

Police Authority Diversity, Equality and Human Rights Working Group
26 September 2012 ([Click here for Easy Read version](#))

IAG Consultation Event

Plymouth 25 June 2012

Introduction

1. On 25 June 2012, Jo Norton (DEWG lead member) and Eelke Zoestbergen (Equalities Policy Officer) facilitated three workshops at the IAG and wider Communities Groups conference, which was held in Plymouth.
2. The objectives of the workshops were to discuss the forthcoming changes to the policing governance with the arrival of the Police and Crime Commissioner as well as to find out from the IAG and community members how they would like to work and engage with the PCC.

Workshop Outcomes

3. All workshops started with a short introduction to explain the current Police Authority way of working and how this would change with the arrival of the Police and Crime Commissioner (from here on referred to as “the Commissioner”). Jo also set out the key aspects of the role and powers of the Commissioner and the scrutiny role of the Police and Crime Panel.
4. Jo and Eelke then outlined the preparations that are underway for the change from Police Authority to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. They also explained that the general Equality duty is applicable to the Commissioner as are the specific duties, which therefore means that the Commissioner will have to set equality objectives.
5. IAG and community group members who attended were then asked to think about how they could or wished to engage with the Commissioner in the future.
6. The feedback and comments received at this consultation event will help to suggest a possible way of working and framework of engagement for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in the future, as well as inform future equality objectives. Eelke underlined that the framework and the objectives cannot be agreed until the Commissioner is in place as it is their job to agree and sign this off.
7. This consultation is not a one-off event - all IAG and community group members were asked to get in touch with Eelke or Jo at any point after the event if they wished to discuss anything in more detail.
8. The workshop members raised the following questions:
 - How long will members of the Police and Crime Panel serve?
 - How will the independent members be elected onto the Police and Crime Panel?
9. The issues raised by workshop members were as follows:

- **Force issues:** They underlined the importance of the Diverse Communities Teams and for all officers and staff to receive diversity training and awareness e.g. understanding autism for Stop and Search. (Groups expressed their concerns about the current reliance on E-learning – as this means a loss of the human element). They also raised the importance of the funding, provision and training of interpreters.
- **Role of the Commissioner:** Groups wondered how a single individual (such as the Commissioner) would be able to attend all strand /strategic IAG meetings. All groups agreed that the Commissioner needs to be involved with the IAG in some way.
- They wondered if a Devon Commissioner would have credibility in Cornwall and vice versa.
- All groups stressed the important role that the Commissioner should play in terms of providing leadership around Equality issues.
- Groups raised concerns that many people in this police area have little awareness or knowledge of the candidates (and their manifestos) and questioned therefore how people can make an informed choice.
- Members expressed their concern that politicisation of policing could lead to loss of a minority community and victim based approach and queried what happens if the Commissioner has no interest in diversity. They asked how the Commissioner would be made aware of their responsibilities / held to account in line with the requirements of the Equality Act.
- **Information streams:** How would community views / information be fed into the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and how would they receive information from the Commissioner? There is a need for the Commissioner to communicate widely, but also differently (including Easy Read documents). Group members also emphasised the need for a SPOC in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- **Priorities:** All groups emphasised that Hate Crime (including mate crime) needs to be on the Commissioner's agenda, including: reporting, confidence levels and the importance of incorporating real individual experiences (of victims), as part of performance monitoring, as well as statistics. Other priorities mentioned were: Youth issues (including the need for specially trained officers and a focus on building relationships); How to make the Criminal Justice System more efficient/effective; Response times; Communication, Homophobic attacks and Violence against women – which should focus on victims as well as identify & work with perpetrators and include preventative work.
- **Partnership working:** All groups expressed concern that currently services do not work well together, leaving vulnerable individuals to live isolated lives – it is in environments like this that issues such as “mate” crime can thrive
- **Raising the profile of community groups:** The Commissioner acting as a single point of contact could be a positive development – the challenge for organisations was to raise their profile with the Commissioner. Groups representing diverse communities may arrange events to which candidates could be invited – an example of this is the hustings event that is organised by ARC and Mencap on behalf of the Coalition against Learning Disability Hate Crime Devon and Cornwall on 6 September. These kinds of events provide an

opportunity to impress upon the Commissioner the Devon and Cornwall philosophy of embracing equality/diversity as part of the culture

Recommendations:

10. The following recommendations came out of the discussion:

- **For diverse community groups and IAGs** to consider how they will raise their profile with the Commissioner as well as to find a way to influence the Police and Crime Plan.
All groups said that it is important for the Commissioner to engage and interact with Diverse Communities – this can be done in various ways e.g. linking in with the IAG meetings (the Commissioner could attend the strategic IAG) or the Commissioner could consider holding surgeries covering the full geographical police area. Another option mentioned was to establish a Commissioner’s IAG to provide a direct channel to the Commissioner or for Community Groups to forge better links with their Community Safety Partnerships.
- **For IAG members** (working with the Force) to review the IAG structure, aims, set up and purpose considering the change in policing governance
- In order to provide assurance to diverse communities **the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s framework of engagement** should suggest that:
 - The Commissioner and their office should communicate widely using different ways and formats (including Easy Read)
 - Create a single point of contact within the Commissioner’s office
 - Scrutinise Force performance on issues that matter to diverse communities – including an awareness of risk, threat, harm and vulnerability.
 - It will need to focus on hate crime (including mate crime) and have an awareness of the impact on victims
 - Provide solutions together with partners in other sections such as criminal justice, local authorities and health
 - Ensure that equalities and human rights legislation is part of everyday business and culture and not an add-on

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