

Institute of Race Relations Briefing Paper

Race and the Criminal Justice System

26 March 2003

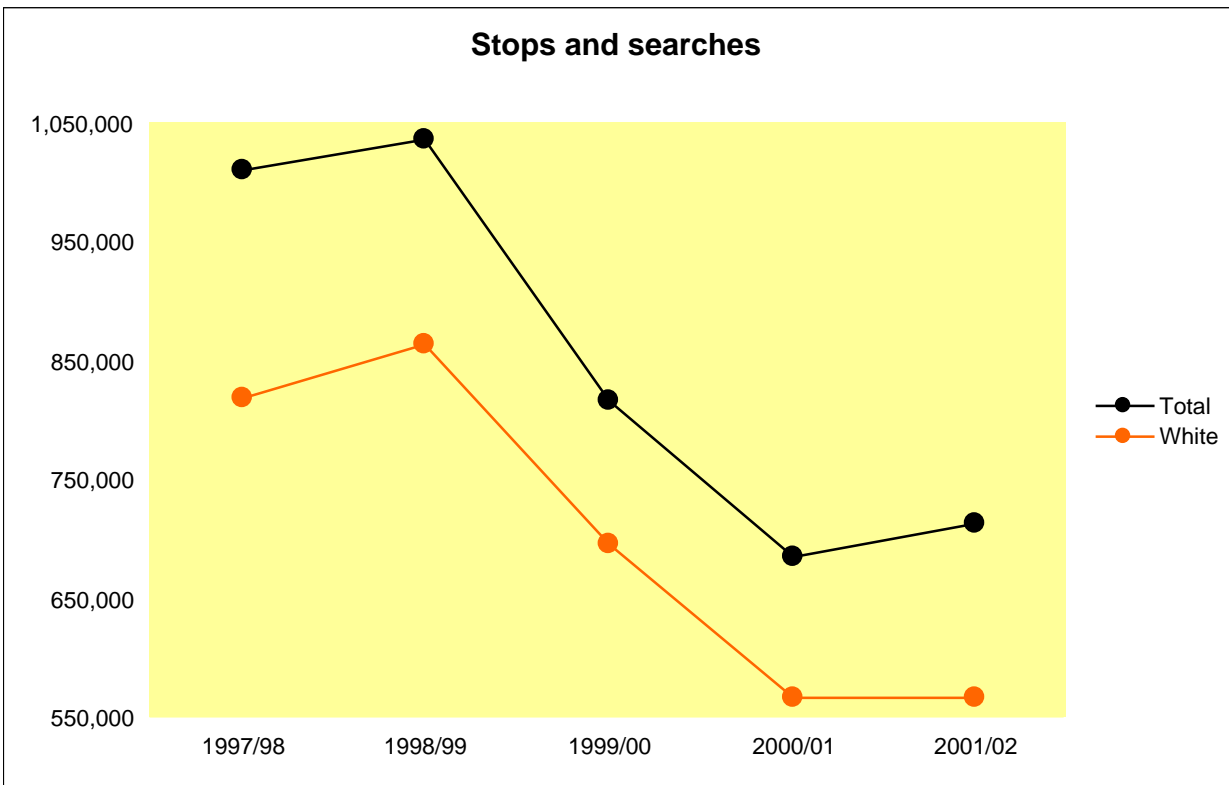
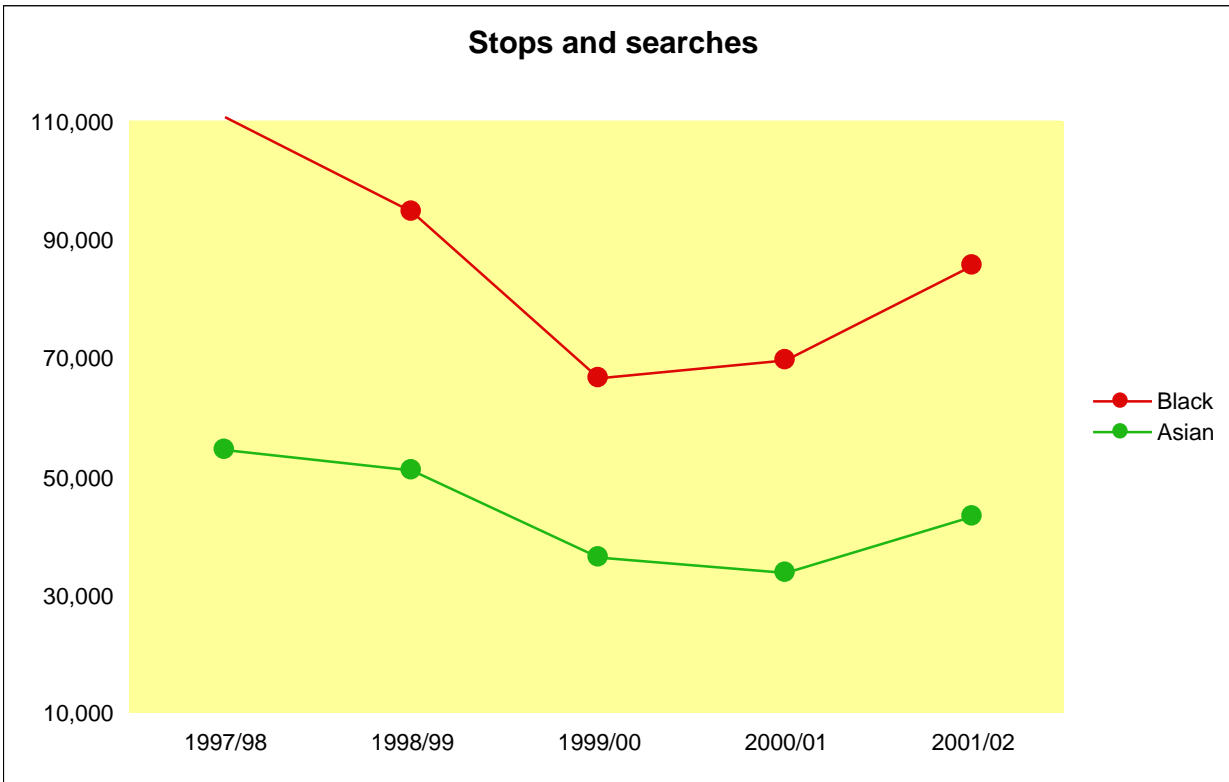
This briefing paper collates and analyses data released by the Home Office from 1999 to 2003 under Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, which requires the secretary of state to publish information on race and the criminal justice system. The information in this document should be read in conjunction with the full data which is available from the Home Office website (www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

