

# Bhatt Murphy Solicitors

## PRESS RELEASE

### Commissioner finally apologises for fist bump stop and search in February 2018

#### STATEMENT TO THE PRESS 9 December 2022

On 8 December 2022 - on day 4 of the 5 day trial of a claim brought by Liam and Dijon Joseph for false imprisonment, assault and race discrimination - the Commissioner dramatically conceded terms of settlement, agreeing to compensate the brothers, apologising in open court and re-stating his commitment to addressing the problem of how stop and search affects black Londoners.

The Commissioner's case was that the brothers had been targeted for a search on the basis of nothing more than that Deptford and its surrounding areas were said to have high rates of drugs related crime, and because an officer saw the men touch hands in the street – the fist bump. In fact the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) found that less than 4% of crimes in that area were drug related and it was the brothers' case that the only reason the fist bump was seen as sufficiently suspicious to justify 6 officers apprehending them in the street was because they are young black men. The Commissioner continued to deny this, notwithstanding that more than a quarter of the people stopped by the officer who initiated the stop in the previous 6 months were black, where they only make up 13% of the London population, and notwithstanding the wider picture, where black people are 7 times more likely than white people to be stopped and searched, 8 times more likely to be "compliant handcuffed" and where black children are 8 times more likely to be strip-searched than white children. Almost 80% of all searches yield nothing.

Notably, the IOPC did not uphold the Joseph's complaint, on any of its grounds, leaving these proceedings as their only route to accountability.

Liam Joseph had this comment to make: *"We have waited almost 5 years for this apology from the police and for my brother and I to finally feel fully vindicated. We brought this case not just for us but for our community: to show that you can and should stand up against the police treating young black men like criminals for no reason".*

Carolynn Gallwey of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors acted for the brothers. She added this: *"This case joins a growing list of successful claims against the Commissioner by young black men who have been unfairly targeted by police over many years using stop and search powers. Well-meaning words are not enough: the Commissioner now needs to openly acknowledge that stop and search is a wasteful and racially divisive policing tactic that needs total review and reform."*

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