

Police Federation CCC Daily Press Alert (03.03.2009)



NEWS HEADLINES 1

[Rise in police firearms incidents – BBC News](#) 1

[Police chiefs spend £200,000 investigating officers who drank vimto they found on railway](#) 1

[Police race bullying claims credible – Metro](#) 2

[Muslim PCSOs suffered violence and bullying – Daily Mail](#) 3

[Police played spot the black officer in the dark – Guardian](#) 4

[PCSOs faced racism and violence – BBC News](#) 5

[Met officers accused of playing racist game – Daily Telegraph](#) 5

News Headlines

Rise in police firearms incidents – BBC News

The number of incidents involving armed police officers in Devon and Cornwall rose by 56% last year, according to the Home Office.

The total from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 was 143, compared to 80 for the previous 12 months.

But the Devon and Cornwall force still had the third lowest number of incidents in the country; only Wiltshire and Cumbria dealt with fewer.

There are now 142 authorised firearms officers in the region.

Conventional firearms were used on seven occasions across England and Wales in 2007/08.

The figures were compiled using data from the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Police chiefs spend £200,000 investigating officers who drank vimto they found on railway

Police chiefs have been accused of over-reacting after launching a £200,000 investigation into two officers who shared five bottles of Vimto they found by a railway line.

Rob Mitchell, 40, and Kris Catterall, 38, were hauled before bosses and suspended on full pay for 18 months.

Eventually they were allowed to return to work after being fined £400 each for a minor breach of police rules and warned not to do it again.

Last night campaigners attacked the force for wasting taxpayers' money.

A senior police source said: 'The lives and careers of these officers have been put on hold for such a long time.'

'It is absolutely ridiculous. Surely an infringement of the rules on this scale should be dealt with quickly and efficiently. It is quite obvious to anyone that no malice or serious corruption has taken place and the whole affair reeks of an over-reaction.'

The officers, who work for British Transport Police in Greater Manchester, found the cordial in a box beside a railway line.

Police rules state they should have recorded the find as lost or stolen property but instead they shared it with colleagues.

But when the drinks were spotted in the mess-room cupboard they were immediately suspended. Lawyers considered the case for eight months before finally deciding not to press charges, but the men still faced an internal inquiry.

The two police officers have exemplary records as transport officers and PC Mitchell became the first constable in the UK to pass his sergeant exams despite suffering from dyslexia and ADHD. As part of his punishment he is unable to rise to the sergeant rank for two years.

The pair returned to work a few weeks ago after pleading guilty to neglecting their duties. The investigation cost an estimated £200,000, which includes the officers' salaries while on suspension.

A legal source said: 'There is a very strict procedure the Crown Prosecution Service has to go through when considering whether to bring charges and it can be a drawn-out affair.

'The subsequent police internal investigation would also have been a drain on the public purse.

'The officers wages for 18 months would have amounted to around £100,000 so it would not be amiss to estimate the total cost somewhere around £200,000.'

Matthew Elliott, of the Taxpayers' Alliance, said: 'This is an absurd and shocking waste of taxpayers' money and utter incompetence on behalf of the senior officers involved.

'If disciplinary action needed to be taken it should have been done quickly and without wasting money.

'The police chiefs who oversaw this episode should be held accountable to taxpayers.'

Alex Robertson, chairman of the British Transport Police Federation which represented both men, said: 'To be suspended for so long over something so trivial will have put the officers and their families under great stress.'

A spokesman for the British Transport Police said: 'The integrity of officers is paramount in maintaining public confidence and any failure to uphold our high standards will always be treated seriously.'

Police race bullying claims credible – Metro

Claims of racist bullying at a central London police station were credible and consistent, an internal Scotland Yard investigation found.

A senior officer brought in to examine complaints by staff at Belgravia police station discovered a series of violent and bigoted incidents in early 2007 and over a "prolonged period of time."

