



**TRAFFIC CONTROL
WARDEN IT BE NICE**

The popular perception of traffic wardens being shouted at by angry motorists has been turned on its head after an allegation from a north-London resident that she was physically threatened by a local traffic warden. Jane O'Rourke claims that when she complained about getting a ticket for her black BMW – which had a resident's permit and was parked in a bay reserved for house removers who had long since gone – the warden demanded angrily: "Do you want a visit to the hospital?" A spokeswoman for Camden Council said: "We are eager to get a formal complaint from Ms O'Rourke so we can make a full investigation."



**ALCOHOL
COME OFF IT**

A new cream liqueur called X-plode, which comes packaged in a large sperm-shaped container with a label urging consumers to "Keep 'em coming", has upset the drinks industry watchdog. The Portman Group, headed by Lord Condon, former Met Police commissioner, said that the 15 per cent alcohol by volume drink was in breach of its code of conduct by encouraging the "irresponsible or immoderate consumption" of alcohol. Retailers have been asked not to stock the product.



Stop-and-search powers have been long criticised

Photo: Report Digital

THE END FOR STOP AND SEARCH? TOP COP SPEAKS OUT

BY MAX WATSON

One of London's top police chiefs has suggested the controversial power of stop-and-search should be restricted to officers who have received specific additional training in its use – or even abolished altogether.

The radical changes were proposed by Commander Stephen Allen, head of the Metropolitan Police Diversity Directorate, at a recent conference.

He told delegates that the four million stop-and-searches carried out each year were seen by many as, "the most visible and tangible abuse of power by the agents of the state visited on minority communities."

While acknowledging stop-and-search is a "fundamental tool", he said people on the receiving end often felt there was "a violation" – and suggested that police officers should undergo a training and accreditation procedure before being given authorisation to use it.

"We need to think about whether stop-and-search needs to exist at all, or rethink the way we do it," he concluded.

A spokesman for the Association Of Chief Police

Officers (ACPO) confirmed Cdr Allen's proposal is currently being considered along with other ideas regarding stop-and-search.

Ray Powell, president of the National Black Police Association, told *The Big Issue* he would support the idea of an accreditation scheme "if there was a proper consultation of all the relevant bodies involved".

But he does not believe stop-and-search powers should cease to exist. "If stop-and-search is used correctly, it is a useful power for the police. The main problem is the disproportionality of ethnic minorities being stopped," he said.

At the time of the Macpherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence case, black people were five times more likely to be stopped than whites. The latest statistics are even more disturbing, indicating that blacks are now eight times more likely to be stopped in general, and 27 times more likely to be stopped if in a vehicle.

"Stop-and-search should not be abolished," said Max Edelstyn, senior policy officer for criminal justice at the Commission For Racial Equality, "but the use of stop-and-search should be

monitored effectively by supervising and senior officers."

Edelstyn said he would need to see more details of any accreditation scheme before backing it. He added: "Training is no easy answer in itself. The police have been trained in the past but that hasn't really changed the way stop-and-search is carried out."

Milena Buyum, a co-ordinator for the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR), noted:

"Recommendation 61, which aims to make police more accountable in stop-and-search, has taken four years to get to the point of being piloted. The priority should be getting that fully implemented."

Under Recommendation 61 – currently being piloted in 7 areas of Britain – police must fill out a form every time they stop and search someone. They must detail the reason for the stop, the ethnic origin of the person stopped as they define it and the outcome of the search.

Abdi Yusuf and Michael-Samuel Osei-Akoto, 18, of Stockwell, south London, and members of the Youth Council in Lambeth, are putting across their views on use of the power in a police training video.

Yusuf said of Cdr Allen's proposal: "As long as the person trains in the area they're going to work in, I think it would definitely be positive."

He concluded: "The police are really aggressive and sometimes they humiliate people. We want police officers to introduce more politeness, more understanding."