.

It is incredible, and yet indicative of ongoing racism in the police force, that our communities continue to suffer under the police practice of Stop and Search. Unless powers to stop and search people on the streets are abolished, the contact between black communities and the police will continue to be fraught with suspicion, fear and miscarriages of justice.

finances

Balance Sheet (as at 31st March 2003)

	2003	2002
Current assets		
Debtors	16,288	21,209
Cash at bank and in hand	17,363	24,388
	33,651	45,597
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(18,598)	(14,900)
Total assets less current liabilities	15,053	30,697
Capital and reserves		
Surplus brought forward	30,697	30,431
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(15,644)	266
	15,053	30,697
Total Funds	15,053	30,697

Income & Expenditure Account (for the year ended 31st March 2003)

	2003	2002		2003	2002
Income			Expenditure		
Donations & affiliations	2,865	1,843	Wages & salaries (excl. NI)	51,049	64,757
Other income	1,669	1,568	Employer's NI contributions	4,478	6,006
Staff secondment - Recharge	12,178	23,585	Recruitment costs	1,927	-
Management fees	11,436	18,537	Staff training & conferences	312	-
Committee of 400	1,346	2,177	Consultancy fees	7,873	8,678
Bank Interest	35	80	Travel & subsistence	528	1,380
NLCB	14,525	55,474	Volunteers' expenses	786	-
Bright Street Project	5,000	-	Rent & rates	4,000	4,000
Comic Relief	14,400	-	Insurance	809	989
Community Fund	10,000	-	Light & heat	369	416
	73,454	103,264	Building maintenance	75	68
			Postage & delivery	1,197	1,016
			Printing & reproduction	4,700	6,984
			Office equipment & maintenance	2,113	776
			Telephone & fax	4,460	4,832
			AGM expenses	299	498
			Literature & subscriptions	37	150
			Bank charges	315	299
			Interest	358	-
			Accountancy	1,600	-
			Audit Fees	1,400	1,375
			Sundry Expenses	413	766
				(89,098)	(102,990)
				2003	2002
			Total Income	73,454	103,264
			Total Expenditure	(89,098)	(102,990)
			(Deficit)/Surplus	1,927	274

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 1st March 2004.

thanks

Management Committee

Asad Rehman • *Chair*
 Patrick Edwards • *Acting Chair (10/2003 to 03/2004)*
 Yasin Patel • *Treasurer*
 Ashika Thanki • *Acting Treasurer (10/2003 to 05/2004)*
 Ilona Aronovsky
 Kevin Blowe - (until September 2003)
 George Brown
 Janet Clarke
 Debashish Dey
 Lina Jamoul
 Isky Osman
 John Pandit
 Piara Powar
 Adil Rehman

Staff

Zareena Mustafa • *Community Development (03/2003 to present)*
 Estelle du Boulay • *NMP Support Team (05/2003 to present)*
 Sehra Choudhury • *Project Officer (03/2004 to present)*
 Catherine Neal • *Administrator part-time (08/2001 to present)*
 Zainab Kemsley • *Emergency Service Officer (08/2000 to 09/2002)*
 • *Project Co-ordinator (09/2002 to 09/2003)*
 Parmjit Singh • *Part-time Outreach and Community Development (10/2002 to 03/2003)*
 • *Project Co-ordinator (03/2003 to 10/2003)*
 Kate Byrne • *Emergency Service Worker (05/2003 to 10/2003)*
 Manju Lukhman • *Emergency Service Worker (11/2003 to 12/2003)*
 Abdul Wadud • *Emergency Service Worker (01/2004 to 03/2004)*
 Naz Uddin • *Project Director (March 2004)*

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support and contribution to our work:

Newham Asian Women's Project • Amal Trust • BRAIN • NMP Anti-Racism Trust • Rokeby Secondary School • Southall Black Sisters • Sree Guru Narayana Mission of the UK • Malayalee Association of the UK • Columbian Fathers • United Families & Friends Campaign • INQUEST • Searchlight Educational Trust • St. John's Church Stratford • Trinity Centre • Tower Hamlets One-to-One plus • University of East London Students' Union • Black and Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum • Network for Social Change • Newham Refugee and Homelessness Forum • Aston Mansfield • Deighton and Guerdella Solicitors • Christian Khan Solicitors • Hickman & Rose Solicitors • Birnberg Pierce Solicitors • Bhatt Murphy Solicitors • Bindmans & Partners Solicitors • JR Jones Solicitors • Ghani & Co Solicitors • Moss & Co Solicitors • Two Garden Court Chambers • Toaks Court Chambers • Amnesty International • Liberty • Day-Mer • Little Ilford Youth Centre • Hathaway Centre • Kick It Out • Community Involvement Unit • Focus E15 • The Children's Society • Hackney Refugee Training Partnership • RAMP • REIN • NAAR • NATFHE • Amifeber Chambers • UNITE • Café Mondo • Theatre Royal Stratford

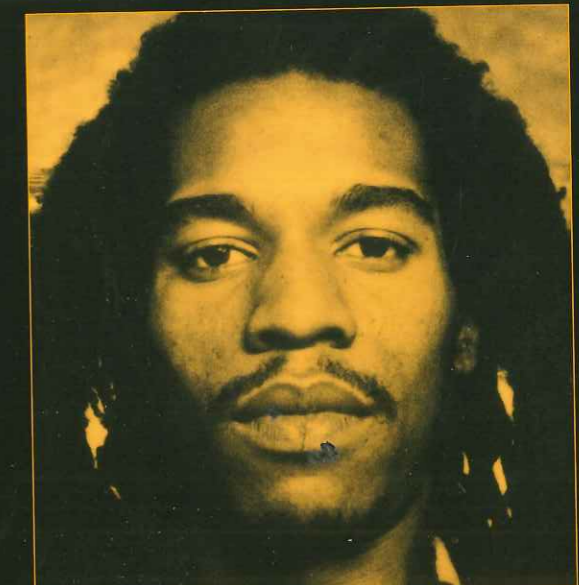
With special thanks to the management committee members and staff who have left this year:

Kevin Blowe • Satwat Rehman • Naz Uddin • Rajiv Menon • George Brown • Gilly Mundy • Gurpreet Virdee • Hossain Zahir • Patrick Edwards • Zainab Kemsley • Parmjit Singh • Abdul Wadud • Kate Byrne • Manju Lukhman • Cilius Victor

Thanks also to our office volunteers:

Jubaika Ahmed • Tracey Kennealley • Francine West

We would like to thank all the Emergency Service volunteers, NMP Support Team volunteers, Sub-committee members and supporters of NMP for all their hard work and commitment over the last year.



Thanks also to NMP's patron - Dr Benjamin Zephaniah