Sergeant Sarah Cashman said many Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were afraid to speak out and some had been assaulted and threatened by colleagues.

The police station is at the centre of a fresh race row after PCSO Asad Saeed, 35, claimed an "apartheid" system of separate vans for black and white officers existed.

His claims centre on two colleagues who have since resigned from the Metropolitan Police after facing charges of gross misconduct.

An extract of Mrs Cashman's review is contained in documents submitted to an employment tribunal brought by Mr Saeed that began today.

She found claims of racist language including an allegation one officer said: "Stick by me and we will bring down all the lazy blacks, one by one."

Mrs Cashman also uncovered claims of bullying and violence both among the police and against homeless people.

She said: "These incidents have taken place over a prolonged period of time and therefore some times and dates may not be entirely accurate.

"However, in speaking to the PCSOs who have come forward, while they may have struggled to remember when an incident occurred, there is no doubting the credibility and consistency in their accounts and recollection of events."

Last week Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson said the allegations were: "appalling" but added it was not clear when they first surfaced.

Speaking at a meeting of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), he said: "If it did take place it is appalling and if it was known about I want to know what was done about it."

Muslim PCSOs suffered violence and bullying – Daily Mail

A white policeman vowed to 'bring down all the lazy blacks, one by one', an employment tribunal heard yesterday.

The boast was one of a number of incidents of bigotry at a central London police station which is alleged to have operated an 'apartheid culture'.

In a claim for discrimination, Asad Saeed, 35, said he and his fellow support officers from ethnic minorities were treated like dogs.

He said senior staff turned a blind eye to racism and there were even separate vans for white and black staff.

Ethnic staff were once forced to spend hours standing in the rain at a cordon while white colleagues returned to the station to watch TV, the tribunal heard.

Mr Saeed claims he was subjected to racism by a white clique after joining the Metropolitan Police as a support officer in January 2007.

He told the tribunal: 'After a week or so it was obvious that there was an established racial divide.

'The white staff and the ethnic minority staff were always in separate groups.'

He claimed one colleague, Geoff Whitehead, would refuse to pick up ethnic minority staff in the force van, leaving them to walk more than a mile back to the station in Belgravia.

'At first I thought he was just antisocial but very soon I started to think it may have something to do with me being the only Asian Muslim on the team,' Mr Saeed said.

'I found it humiliating and disturbing whenever I called him on the radio and he would not answer.

'I was also shocked that his behaviour went unchallenged, even as a member of the Metropolitan Police.

'He was using his role as driver to carry on an apartheid culture with the team. At Belgravia, they turned a blind eye to racism.'

Whitehead told a black support officer to 'get in the black van' when she tried to get into his vehicle, Mr Saeed claimed.

On another occasion he allegedly called a woman support officer a 'f***** lesbian' and a 'f***** dyke'.

He is also said to have gambled at work, sold counterfeit DVDs, CDs and cigarettes and frequently kicked sleeping homeless people to move them on.

A second support officer, Peter Campbell, 48, said he also witnessed racism and abusive behaviour.

'It felt as though sneezing was an offence if you were not white,' he said.

'After a while, I felt as though as soon as I had swiped in to the station I was being discriminated against.'

He said white policemen played 'spot the PCSO' at night: 'We would look over and see two white police officers gawping at us from the vehicle. The joke was that all PCSOs had black or brown skin colour so they were very hard to see in the dark.'

Mr Saeed claimed that Whitehead conspired to have him dismissed in late 2007 by inventing a claim that he assaulted a homeless man.

Mr Saeed was reinstated after a report by Sergeant Sarah Cashman found ethnic staff were afraid to speak out and some had been assaulted and threatened by colleagues. She found claims of racist language including the allegation that Whitehead wanted to bring down 'the lazy blacks'.

There was no doubting the credibility and consistency of the accounts given by the support officers, she said.

Whitehead has resigned from the Met after facing charges of gross misconduct.

