Community Engagement

Contents

Policy Statement ................................................................. 2
Principles ............................................................................. 2
Strategic Drivers ................................................................. 4
Equality and Diversity......................................................... 5
Responsibilities.................................................................... 6
Monitoring and Accountability ............................................ 7
Additional Information........................................................ 9
Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police (WYP) complies with College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) in relation to Community Engagement. This contains information to assist the Force with embedding community engagement at the heart of every aspect of policing. Community engagement ensures that West Yorkshire Police can make our communities safer and feel safer.

As a service, we are committed to working more closely with our communities and ensuring that our priorities mirror local priorities so that we:

- Build trust and confidence across all of our diverse communities
- Deliver the services required through a neighbourhood policing model based on community engagement, preventative problem solving and early intervention
- Access new and knowledgeable sources of community information and intelligence.
- Protect the most vulnerable from harm and from the most serious forms of crime, whether as victims or coerced perpetrators.

Community engagement is a tool to identify the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal and organisational factors that make individuals or communities vulnerable. Understanding these can ensure an improved response to threat, harm and risk.

Community engagement can have a range of benefits, such as:

- Creating a greater understanding of how policing strategies may affect individuals and communities;
- Creating an increase in public perceptions of safety;
- Impacting positively on tackling crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Helping identify strategies that may not have otherwise been considered; and
- Aiding the design and delivery of services that meet the public needs.

Scope

This policy applies to all police officers, police staff, volunteers and any other individuals who may represent West Yorkshire Police.

Principles
• Community engagement is an umbrella term that lends itself to a wide range of activities that can be pursued through various processes and lead to multiple outcomes. It is not simply about consultation, but includes a wide variety of ‘engagement’ opportunities.

• Community engagement should not be a ‘top down’ approach, but one based on what Arnstein referred to as a ‘ladder of community participation’, focused on co-production and capacity building in conjunction with communities, aided by community and voluntary sector networks.

• Neighbourhood profiling is key and allows specific networks and individuals to be captured in order to better understand the nature of communities and how they interact.

• All community members have a stake in the provision of policing services and should have the opportunity to understand and influence services. Information about policing services, and how to access and influence them, should be designed so as to be accessible to everyone. All officers and staff must be aware that members of the local communities each have unique and personal requirements - different approaches should be adopted to reflect these needs. Strategies should be cost-effective, efficient and flexible so as to develop the right approach for the groups of individuals in question.

• We need to ensure that we include those ‘seldom-heard’ individuals or groups who may sometimes be absent from decision-making and local activities. We need to have the creative thinking to ensure any barriers to accessing West Yorkshire Police can be alleviated.

• We need to make an assessment of Threat, Risk and Harm and Vulnerability.

• Community engagement forms part of the accountability and transparency process mandated by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Engaging effectively with communities must be embedded at all levels of policing to ensure public confidence and perceptions of police legitimacy.

• Strategies should ensure that they are conscious of demand management, managing the expectations of the community with the realities of day-to-day operational policing.

• Support and training may be required for officers and staff to equip them with the appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver effective community engagement.

• As per the integrated and whole systems approach fostered by the National Policing Vision 2025, community engagement should be aligned with other local public services and community and voluntary sector partners to ensure a wider place-based approach to understanding communities and their needs.

• In short, we need to:
  o Know communities in order to protect them.
  o Understand why different communities and groups of people may be vulnerable to being victims of offenders
  o Communicate in an accessible and appropriate way with our
Strategic Drivers

Principles

• Community engagement can be regarded as underpinning every aspect of Force business in line with the overarching aim of the Police and Crime Plan to ‘Keep Communities Safer and Feeling Safer’. Within each of the 5 Policing Purposes are features which align to the main principles of community engagement. These are set out below.

• Community engagement is part of West Yorkshire Police’s wider approach to how we work with communities and partners in our neighbourhoods. It is one of the three pillars of Neighbourhood Policing alongside Problem Solving & Prevention and Early Intervention.