Stop and search¹

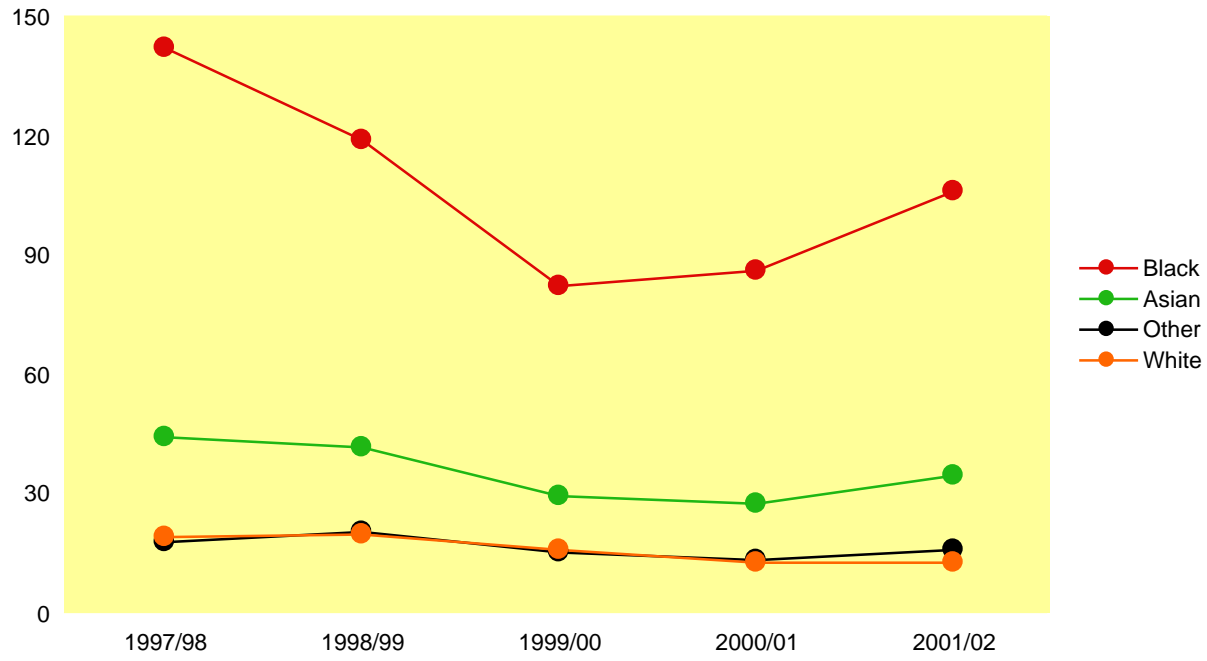
- Black people are now eight times more likely to be stopped and searched than Whites. Asians are two-and-a-half times more likely to be stopped and searched than Whites.
- Over the last two years, while the number of Whites stopped and searched has fallen by 19 per cent, the number of Blacks stopped and searched has increased by 28 per cent.
- Over the last year, the number of Asians stopped and searched has increased by 28 per cent.