Mr Saeed, who now works as a support officer in North London, is claiming discrimination over how the assault charge was handled.

The hearing, at the Central London Employment Tribunal, continues.

Police played spot the black officer in the dark – Guardian

Racist police officers were given a "licence to bully" their ethnic minority colleagues by bosses who turned a blind eye to threats of violence and a culture of apartheid that gripped a London police station, it was today alleged.

The allegations are contained in legal documents submitted by Asad Saeed, a Muslim PCSO who is suing the Met for racial discrimination at an employment tribunal that began today. He says he worked for barely a month at Belgravia station in central London in February 2007, before being suspended after two white racist colleagues who "framed" him. He was sacked from the force, but later reinstated on appeal with CCTV evidence disproving a claim from one of his accusers that Saeed, 35, had assaulted a vagrant while on duty.

The claims from Saeed and other black officers are some of the worst concerning racism to hit Scotland Yard in modern times. But more troubling for the new Met commissioner, Sir Paul Stephenson who last week declared the force's racist past was behind it, are the repeated claims from Saeed and his colleagues that when senior officers were told, they tried to silence the whistle blowers.

One ethnic minority officer told of the culture of fear at Belgravia station which was incited by a white boss.

PCSO Peter Campbell said an inspector at the station drew up a hit list of black officers to be got rid of, and shared the list with white officers.

In his witness statement, submitted to the tribunal today, Campbell said: "This is what gave bullies like PCSO Geoff Whitehead and PCSO Royston Upson a licence to bully the ethnic minority PCSOs."

Things were so bad at the station that white officers rode in a separate van to ethnic minority colleagues, barring entry to any black officer who tried to get in, and refused requests to pick them up.

Documents supporting Saeed's claims say the "apartheid" began in 2003.

In June 2006 a white PCSO is alleged to have reported racist remarks by Whitehead to senior management, but no action was taken.

The canteen and television rooms were also subject to "apartheid" with white officers and their black colleagues sitting separately.

Campbell also alleged that at times black officers were "treated like dogs" and that senior officers played a racist game called "spot the PCSO".

Campbell said: "When we were on the beat after dark we would often notice a police car following us. Eventually one of the police constables told me that they were playing a game called 'spot the PCSO'.

"We would look over and see two white police officers gawping at us from the vehicle.

"The joke was that all PCSOs had black or brown skin colour so they were very hard to see in the dark.

"When I found out that police constables and senior police officers played this game I was extremely upset."

Saeed says his race hate ordeal began on his first day at Belgravia when Whitehead refused to shake his hand.

Days later Saeed saw the same white officer bar a black colleague from a vehicle, saying: "You need to get in the black van".

Documents show other officers confirming the black and white van system.

A woman officer was threatened, her chair kicked and sworn at, being called "a fucking bitch".

A senior officer was overheard complaining about "fucking foreigners", two white officers bragged of connections to the BNP, while on duty homeless people sleeping in the street were kicked in the stomach, and smuggled goods were traded in the station.

Saeed says bosses turned a blind eye to this, and after his suspension a senior officer ignored his complaints of racism saying it was "a smokescreen": "At Belgravia, they turned a blind eye to racism," his witness statement says.

In August 2008, an internal report by sergeant Sarah Cashman, found the claims from the ethnic minority PCSOs had "credibility and consistency".

The investigation found black PCSOs scared to speak because of past threats and assaults by colleagues.

Whitehead and Upson have both left the force.

A document reveals that a Met internal investigation produced enough evidence to bring a disciplinary charge against Whitehead for racism, harassment and bullying of colleagues, and for running the apartheid van system.

He quit before the hearing.

The Met is denying the claim brought by Saeed and the hearing continues.

PCSOs faced racism and violence – BBC News

Staff at a police station in central London have encountered violence and racist bullying, an internal Scotland Yard investigation has found.

