

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Friday 13 December 2024**

**IOPC FAILS CHILD X, HIS FAMILY AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN HACKNEY**

On 13 December 2024, the IOPC announced that – following their 14 month long investigation into the Metropolitan and City of London Police arising from the case of Child X – they had concluded that “*the service provided to Child X and his family by the police was acceptable*”.

Child X, who is black and was 13 at the time, was playing outside his home with his younger sister in Hackney in broad daylight on 19 July 2023 with a brightly coloured plastic water pistol. A uniformed Metropolitan Police officer, reported what he saw as a potential firearms incident. Child X was then apprehended by armed police officers who knocked him off his bicycle by driving into him, pointed their weapons at him and then arrested him, placing him in handcuffs. Child X was de-arrested at the scene, once his mother arrived and challenged what was happening.

In dismissing concerns raised by Child X’s mother that the actions of the police officers involved were influenced by his race, the IOPC said they had relied upon there being “*no evidence of overt comments...or evidence of a perception of discrimination*”.

**Child X’s mother said:**

*From the very day of this horrific incident, it was clear to me that the police would not have treated my son in the way that they did if he had been a white 13 year old boy.*

*When the local Commander James Conway met with me shortly after the incident, even he admitted that his son would not have been treated by the police in the same way.*

*From the outset, I made it clear that I expected any investigation into the incident to look at the very obvious role that my son’s race played in the way in which he was treated by the police.*

*Unfortunately, the IOPC have shown themselves to be completely incapable of understanding what race discrimination is and how it actually operates in the way that black children are treated by the police.*

*The outcome of their investigation is consistent with my experience of the IOPC throughout my dealings with them. At first, they didn’t want to investigate my concerns at all. They only agreed to investigate after they were publicly embarrassed in the media and had to respond to the widespread support my family has received in the local community and from parents around the country.*

*Even then, it seems the IOPC have simply gone through the motions of an investigation, with the inevitable outcome they have now presented to me.*

## Bhatt Murphy Solicitors

*Their unwillingness to do their job has been extremely disappointing, and it does nothing to inspire any confidence in them or in the police.*

### **Catriona McGregor, solicitor for Child X and his family said:**

*The IOPC have shown themselves yet again to be unfit for purpose. It would appear that the IOPC is afflicted with the same sickness that we see time and time again in the Metropolitan Police: an inability or unwillingness to understand how race operates as a factor in the perception and assessment of risk when police officers exercise their powers against black children.*

*That sickness was at the heart of the police's conduct towards Child X in July 2023, just as it is at the heart of the failure that we see in the IOPC and the outcome of its investigation into the incident.*

*The implications are all the more stark in circumstances where the IOPC has identified race discrimination as one of its areas for thematic focus, with the stated aim of helping to "tackle the issues widening the confidence gap between communities and policing".<sup>1</sup>*

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Child X's mother is understandably anxious to protect Child X, his siblings and their privacy. She requests that there should be no speculation as to their identities, and she regrets that she is unavailable for further comment at this stage.
- Her formal complaint about the actions of the police officers involved in the incident was referred by the Metropolitan Police to the IOPC on two separate occasions in 2023. On both occasions, the IOPC refused to take responsibility for any investigation of the matter, and only did so three months later, on 20 October 2023, after national press coverage of the incident finally compelled them to act.
- A copy of the IOPC's investigation report has not been provided to the family, so they have not had access to the underlying information considered by the IOPC when coming to their decision.

Child X and his family are represented by Catriona McGregor of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors, who can be contacted on 0207 729 1115 or [c.mcgregor@bhattmurphy.co.uk](mailto:c.mcgregor@bhattmurphy.co.uk).

Child X and his family are also supported by Lee Jasper of the Alliance for Police Accountability who can be contacted for comment on 07984 181797.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/our-work/key-areas-of-work/race-discrimination>