

# **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 27 February 2001  
*(Morning)*

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2001.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Copyright Unit,  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ  
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate  
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by The  
Stationery Office Ltd.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office is independent of and separate from the company now  
trading as The Stationery Office Ltd, which is responsible for printing and publishing  
Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body publications.

---

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 27 February 2001

Col.

POLICE RACE RELATIONS ..... 1040

---

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

### 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2001, Session 1

#### CONVENER

\*Kate MacLean (Dundee West) (Lab)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Mr Michael McMahon (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)

\*Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

\*Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD)

\*attended

#### WITNESSES

Mr Jim Wallace (Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice)

Colin Boyd QC (Lord Advocate)

Neil Davidson QC (Solicitor General)

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Lee Bridges

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Richard Walsh

#### ASSISTANT CLERK

Roy McMahon

#### LOCATION

Committee Room 1



## Scottish Parliament

### Equal Opportunities Committee

Tuesday 27 February 2001

(Morning)

[THE DEPUTY CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:04*]

**The Deputy Convener (Kay Ullrich):** We are few in number this morning, but let us begin. Under agenda item 1, do members agree to take items 6, the draft report on the Housing (Scotland) Bill, and item 7, the budget paper, in private?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Deputy Convener:** We will now go into private session to consider item 2. The meeting will reopen to the public at 10.15 am.

10:04

*Meeting continued in private.*

11:11

*Meeting resumed in public.*

**The Convener (Kate MacLean):** We will get started. I apologise for the delay in starting, which is due partly to my being late because of the bad weather and partly to the fact that the committee has been discussing whether to proceed with item 3 on the agenda, which is the Crown Office inquiry into relations with the Chhokar family, on which we had intended to take evidence from Jim Wallace, Colin Boyd and Neil Davidson.

The committee has agreed not to discuss item 3 as there appears to be a problem. I was under the impression that committee members were aware that we would take evidence on this matter and that the Chhokar family was happy to attend as members of the public. It appears that that is not the case, so the committee has decided that, under the circumstances, it would not be appropriate to go ahead with the line of questioning on item 3.

### Police Race Relations

**The Convener:** We move immediately to item 4 on the agenda, which is the report by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland, "Without Prejudice? A thematic inspection of police race relations in Scotland". I welcome the Solicitor General, the Minister for Justice and the Lord Advocate. I understand that Jim Wallace will make a short presentation, and then the committee will ask questions.

**The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace):** My opening statement will be very short indeed. I will just set the scene for both this item and item 5. You will be aware that two documents have been published recently: "The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: An Action Plan for Scotland", the review by the Stephen Lawrence inquiry steering group; and the thematic report, "Without Prejudice?" which was compiled by Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary.

The action plan was prepared by a sub-group of the steering group under Raj Jandoo and has been endorsed by the whole group. It charts the progress that has been made and where work remains to be done, and it reflects on the comments that have been made in response to the consultation on the original action plan, which was published in July 1999. The review sets clear practical targets for future work and includes a timetable, which is important.

The report from Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary records the genuine commitment of the Scottish chief constables to improve police relations with Scotland's ethnic minority communities. I can confirm through my experience, particularly on the working group, and generally from visiting police forces, that there is a serious commitment on the part of the chief constables and police forces to learn lessons and implement recommendations. It is also fair to say that the report records a number of weaknesses, such as the need to translate policy into practice. The report makes further recommendations and suggestions for improvements. The chief inspector of constabulary will follow up the forces' reaction to those suggestions in the routine inspections of each force, and there will be follow-up thematic inspections towards the end of 2002.

Those two sets of actions provide a valuable set of practical measures that can be taken over the next few months to advance work in this area. No doubt, in due course, there will be some recommendations from the two Chhokar inquiries that will also help to inform future practice.

11:15

**Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab):** I have a couple of questions. What is the constitutional relationship between the Minister for Justice, the chief constables and police authorities?

**Mr Wallace:** There is a tripartite relationship. Ministers set the framework; we form policies, pass legislation and are responsible for allocating funding. The chief constables are responsible for operational matters. Of course, they are accountable locally to their police authorities. Scottish ministers strongly support those constitutional arrangements.

