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Police anti-racism document 'gives wrong impression', minister says



| Policing Minister Sarah Jones speaking on BBC Breakfast

Olivia Ireland

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A police anti-racism commitment "gives the wrong impression", Police Minister Sarah Jones has said as forces' chiefs pledge to review the guidance in the wake of the murder of Henry Nowak.

Jones' comments came after bodycam footage shows officers handcuffing the 18-year-old student in Southampton last December as he said "I can't breathe" - after his attacker Vickrum Digwa lied by claiming he was a victim of a racist attack.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) is reviewing a guidance **document from the National Police Chiefs' Council** which says its goal of "producing equality of policing outcomes... does not mean treating everyone 'the same' or being 'colour blind'...".

"This particular document is a sort of values document, it's quite a short document and I don't think it forms the basis of any training or any police activity," Jones told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme.



| The BBC has chosen to remove the sound in parts of this video due to its distressing content

She added: "It is an official NPCC document, yes, and it is being reviewed we think the language is wrong and it gives the wrong impression but I don't think it affects how our training is done.

"People are right to ask questions when they've seen such a horrific incident and we will be listening and learning the lessons and there is a history... of

racism within policing that forms part of the policing picture when you are trained."

Digwa was given a **life sentence** with a minimum of 21 years in prison for stabbing Nowak, from Chafford Hundred in Essex, as he walked back to his student accommodation.

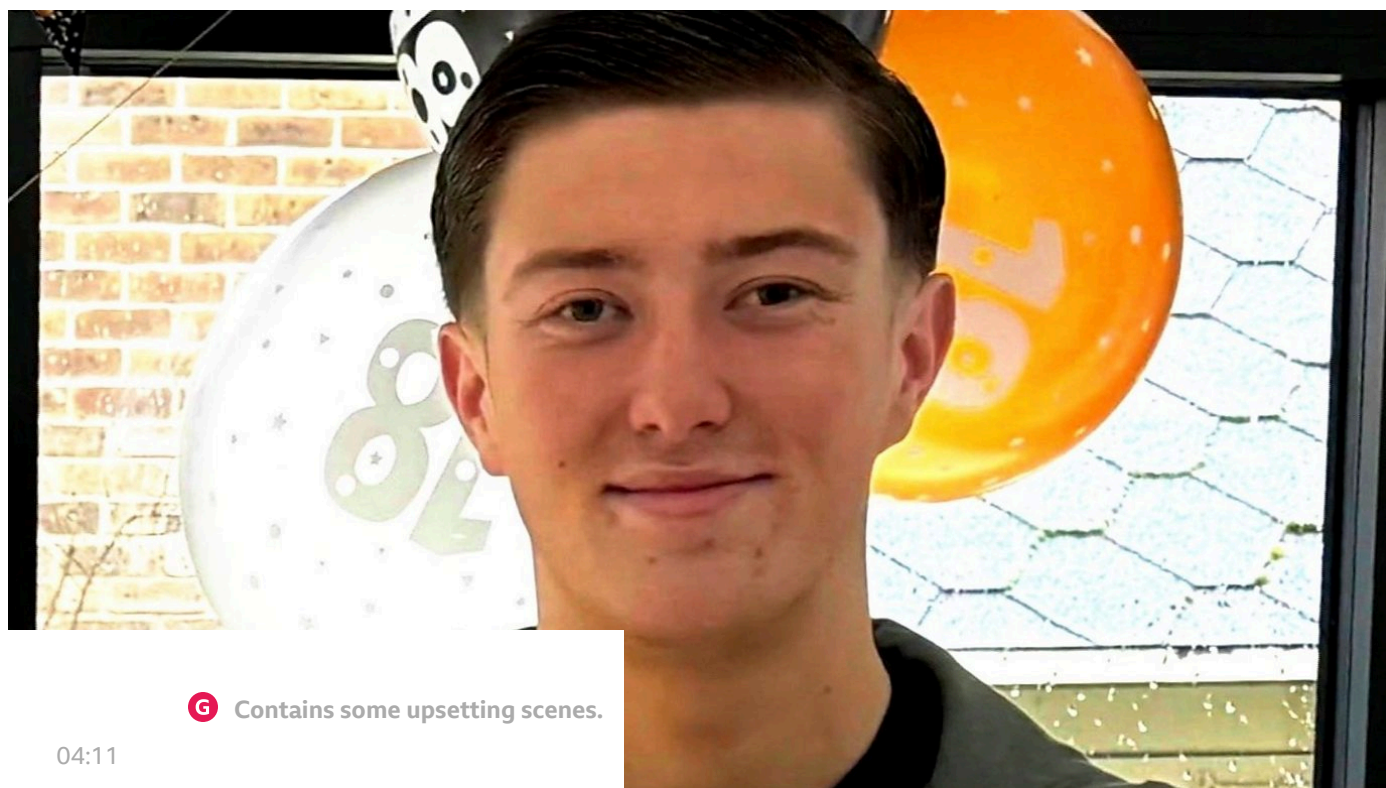
Hundreds of people protesting over the way the Hampshire Police handled the case **clashed with officers in Southampton on Tuesday evening**, with Jones confirming two have been arrested.