• By working closely with our communities, partners and voluntary and community sector organisations, we can ensure a holistic approach to providing long-term and tailored solutions to crime, anti-social behaviour and individual and community health, well-being and resilience.

• **Protect the Vulnerable**
  We will:
  o Understand the complex needs and vulnerabilities of the communities we serve.
  o Identify the links between vulnerable people, particularly young people, and crime to develop preventative and early intervention strategies with partners and the third sector.
  o Focus on vulnerable people whatever the crime type.
  o Be victim centred and understand the “lived experience” and victims’ needs.

• **Reduce Crime**
  We will:
  o Work with partners and the third sector to prevent and reduce crime.
  o Use intelligence mapping systems to identify areas for strategic community engagement.
  o Create a two-way dialogue between communities and local Districts.
  o Involve communities in long-term problem solving approaches to ensure sustainable reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

• **Attack Criminality**
  We will:
  o Develop a trusted two-way stream of information and intelligence between community service providers and West Yorkshire Police.
  o Develop joint engagement plans and inputs to communities focusing on threat, harm, risk and vulnerability.
  o Work with young people to prevent them becoming involved in gang crime and other pathways into serious and organised crime.

• **Provide Reassurance**
  We will:
  o Work with partners and the third sector to build confidence and endorse
West Yorkshire Police as a fair, respectful workplace with integrity.
- Be proactively visible and approachable with communities most at risk.
- Be proactive, inclusive and involve communities in the service delivery decision making process and work with partners and the third sector to understand and strengthen community cohesion.

**Provide Value for Money**

We will:
- Utilise community assets, resources, knowledge and expertise to proactively identify key communication channels between vulnerable groups and organisations.
- Identify key funding streams for joint engagement with partners, third sector and community groups.

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**Equality and Diversity**

**Principles**

- All officers, staff and volunteers must adhere to the principles of the NPCC and Force’s Diversity Equality, and Inclusion strategies, when undertaking community engagement. These refer to 3 principles under the heading of ‘Our Communities’:
  - Understanding our Communities
  - Engagement and Good Relations
  - Improving Confidence
- The police service have a duty to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of the Equality Act 2010.
- All officers, staff and volunteers must:
  - Be mindful of our statutory general duties in relation to the nine protected characteristics;
  - Ensure that community involvement, engagement and feedback is appropriately linked into our activities to meet these duties.
  - Ensure that opportunities to engage with the police are made available to all communities at a convenient and accessible time and location and ensure that the communication style is tailored appropriately.
  - Ensure that work is reported back through the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion model governance arrangements.
- West Yorkshire Police Equality Objectives The Force have devised the following Equality Objectives for 2018-2022, providing a framework for how community engagement can help meet the Force’s duties under the Equality Act:
  - Develop a diverse and inclusive, flexible workforce which reflects the communities we serve to help the police service in West Yorkshire understand and protect our communities.
  - Create safer and more confident communities in tackling the under-reporting of hate crime and incidents.
  - Reduce children, young people and adults from diverse, socio-economic backgrounds, cultures and identities becoming victims or perpetrators of crime by prevention and early intervention.
Enhance service delivery and accessibility to marginalised individuals, protected groups and communities where there is perceived inequality by including and involving them in our work.

Increase awareness of emerging crime types faced and effectively work with third sector to better understand the needs and additional vulnerabilities faced by diverse communities.