The two graphs on page 2 illustrate these trends. The third graph, on page 3, shows the number of stops for different ethnic groups per 1,000 members of the population, giving an indication of the relative likelihood of being stopped.

¹ These figures are based on stops and searches conducted under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and under some other pieces of legislation, in England and Wales. It does not include stops carried out under Section 60 of the Public Order Act 1994. Stops which are considered 'voluntary' and stops which are not followed by a search are also excluded, as are stops under the Road Traffic Act 1988.

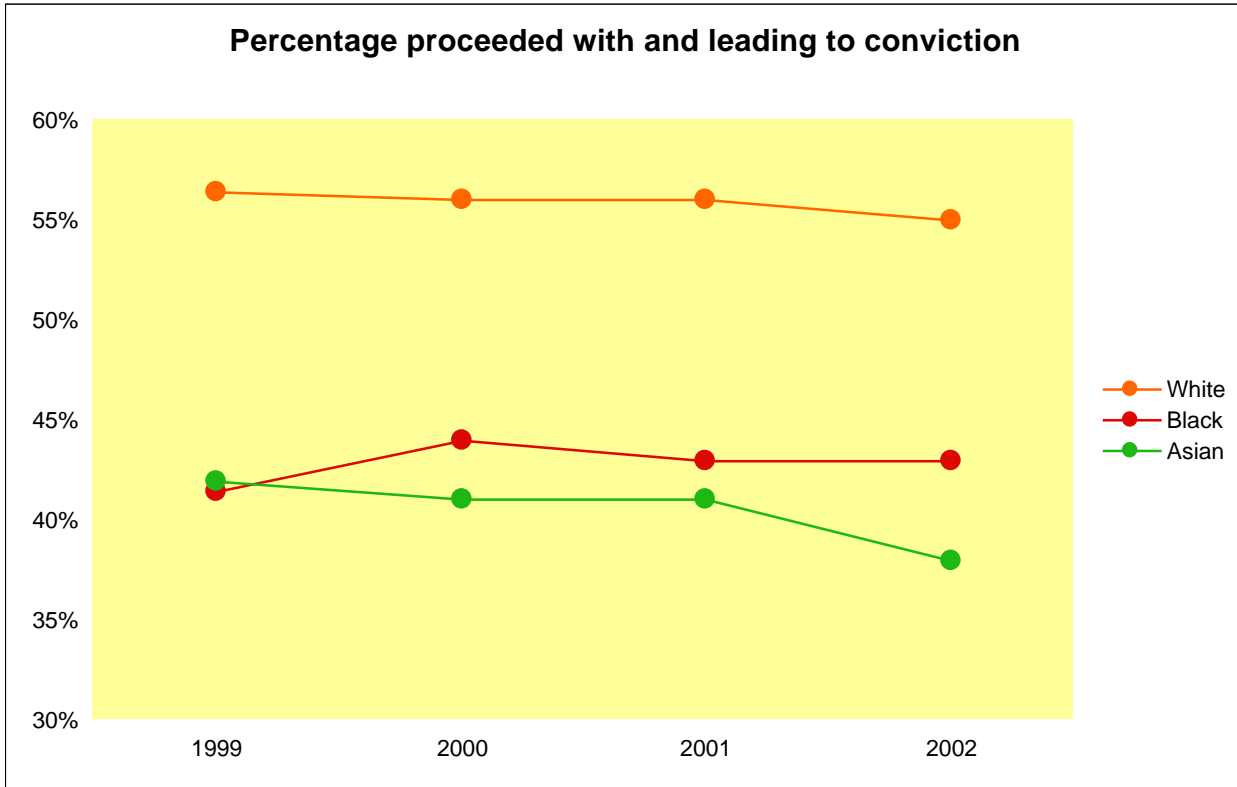


Stops and searches per 1,000 population



Prosecutions and acquittals²

- Of the cases proceeded with by the Crown Prosecution Service at magistrates' courts, the proportion which resulted in a conviction has remained at around 55 per cent for Whites and around 40 per cent for Blacks and Asians over the last four years.



