



## **STATEMENT ON THE 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE RACIST MURDER OF STEPHEN LAWRENCE**

On the 22 April 1993, Doreen and Neville Lawrence were informed that their 18-year-old son, Stephen, had been murdered in a racist attack whilst waiting at a bus stop. Grief stricken and traumatised at losing their beloved son, they were forced into fighting for truth and justice. A fight, which no grieving parents should ever have to do.

They were forced to fight for the reputation of their son and for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to bring their son's killers to justice.

Stephen was a young man with dreams and aspirations of becoming an architect. Whilst many untruths underpinned by racist stereotypes and aimed at denying his memory and his family sympathy and support were circulated about him; the Metropolitan Police Service appeared to discount the names of a list of suspects given to them by the public for no apparent reason.

Stephen Lawrence's name and image are a symbol of racial equality, justice and hope. His memory has made him an enduring icon and embedded his legacy on British social, legal and political history, turning an ordinary young man into an extraordinary individual. Whilst his family have paid a heavy toll in their fight for justice for their son. It must never be forgotten that Stephen was a person, a son, a brother 'taken' from his family and depriving them of their family life. Their fight is a testament to the staying power of the Black British community.

The National Black Police Association was formed in the aftermath of the Inquiry into Stephen's murder. Our founding members gave powerful oral evidence to the Inquiry, successfully shifting the established police narrative and paving the way for the introduction of 'institutional racism' into the Inquiry report.

The Lawrence Family were at the launch of the NBPA and we are proud of our history of doing the right thing, supporting members of the community in their fight for justice and racial equality.



In his Inquiry into the murder of Stephen, Lord Macpherson, stated that institutional racism affects the Metropolitan Police Service and police services elsewhere. His definition of institutional racism was clear and unambiguous,

*“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.”*

Stephen’s murder brought about improvements to policing policy and practice and the Inquiry made 70 recommendations: which included improvements in murder investigations, creation of family liaison officers to support bereaved families, the recording of ethnicity in stop and search and created a recognised perception test for hate crimes.

Sadly, despite 30 years since Stephen’s murder. 23 years since the Macpherson Inquiry and 23 years since Sir Paul Condon’s assertion that the MPS was institutionally racist and a programme of change was put in motion to understand, identify and address racism in policing. The Casey report has exposed the sad reality of policing and the MPS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic. The only difference between then and now is that policing leaders refuse to state the obvious— a damning indictment on the sanctity of the Peelian Principles where, *‘the power of the police [...] is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect’*.

This Stephen Lawrence Day, The National Black Police Association pledges to do all we can to support the fight for racial equality and justice to ensure that no family has to fight through their grief for policing to do the right thing.

**22 April 2023**