In the bodycam footage, a police officer can be heard asking Nowak: "You've been stabbed, whereabouts?" before adding: "Don't think you have, mate."

While being handcuffed, Nowak says "I can't breathe" multiple times.

Later in the footage, Nowak, who seems unresponsive, is told he is being arrested for assault.

In his sentencing remarks on Monday, Judge William Mousley KC said that no matter how quickly Nowak had received "first aid, CPR or expert medical treatment", he would not have survived because of the nature of his injuries.



| Speaking outside court, Henry Nowak's father Mark said his son "did not die with dignity"

Speaking on BBC Breakfast, Jones called for calm and noted it was "important to say that there is historical and a long history of racism in policing that we need to acknowledge".

"The black community are the least confident in our policing in the country, they are under represented in the police workforce and they are more likely to be subjects of police use of force, so we need to acknowledge that and that is an important part of training."

The NPCC's "Police Anti-Racism Commitment" was developed last year in response to the organisation's **2022 Police Race Action Plan**.

The commitment describes racial equity as "producing equality of policing outcomes for people from different ethnic groups by responding to individuals and communities according to their specific needs, circumstances and experiences".

"It does not mean treating everyone 'the same' or being 'colour blind' (racial equality)."

Jones said beyond the NPCC commitment, police are trained to understand the history of racism and "the problems and challenges that have existed in the past".

"As part of that training, there is an element of understanding there is a history of racism, that is part of the training."

Asked if that training had a bearing on what happened to Nowak, Jones said she did not know and said it was part of the IOPC investigation to get all the facts.

Three of the officers involved are still serving, and one has resigned, a spokesperson for Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary said.

Donna Jones, the police and crime commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, has requested a review of the culture and performance of the police force's control room and the training of officers responding to the stabbing.

Separately, Digwa's father Moga Singh, 52, and brother Gurpreet, 27, faced court on Tuesday afternoon on weapons charges, and were released on unconditional bail.

His mother Kiran Kaur, 53, was previously found guilty of assisting an offender after she attempted to hide the blade used in the attack. She will be sentenced on 17 July.

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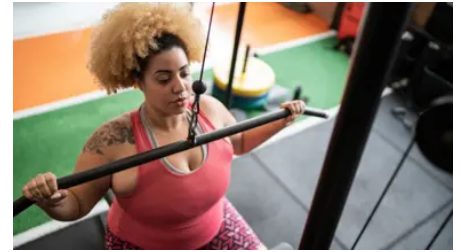
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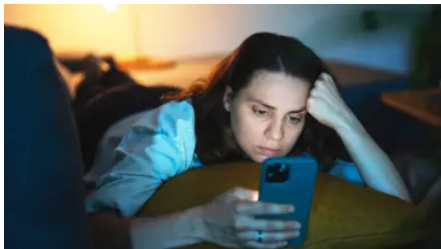


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