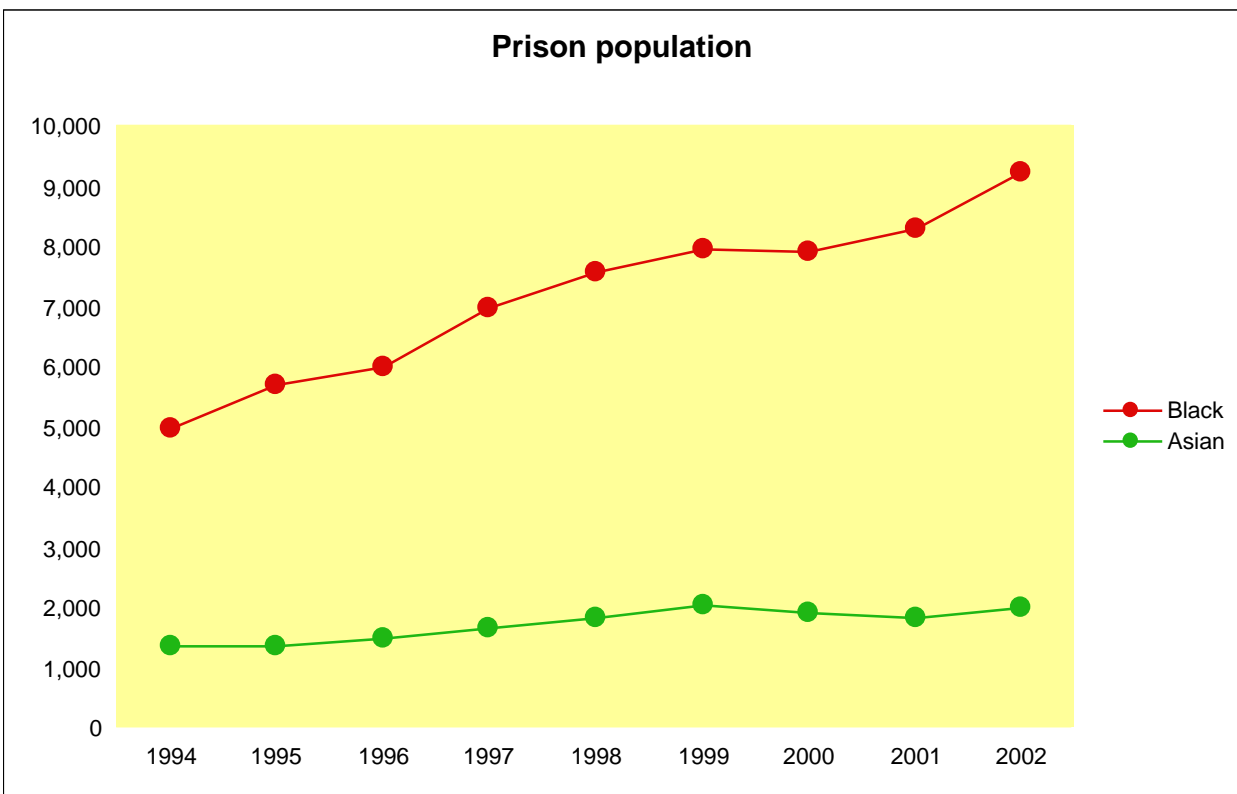
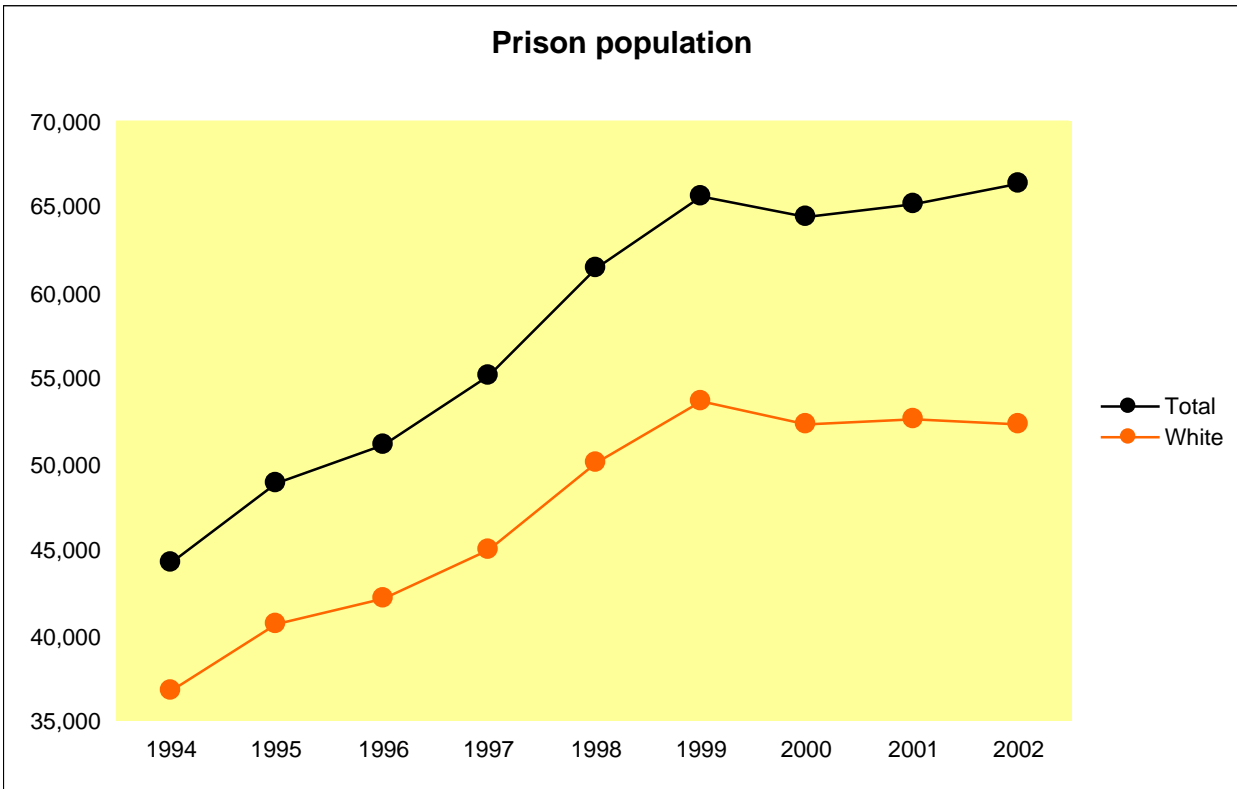
² The data in this section should be treated with caution. It is limited to figures collected in pilot studies in a small number of police forces. In 1999, data was available from just four police forces while in 2002 data was available in eleven. Comparisons over time therefore obscure any differences between police forces.

Imprisonment³

- The number of White people in prison has remained fairly steady over the last four years.
- The number of Black people in prison has risen sharply over the last four years, from 7,946 in 1999 to 9,250 in 2002, an increase of 16 per cent.
- Since 1994, the number of Black people in prison has almost doubled.

The two graphs on page 6 illustrate these trends.

³ The data on the number of people in prison includes both men and women, and includes foreign nationals.



Notes

- 1) The ethnic categories are drawn from those which the police use. Data is based on police officers' visual assessment of a suspect, using four categories (White, Black, Asian and Other). 'Black', in this context, includes those of African and African-Caribbean origin. 'Asian', in this context, includes those of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. 'Other' includes those of Chinese origin.
- 2) The data on the ethnicity of prisoners is determined by a combination of self-assessment by the prisoner and observation by a prison officer.

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