It is important to emphasise that day-to-day matters are the responsibility of the chief constables. I sometimes receive letters from parliamentary colleagues asking why there are not more policemen policing particular housing estates, but that is a matter for the local chief constable. We provide resources and I meet chief constables regularly. We set the environment. Police race relations are a good example of that, as ministers are sending a clear message about the need to ensure that there are better relationships with Scotland's ethnic minorities. The policies that we set are then carried out by the police.

**Cathy Peattie:** What measures are in place to monitor chief constables' accountability to police authorities?

**Mr Wallace:** HM inspectorate of constabulary has an important role to play. Following on from the Macpherson report, there have been two thematic inspections. There was a thematic inspection on police complaints, and then one on race, which led to the publication of "Without Prejudice?" In thematic inspections, the chief inspector examines a specific issue across Scotland, and measures the extent to which practices have been introduced and policies have been drafted and implemented that would take forward recommendations. In addition, there is the cycle of inspections of individual police forces, which give an opportunity to measure how individual police forces are performing.

As emerged from the thematic report, it is possible to develop performance indicators. Three indicators are currently used: the number of racist incidents that are reported; recruitment, retention and progress of people from our ethnic minority communities; and the level of complaints about racist behaviour. The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and Her Majesty's chief inspector are discussing the development of a number of other performance indicators on race matters, which will clearly allow benchmarking of the progress that is made.

**Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD):**

You mentioned the gap between policy and practice, which is highlighted in the HMIC report. Do you think that there is such a gap? If so, in what key areas is there a gap? What can be done to take what you are saying at a political level and we are saying at a parliamentary level about everybody in Scotland having the same rights under the law and about stamping out prejudice right through to the police forces and the behaviour of individual policemen? If you believe that there is a gap between policy and practice, where do you think that it is most problematic at the moment?

**Mr Wallace:** The report identifies that there is a gap between policy and practice—we would be complacent if we did not recognise that. A fair comment is that there is a strong commitment by chief constables to develop policies, which they have been doing as guidance manuals have been produced. It is a question of implementing and delivering that and ensuring that it is pushed down to the grass-roots level. There is no formal proposal to impose sanctions, but the inspection process is an important one. The forces know that they will be regularly inspected and measured on these important issues.

I have with me some examples of things that are being done practically to address the issue. I have the Lothian and Borders police card, "Rooting Out Racism", which is carried by constables: it reminds them of the Macpherson definition of a racist incident and gives them an aide-mémoire when they come across what might be thought of as a racist incident. I also have a card that Fife constabulary has issued, which is slightly different but is on a similar principle.

Those practical measures are being taken to try to ensure that the good intent is filtered through. Training is another vital issue, in which the steering group has taken considerable interest. We held one of our meetings at Tulliallan and one of the members of the group spent some time on a training course. The importance of training cannot be overemphasised.

**Mrs Smith:** Would that be training for existing officers and new recruits?

**Mr Wallace:** Yes.

**Mrs Smith:** Are you saying that the forces will be inspected in the usual way and that this issue will be specifically measured and examined, but there will be no sanctions if a force does not come up to par?

**Mr Wallace:** There are no sanctions; there is not a process of fining. However, there will not only be the regular force inspections. As I indicated in my opening remarks, a further thematic inspection, which will specifically consider the race issue, will be completed by the end of 2002. Performance

indicators, which are currently being worked up, will give us benchmarks against which we can measure the progress that is being made.

**Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP):** The inspection team found evidence that some forces had, if you like, cobbled together an action plan prior to the inspection. It is good that the inspection team did not fall for that. I know from working in social work that action plans were often cobbled together before inspections, but I am concerned about it. What action has been taken to ensure that a real strategic approach is now being taken by the forces that were identified as cobbling something together for the benefit of the inspection team?

**Mr Wallace:** I am pleased that you acknowledge that the wool was not pulled over the eyes of the inspectorate. That indicates that we have, in the chief inspector and his team, people who are independent of the forces and who will go into a force and be robust and thorough in their investigation.

