

## UK Police Forces Face Shortage of Black Officers

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Nearly half of police forces across England and Wales have fewer than ten black officers, with one force reporting none at all, according to recent Home Office data.

Out of a total of 146,442 officers in these regions, only 1,838 are black, representing just 1.25 per cent of the police workforce. This figure contrasts sharply with black people making up around 3.3 per cent of the combined population of England and Wales. When

combined with Asian and other ethnic minority officers, the proportion rises to 8.5 per cent, still significantly below the 18 per cent these groups represent in the general population.

They chanted slogans such as “Hands off Gaza” and “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.” Dorset, North Wales, and Durham each have only one black officer serving. Overall, 20 out of the 44 regional police forces have fewer than ten black officers.

A decade ago, Theresa May, then Home Secretary, criticised police forces for failing to represent the communities they serve. The latest statistics indicate that progress has been limited, with the Metropolitan Police and West Midlands forces employing the largest numbers of black officers: 1,247 and 113, respectively.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) emphasised the importance of police forces reflecting the diversity of their communities. The commission highlighted that law enforcement agencies have a legal obligation to promote equality and foster workplace environments free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Dr Alison Heydari, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, stated: “The proportion of officers from ethnic minority backgrounds is at its highest level since records began. The number of black officers has increased by 16 per cent over the past five years. Forces have implemented strategies aimed at encouraging more black individuals to join policing.”

Despite these efforts, Dr Heydari acknowledged there remains significant progress to be made: “We still have a long way to go.”

The underrepresentation of black officers within police forces raises concerns about community trust and effective policing, given the importance of diverse representation in fostering mutual understanding and legitimacy.

This data forms part of ongoing discussions about improving diversity and inclusion within UK public institutions and ensuring equal opportunities for ethnic minorities.