Responsibilities

WYP Force

The Force is responsible for:

- Helping communities, individuals and partners and our staff understand our roles and responsibilities towards community engagement;
- Developing a wide range of contact and feedback options for the community, whether to report a crime or to assist the Force in developing strategies to make communities safer;
- Explaining how we will engage with individuals and communities and how this will be co-ordinated to avoid duplication;
- Showing how community engagement will inform and influence policing activity, problem solving, early intervention, planning and decision making within West Yorkshire;
- Explaining the process for monitoring the implementation and impact of our engagement activity;
- Preventing violent extremism by implementing activities that, with our partners, stop or help to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists or violent extremists; and
- Reflecting the diverse nature of the communities that it services in the ratios/proportions of people it employs. It will instil confidence within the diverse communities to encourage the broadest range of recruitment and volunteering opportunities.
- Equipping members of West Yorkshire Police with the skills and knowledge to deliver the Force’s Community Engagement Strategy.
- Consider why people who subscribe to one or more of the Protected Characteristics may be more vulnerable to getting involved in serious and organised crime, whether as victims or offenders.

Local Policing

Local Policing are responsible for:

- Working with Districts and Departments to integrate the principles of community engagement into all aspects of policing activity;
- Working with, and monitoring, Districts and Departments on community engagement work streams through the Local Policing Governance Board and NPT Inspector’s Forum;
- Advising on different community contacts and organisations, providing training, operational guidance and the best methods on engagement with different communities and groups;
• Overseeing the Force Independent Advisory Group (IAG), ensuring that members represent a wide range of protected characteristics; and
• Overseeing the ‘Our Communities’ strand of the Force Diversity Inclusion and Equality strategy.

Districts and Departments

Districts and Departments are responsible for:
• Ensuring that local consultation and engagement informs the District and Departmental planning processes and local engagement plans reflecting local priorities and needs; and
• Ensuring that members of communities representing a range of protected characteristics are integrated into local decision-making forums through IAGs, Scrutiny panels and other appropriate forums as per the Force Equality Delivery Model.

Neighbourhood Level

Each Neighbourhood Policing/Partnership Working Area Team is responsible for:
• Identifying and mapping at Ward level the key communities, individuals, groups and emerging communities, with each the most effective means of consultation and engagement – this means getting to know communities face-to-face;
• Ensuring that local engagement plans are co-ordinated with those of partners, including local councillors, in respect of problem-solving, early intervention, action planning and joint activity to tackle local crime and disorder issues and contribute to the safety and health and well-being of communities;
• Being visible at community venues, public events or celebrations to enable members of the public to pass on concerns and share feedback, ideas and visions;
• Promoting and utilising the West Yorkshire Police Community Alert system; and
• Promoting the Partnership Intelligence Portal to encourage the submission of community intelligence.

Monitoring and Accountability

Principles

• The Force at all levels must identify how well community engagement is working through self-assessment.
• Force and all District and Departmental plans will incorporate community engagement whether explicitly or not. Activity should be both quantitatively and qualitatively recorded, monitored and audited appropriately to measure the volume and nature of engagement initiatives.
• Employees must be encouraged to share best practice across the Force, Districts, Departments, regionally and nationally.
• Successful engagement looks different in different circumstances however the successful implementation of this strategy should see:
  o An increase in public feelings of safety.
  o An increase in public confidence and trust, and improvement of community relationships with the police, particularly amongst the most vulnerable and seldom-heard.
  o An increase in people actively involved in volunteering, and in collaborative work with the police and other partners.
  o Wider use of Early Intervention and Problem Solving processes at an early stage.
  o Positive impact on crime prevention and anti-social behaviour levels.
  o More effective demand management and increased capacity building.
  o A satisfied and representative workforce who are actively engaged.
Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following legislation, policy and guidance:

• College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice: Engagement and Communication
• Equality Act 2010
• Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
• PCC Police and Crime Plan
• Code of Ethics
• West Yorkshire Police Policing Strategy 2016-21
• West Yorkshire Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy
• NPCC Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy (DEI) 2018-2025

Supporting Information

The supporting information for this policy can be accessed.

Further Information

Further guidance in relation to this policy can be sought from:

• Authorised Professional Practice: Engagement and Communication
• Community engagement in policing: Lessons from the literature
• Neighbourhood Policing Engagement Strategy
• Community Engagement Toolkit