ACPOS published the "Racial Diversity Strategy" in March of last year. That document is indicative of the commitment of the Scottish police service to fight against racism. The strategy was developed and in August of last year, in consultation with the working group, ACPOS produced the "Racial Diversity Guidance Manual", which gives detailed practical advice on a range of issues that arose from the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report, for example, about the reporting and recording of racist incidents, investigation of racist crime, training and fair practice during staff appraisal.

Those issues are all included in the guidance, and the group had serious input into it. That guidance has been agreed and adopted by ACPOS. It is up to each chief constable in individual force areas to take that guidance and work up plans. Different forces are at different stages of development, but it is being implemented in each force area. I repeat that we have an inspectorate. Kay Ullrich indicated that it is a thorough inspectorate. Police forces know that this is a key issue on which they will be inspected. That is now being taken forward.

The inspectorate found a glass that you could say either was half empty or half full. It is important to acknowledge the work that has been done. It is equally important to acknowledge the work that needs to be done. However, it is a glass that is filling up, rather than one that has been drained.

**Kay Ullrich:** Surely it would have been better if individual forces had been identified. Why was the report not more open and frank?

**Mr Wallace:** That is a good question, and it is one that I asked myself. If you read the report, you will see that forces are identified as A, B, C and D.

I raised that issue. It is nothing to do specifically with the thematic inspection on race; rather it is an approach that generally is used in thematic inspections to encourage openness and frankness by individual police officers—we are not talking about the top chief constables and superintendents. This approach is used so that officers feel they can speak their mind in confidence to visiting inspectors without the fear that there will be some comeback. When I asked Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary about this approach, he said that from experience he had found that it is one that aids frankness and candour.

I think I am right in saying that the inspection of Lothian and Borders police is about to start and it will measure performance in Lothian and the Borders. However, in terms of thematic reports, the approach has been one of referring to forces A, B, C, D and E.

**Kay Ullrich:** But surely it would be possible to protect the anonymity of individual police officers and still name individual forces?

**Mr Wallace:** The chief inspector of constabulary has made a judgment. The approach is one that he has found valuable. Kay Ullrich indicated that he was doing a thorough job. As I said, I have questioned the practice of referring to police forces as A, B, C and D. I am satisfied by his judgment that that is the best approach.

You say that anonymity could still be safeguarded. That might not be the case. If you referred to X constabulary—let us say Grampian for the sake of argument, but I am not in any way singling out Grampian; I am just using it because it is the first one that came into my head—and a particular thing was mentioned, it might easily be attributable if it were known that the chief inspector of constabulary spoke to a group of constables in a particular police station or unit. On the occasion of inspections, we want police officers at junior ranks to feel able to say what is going on on the ground, because that is how policy-practice gaps are identified.

**The Convener:** I will let Cathy Peattie in on that point, because she has been waiting for a while.

**Cathy Peattie:** You say that the glass is half full. We are going along in a positive manner, and that is helpful, but I am interested in a reality check. It is important when looking at performance indicators, and when inspections are taking place, that there is a way of checking with stakeholders that what police forces say is true, and of finding out how they feel. Sometimes reports say that everything is wonderful, but when you speak to people at a grass-roots level they tell you something quite different. Is there a system by which stakeholders can be involved and say what

it is like in their areas?

**Mr Wallace:** Yes. In the case of this report, the chief inspector of constabulary and his inspection team talked to community groups and individuals. That was an important part of the report. They were encouraged to be open and frank with the inspectors, without the concern that they might be identified. An important issue that the chief inspector identifies in the report is measuring each force's level of community involvement, and its ability to consult. That is on the agenda. We recognise that there is some way to go, but it is one of the key issues that is being addressed.

11:30

**Cathy Peattie:** That is very welcome. Will that be one of the performance indicators?

**Mr Wallace:** The current position is that the chief inspector and ACPOS are considering what the performance indicators will be. It would be premature for me to say that that will definitely be one of the indicators, but it is certainly on the agenda.

We hope that the indicators will be in place to start on 1 April 2001. Some people may say that there will not be a proper opportunity for wider consultation on that and I accept that that might be a criticism. I hope that people agree that it is more important that we get on with it and start measuring against those performance indicators. In the course of the year there will be opportunities for consideration and consultation and for comments to be made on the usefulness of particular indicators. It is important that we start measuring and get some figures, rather than just talk about it.

