

## **The Inspector's dilemma**

### **Abstract**

Deals with institutional racism in the police service

### **Key words**

Diversity, Discrimination, ethnic minorities, Police

### **The case**

A newly promoted inspector of police is appointed to a post in an urban police station. The inspector is a graduate and subscribes wholeheartedly to the police force's adoption of 'Fair treatment and Equal opportunities for all'. In the new job, the inspector has the management of a shift of 10 constables and two sergeants. Both the latter are older than the inspector and have been police officers for longer. About half the constables have served for longer, but the other five include two probationer-constables. Each of these probationer-constables is being mentored by a long-serving constable. Shifts work closely together. There is a culture of mutual support.

The bulk of the area's older inhabitants are migrants from the Indian sub-continent or from the Caribbean, though the younger people are likely to have been born in the UK. All the officers in the station are white. The inspector notices that dismissive, derogatory remarks about ethnic groups are part of the common currency of the station. The superintendent in charge of the station is within five years of retirement and is proud of being 'of the old school'.

### **Discussion points**

- Discuss the challenges, which face the inspector, or any manager in a similar situation.
- What general principles do you think apply to such cases?

### **Tutor's notes**

The case can be used to discuss the concept of institutional racism that emerged from the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. It raises the problem of the cultural barriers that may exist that inhibit the development of ethical organisations.