Many police community support officers (PCSOs) in Belgravia were afraid to speak out and some were assaulted or threatened by colleagues, it added.

The review was submitted to an employment tribunal brought by a PCSO.

He said there was an "apartheid" system at the station with separate vans used to transport black and white officers.

Asad Saeed claims senior Metropolitan Police officers at Belgravia station "turned a blind eye to racism".

He was dismissed after allegedly assaulting a homeless man at a fast-food restaurant near Victoria station in central London, tribunal documents stated.

'Humiliating and disturbing'

The report said there was "no doubting the credibility and consistency" of employees' accounts.

Mr Saeed's claims centre on two colleagues who have since resigned from the force, who faced charges of gross misconduct.

"It was obvious that there was an established racial divide," he added, saying that this became apparent "a week or so" after he joined the Metropolitan Police as a PCSO in January 2007.

One colleague who was a van driver would refuse to pick up PCSOs who were not white, Mr Saeed alleged.

"At first I thought he was just anti-social but very soon I started to think it may have something to do with me being the only Asian Muslim on the team," he said.

"I found it humiliating and disturbing whenever I called him on the radio and he would not answer.

"The airwaves were public as well, so everyone knew it was going on."

'Treated like dogs'

A second PCSO, Peter Campbell, said he also witnessed racism and inappropriate behaviour at Belgravia police station.

"It felt as though sneezing was an offence if you were not white," he said.

He described a stormy evening in 2007 when non-white PCSOs were told to form a cordon, while white colleagues were inside, watching TV.

"We were treated like dogs that night," Mr Campbell said.

The force asked Sgt Sarah Cashman to look into complaints about unacceptable behaviour, which her report has stated took place over "a prolonged period of time".

Among claims of racist language were an allegation that one officer said: "Stick by me and we will bring down all the lazy blacks, one by one."

Documents given to the tribunal also include allegations of homophobic abuse and intimidation among staff.

Asked about Mr Saeed's allegations last week, the force's new commissioner, Sir Paul Stephenson, described them as "appalling", but said it was not clear when they began.

"If it did take place it is appalling, and if it was known about, I want to know what was done about it."

Met officers accused of playing racist game – Daily Telegraph

The allegation came during an employment tribunal brought by PCSO Asad Saeed, 35, who claims an "apartheid" system for black and white officers existed at west London's Belgravia station.

At a hearing yesterday it emerged that an internal Scotland Yard investigation in 2007 found evidence of violent and bigoted incidents over a prolonged period of time.

Sergeant Sarah Cashman, who compiled a report into allegations of bullying, said many PCSOs were afraid to speak out and some had been assaulted and threatened by colleagues.

PCSO, Peter Campbell, 48, also said officers played "spot the PCSO" and followed ethnic minority staff at night.

In documents submitted to the tribunal, Mr Campbell said: "When we were on our beat after dark we would often notice a police car following us. Eventually one of the police constables told me that they were playing a game called 'spot the PCSO'.

"We would look over and see two white police officers gawping at us from the vehicle. The joke was that all PCSOs had black or brown skin colour so they were very hard to see in the dark.

"When I found out that police constables and senior police officers played this game I was extremely upset. I found it offensive and degrading."

He said on one occasion in the winter of 2007 black and ethnic minority PCSOs were left to cover a police cordon in the middle of a stormy night while white colleagues watched TV indoors.

The PCSO said: "We were treated like dogs that night."

Mr Campbell said if his colleague had not blown the whistle the racism would have continued.

Mr Saeed, an Asian Muslim, joined the Met as a PCSO in January 2007 and said there were obvious racial tensions as white and ethnic minority staff were always in separate groups.

He said: "At first I did not jump to conclusions, but after a week or so it was obvious that there was an established racial divide."

Speaking about the alleged culture of bigotry, he said: "At Belgravia, they turned a blind eye to racism."

The Met denies the allegations. The tribunal continues.