**Cathy Peattie:** Do you agree that in a stakeholder approach people need to be on board fairly early? It is too late to ask the community what it thinks if we wait until things are in place.

**Mr Wallace:** I agree with the general proposition that it is important that communities are involved. When the chief inspector carried out his thematic inspection on police complaints, he found it difficult to get feedback. That was better this time round. However, no one is under the illusion that there is not still considerable scope for improvement. That is one of the issues that each force must consider; how it can improve its links with the community and how there can be better liaison. I want to make it clear that we should not just sit around and talk about it. I think that we are saying the same thing.

**Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I am always bothered by the idea of professions being self-regulated or self-policed. I know that the procurator fiscal service deals with racial

complaints of a criminal nature, but what happens if a racial complaint is made against the police, yet is not deemed to be of a criminal nature?

**Mr Wallace:** That is one of the performance indicators that I have mentioned—levels of complaints about allegations of racist behaviour within the police. Members will be aware that once the local system has been exhausted, complaints can be considered generally by the inspectorate, which includes lay inspectors. I have also made it clear—as did the programme for government that was published at the end of January—that in the spring we will issue a consultation document on police complaints, which will include an independent element. That is work in progress. The impetus for that came from the Macpherson report, but it applies beyond questions of race.

**Linda Fabiani:** At the moment is that largely down to the chief inspector of each force?

**Mr Wallace:** At the moment it is undertaken by the chief constable. Each force has procedures involving the chief constable. I am racking my brains and I think that there is a role for the police authority in overseeing the complaints system.

**Linda Fabiani:** I am interested that you intend to consult following some of the models from overseas that have independent commissions, which are included in "Without Prejudice?"

**Mr Wallace:** Yes. We have been examining the experience in other countries. Indeed, I took time out of my holiday in New Zealand to go and talk to the police complaints commissioner there.

**Linda Fabiani:** So you contributed to the report.

I would like to go back to a point made by Kay Ullrich. I, too, have a problem with the anonymity question in relation to complaints about racism. I worry about the self-policing issue—that the chief inspector can decide that it is in the interests of his policemen that they should have such a level of anonymity.

**Mr Wallace:** The consultation will be about complaints about the police and it will stand on its own. However, it cannot be divorced from other matters; there are complaints about the police that go beyond the question of race.

I am landing the law officers in it, but perhaps one of them would like to respond to the question on the Race Relations Act 1976. Perhaps not.

**Mrs Smith:** The report, "Without Prejudice?", makes 18 recommendations and 15 suggestions for action. I am interested in the gap between policy and practice. How can we ensure that those recommendations and suggestions are developed into action? How can we make that process politically accountable? What politically accountable and enforceable guarantees are there



that those recommendations and suggestions will be implemented?

As with most things in life—particularly politics—pursuing the programme for action will involve costs. What are those costs? As the budget process for 2002-03 has begun, what additional resources will be put in by the Executive to support the implementation of the report's 33 recommendations and suggestions?

**Mr Wallace:** The recommendations and suggestions are directed at different levels. Some are directed at chief constables and others have an element of Scottish Executive responsibility, although they are also directed at chief constables. I could go into some that are the responsibility of the Scottish Executive, but I am accountable for them to Parliament and, no doubt, to the Equal Opportunities Committee. The Justice 1 Committee and the Justice 2 Committee might also wish to go through the recommendations and suggestions to see how we are measuring up.

On the recommendations and suggestions that are being implemented at police force level, I indicated that not only will each force be inspected, but a further thematic inspection will take place and performance indicators will be worked up.

During its lifetime, the Stephen Lawrence working group will also have regard to how those issues are being developed. The chief inspector of constabulary is a member of that working group and has co-operated by keeping us informed about the progress of his inspection. Mr Taylor gave the working group a presentation on his report at its most recent meeting, when it held a full session on the report. The working group has a keen interest in following up those issues.

There are a number of ways in which performance will be measured. I do not pretend that that should make us complacent, but I do not think that we will be short of ways in which performance can be measured.

