

Fraud investigator 'was sacked for being white and probing crimes committed by Asians at East London council'

From the [*Daily Mail*](#)

An anti-fraud investigator claims he was sacked by a council because he is white and the subjects of his inquiries were Asian. Mark Edmunds, 54, is suing for £529,000 in a race and sex discrimination case against the scandal-hit London borough of Tower Hamlets. He joined the council in January 2010 and helped successfully host the Olympics before moving into fraud investigation.

Britain's first Muslim mayor, Lutfur Rahman, had won control of Tower Hamlets in October 2010 but was removed by a court for rigging his 2014 re-election.

Mr Edmunds says he was removed from his £63,000-a-year job last year because he was 'a white man investigating a service predominantly staffed by Bangladeshi employees where the allegations of corruption were predominantly against Bangladeshi employees'.

Twelve senior Asian employees were dismissed as a result of Mr Edmunds' investigations. The review found that Mr Rahman had used youth grants to bribe voters.

When he refused to tell a senior youth service officer about his findings, the official "started to pinch the back of his hand and kept repeating to me, 'Is it because of this' which I took as a reference to the colour of his skin."

Mr Edmunds received a sinister telephone call from a woman who laughed and said in an Asian accent: "Something is going to happen" before hanging up.

The investigator was aggressively followed by a car containing three Asian men, believed to be driven by a former employee who had been dismissed because of his findings.

"The threats and intimidation were very real and serious given the history of many of those I was investigating (ie ex-gang members and drug dealers.) . . . his witness statement says. 'Additionally, while conducting investigations I was regularly accused of being a racist and a bully, when all I was doing was my job, in an attempt to intimidate me and derail the investigation process.'

Assessments found that Mr Edmunds was at high risk and his family in danger: he should be based in a secure room, he and his relatives needed personal safety training and he required portable alarms and a monitored intruder system. Only a small number of these safety measures was implemented.

When an Asian officer in the youth service was interviewed about bogus grant recipients, he allegedly sent an email to human resources accusing Mr Edmunds of being a racist conducting a racially motivated inquiry.

Tower Hamlets removed Mr Edmunds from the case. The investigator claims that the council failed "to investigate the false and defamatory allegation" of racism against him because he was white. A union official, in an email seen by The Times, said it would be discriminatory for Mr Edmunds as a 'white male' to get a senior role rather than more experienced ethnic minority employees.