It is important that I remind the committee that there has been a substantial increase in the resources that have been made available for policing in Scotland—both resources that are channelled through the local authorities and those for policing issues for which central Government is responsible. I think that I am right to say that we met in full the revenue requests from chief constables for the forthcoming financial year. The first question that we were asked was about the constitutional position. The answer is that we make the resources available. The chief constables submitted their bids and we met those bids in full for the forthcoming financial year. Thereafter, it is up to them how they deploy those resources, but they are aware of the importance

that is attached to implementing the recommendations.

**Mrs Smith:** You say that you will not be complacent about those issues, and it is obvious that measuring performance is important.

The Scottish Parliament information centre's research note states:

"Police recorded 2,242 racist incidents in Scotland in 1999/2000 compared with 1,271 the year before".

My arithmetic is not all that great, but we are heading towards almost a doubling of reported incidents. There might be all sorts of reasons for that; I would be interested to hear the minister's reasons. I take on board his comments about the resourcing of the police service—which were self-evident—but given that worrying statistic and in the absence of ring fencing, is the minister sure that the Executive is giving chief constables the tools to do the job in the face of a level of racist incidents that appears to be growing?

11:45

**Mr Wallace:** I believe that we are. As I indicated earlier, we have given the chief constables what they asked for for the forthcoming financial year. It is difficult to speculate about why the level is increasing. One obvious explanation would be that there are more racist incidents; another might be that reporting of such incidents has increased. We have, from the Macpherson report, a definition of a racist incident. That information is being better disseminated—the cards that I showed to the committee have that definition on them, for instance—and it might be that there is improved identification of racist incidents. Another possible explanation might be that there is a greater willingness among the victims of racial crime or harassment to report those crimes. One of the reasons why we want to have better figures in this area is that we want to benchmark and understand how trends develop.

The same situation exists in relation to domestic abuse. One of the reasons why there has been an increase in domestic abuse figures is that more people are willing to report the crime. I repeat; no one is sitting around patting their own back and assuming that we are getting everything right just because people are now coming forward to report those crimes. It might be that there has been an increase in the number of racist crimes. I assure the committee that the Scottish Executive is committed to tackling racist crime with vigour and, from the meetings that I have had with chief constables, I can assure the committee that they have a serious intent to root out racist crime and that that intent gives leadership to their forces.

**The Convener:** I will allow one more question on this subject before we move on.

**Kay Ullrich:** I wanted to pick up on the issue of under-reporting. Mr Wallace mentioned the likelihood of under-reporting of racist incidents. From talking to groups and carrying out investigations, is there any evidence about the extent of under-reporting? I know that that is difficult to answer because, if people do not report the crimes, it will be hard to know that there has been a crime.

**Mr Wallace:** For obvious reasons, I cannot quantify the extent of under-reporting, but the feedback that we have received indicates that it exists. People in the working group have also raised that. We must address the reasons for under-reporting and we must ensure that people are clear about what constitutes a racist crime. I remind the committee that a racist incident is an incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person. That is a useful definition that will be widely circulated.

**Kay Ullrich:** Is that definition being adopted by all agencies?

**Mr Wallace:** It ought to be adopted by all agencies, not by only the police. We are trying to introduce the idea of third-party reporting. Many police forces are trying to put in place mechanisms that would allow other parties to be the recipients of reports of such crimes. The police have not been made aware of all the racist incidents that there have been and, even although the evidence of under-reporting is anecdotal, it is so widespread that we must address the matter.

**Kay Ullrich:** Have you any evidence about what prevents people from reporting the incidents?

**Mr Wallace:** I do not want to speculate about that. Sometimes, people might be frightened that, if they report the crime, there will be further reprisals. People might wonder whether anyone will pay any attention to them if they report such a crime.

**Kay Ullrich:** Perhaps there is a perception that the police would not acknowledge it.

**Mr Wallace:** That could be the perception. There is widespread recognition of the need to increase our ethnic minority communities' confidence in the police. The police are conscious of the need to do that and are addressing the matter. It is important that the links are improved between stakeholders—the community groups—and the police.

**Kay Ullrich:** Ethnic minorities must also be encouraged to join the police force.

**Mr Wallace:** Very much so. One of the recommendations that the Executive is considering is that there should be a national recruitment campaign to encourage people from ethnic minority communities to join the police. We

should encourage people from ethnic minority communities to view the police as a worthwhile career.

**Kay Ullrich:** The police forces should reflect the communities in which they work.

**Mr Wallace:** Indeed—that is accepted.

**Linda Fabiani:** I am laughing because Kay Ullrich kept asking the questions that I wanted to ask. Every time, she beat me to it. I would like the minister to be a little more specific. Like him, I think that the definition of racist crime is excellent. The minister also mentioned the analysis of third party reporting and said that each individual police force was examining it. Is that analysis being carried out in a co-ordinated fashion?

**Mr Wallace:** That is one of the issues that the steering group has raised. The view is that there must be co-ordination. However, what might be appropriate in Northern Constabulary might not be appropriate in Strathclyde and different methods will work in different parts of Strathclyde.

**Linda Fabiani:** Have guidelines been issued about how that analysis should be carried out, so that there can be an overview throughout the country?

**Mr Wallace:** I am racking my brains—that issue was discussed at length at the most recent meeting of the steering group. I cannot remember whether detailed guidelines have been produced. Perhaps I can give the convener a detailed response on that issue.

**The Convener:** Thank you, minister. Do you have any other questions, Linda?

**Linda Fabiani:** Yes, on recruitment. The review of the action plan was quite scathing. It noted that, although 1.6 per cent of the population are from ethnic minorities, only 0.15 per cent of the police officers are. It is fine to say that there are targets to meet, but this country has failed abysmally in trying to achieve targets on representation in the police force. Is there a national plan, or are guidelines in place that individual forces can use to assist them in recruiting to represent communities, as Kay Ullrich said that they should?

**Mr Wallace:** There is no national target, as such. We expect each police force area to indicate its ethnic minority community in proportion—

**Linda Fabiani:** Excuse me, minister—I did not mean a national target. I meant some kind of national guideline to assist regional police forces to meet their targets.

**Mr Wallace:** We are trying to ensure that each police force is aware of its target—the trouble with such words is that they might be interpreted as having implications that do not necessarily exist. We will publish and make clear what percentage

of the population in each area is made up of ethnic minority communities, and we will compare that with the reflection of the ethnic minority communities in the police force's strength. I know that the chief inspector is anxious that—the more that we pursue that initiative and develop it—the process should be carried out through applications rather than recruitment. It should be based on how many people come to the starting gate, as it were. There is far more work to be done and I am not shying away from that.

If members have “The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: an Action Plan for Scotland” before them, they will see, on page 39, that there is broad support for setting targets in recruitment, retention and progression, not only in the police but throughout the public sector. In the ACPOS guidance manual, there is advice for individual forces on the use of targets for recruitment, retention and progression. A national policy is being developed by ACPOS on that. As I said, there is a recommendation on whether there should be a national recruitment pitch.

**Linda Fabiani:** That is great—I do not doubt for a minute that the intentions are honourable. However, it worries me that, although positive targets were introduced some years ago for the recruitment of women into the police force, examination of the number of women who go beyond constable level and move up into the higher ranks shows that the record is appalling. I hate to think that, again, we would be recruiting people who are representative of their communities, but that we would be keeping them at that low level in the police force. Will there be mechanisms to ensure equality of opportunity for promotion?

**Mr Wallace:** Yes. If Linda Fabiani noted what I said, I did not talk only about recruitment, but about recruitment, retention and progression. The three issues are important. I take Linda Fabiani's point that it is not just a matter of getting people to the starting gate.

**Linda Fabiani:** I add a note of caution in that, despite the great intentions, the initiative has not worked for women. We must ensure that it works this time.

**Mr Wallace:** I do not think that anybody is pretending that the system of recruitment, retention and progression works at the moment. We all accept that more work must be done and Linda Fabiani is right to flag that up. Our success or otherwise will be measured in the years to come. I assure the committee that we are aware of the issue and that we are willing to address it.

I return to guidance on third-party reporting, which is in the ACPOS guidance manual. Unfortunately, the note that I have been given is

like a doctor's prescription. ACPOS is preparing detailed guidance for the individual forces on the back of the work that has been produced in the manual.

**Linda Fabiani:** I am so pleased.

**Mr Wallace:** Let us hope that the guidance is clearer than the note.

**Mrs Smith:** I should perhaps ask a question about literacy in our schools.

I will ask Mr Wallace—wearing his Deputy First Minister's hat, rather than just his Minister for Justice's hat—a question. Does the Executive consider that every aspect of public life in Scotland has adequate mechanisms for independent redress in cases of complaints about racial bias? Today, we are talking specifically about racism within the justice system, but we should examine the whole spectrum of public life. You talked about recruitment, retention and progression, not only in the police force but in other areas of the public sector. What is the Executive doing to advance the wider agenda?

**Mr Wallace:** As Margaret Smith knows, equal opportunities is a foundation stone of the policies not only of the Parliament, but of the Executive; it is central to our overall activities. We have an equality unit and, on race, the working group that I have been chairing has specifically pursued the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. Jackie Baillie has chaired a parallel group, which has considered racial equality issues in the wider public service domain.

I do not want to sit here and pretend that we have got it all right, but a sufficient number of initiatives have been taken and commitments in principle given to show that we are not slouching. There is a strong commitment from the Executive to equal opportunities and we are taking several practical and specific steps to drive that forward.

**The Convener:** I thank the witnesses for coming this morning. The committee will obviously have you along again to discuss the Chhokar case—possibly before the inquiry is published, or after it is published.

**Mr Wallace:** Thank you very much.

**The Convener:** Before we go into private session, I thank the interpreter for translating the proceedings of the meeting today. I hope that we can have that done again in future—accessibility is one of the founding principles of the Parliament. I am glad that the Equal Opportunities Committee is among the first to use simultaneous translation.

12:00

*Meeting continued in private until 12:15.*



Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the archive edition should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, 375 High Street, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

**Tuesday 6 March 2001**

Members who want reprints of their speeches (within one month of the date of publication) may obtain request forms and further details from the Central Distribution Office, the Document Supply Centre or the Official Report.

#### PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

##### DAILY EDITIONS

*Single copies: £5*

*Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £500*

The archive edition of the *Official Report* of meetings of the Parliament, written answers and public meetings of committees will be published on CD-ROM.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, compiled by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, contains details of past and forthcoming business and of the work of committees and gives general information on legislation and other parliamentary activity.

*Single copies: £3.75*

*Special issue price: £5*

*Annual subscriptions: £150.00*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

*Single copies: £3.75*

*Annual subscriptions: £150.00*

Standing orders will be accepted at the Document Supply Centre.

Published in Edinburgh by The Stationery Office Limited and available from:

**The Stationery Office Bookshop**  
71 Lothian Road  
Edinburgh EH3 9AZ  
0131 228 4181 Fax 0131 622 7017

**The Stationery Office Bookshops at:**  
123 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PQ  
Tel 020 7242 6393 Fax 020 7242 6394  
68-69 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AD  
Tel 0121 236 9696 Fax 0121 236 9699  
33 Wine Street, Bristol BS1 2BQ  
Tel 01179 264306 Fax 01179 294515  
9-21 Princess Street, Manchester M60 8AS  
Tel 0161 834 7201 Fax 0161 833 0634  
16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD  
Tel 028 9023 8451 Fax 028 9023 5401  
The Stationery Office Oriol Bookshop,  
18-19 High Street, Cardiff CF1 2BZ  
Tel 029 2039 5548 Fax 029 2038 4347

**The Stationery Office Scottish Parliament Documentation**  
Helpline may be able to assist with additional information  
on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament,  
their availability and cost:

**Telephone orders and inquiries**  
0870 606 5566

**Fax orders**  
0870 606 5588

**The Scottish Parliament Shop**  
George IV Bridge  
EH99 1SP  
Telephone orders 0131 348 5412

sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

www.scottish.parliament.uk

**Accredited Agents**  
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers