

WEST YORKSHIRE  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Criminal Justice System: working together for the public



# RAISING MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

*A Good Practice Guide  
For Criminal Justice  
Practitioners in  
West Yorkshire*



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# The Policy Background



Since 1995, there has been a marked shift in public policy from an emphasis on reducing crime towards measures that are designed to reduce fear and boost public confidence in the criminal justice system. Since 2001 the Home Office in collaboration with the Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Attorney General's Office have initiated large-scale reforms of the criminal justice system. An Office of Criminal Justice Reform has been set up to drive policy change and Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) have been charged with delivering change at the local level. At the same time the Government's determination to take on board the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry in 1999 has fuelled the prioritisation of black and minority ethnic issues within this process of change.

In 2003, the Criminal Justice Confidence Unit issued a framework document setting out government policy for the improvement of confidence in the criminal justice system. The Framework Document also tasks Local Criminal Justice Boards to identify specific drivers of confidence and satisfaction in local areas and to implement improvements in five performance areas:

- Increasing victim and witness satisfaction in the local area
- Staff engagement
- Community engagement, including race issues
- Communications

Increasing overall public confidence

This guide is based on research carried out for the West Yorkshire LCJB to generate a better understanding of BME people's confidence in the criminal justice system in the area. Although it takes account of the national picture, it is tailored to the situation and issues raised in the local area of West Yorkshire. The research comprised a survey of residents, focus groups with BME residents and interviews of key players in the criminal justice system.

# The purpose of this Guide



The overall aims of this document are:

- To provide guidance in order to enhance effective communication with BME communities, raise confidence and promote the effective delivery of services.
- To enable criminal justice practitioners, agencies and community groups in the region to improve criminal justice services and gain the trust, support and confidence of the minority ethnic communities and groups that they serve.

The best practice guide is intended to:

- Help criminal justice practitioners and relevant agencies appreciate the variety of issues impacting on minority ethnic people's confidence in the criminal justice system generally and specific groups in particular.
- Stimulate effective review of service delivery in terms of these identified drivers of confidence.
- Provide practical ways of improving confidence tailored to the needs of both agencies and communities
- Suggest ways by which communication can be improved between the agencies and BME communities and also between the agencies themselves.
- Provide ways of measuring the effectiveness of initiatives and mechanisms of consultation between criminal justice practitioners

and BME communities and of measuring outputs and outcomes of initiatives designed to raise confidence, e.g. in terms of benchmarks or performance indicators.

The guide is intended to offer guidance on promising ways forward rather than definitive recipes for success. Rather than discarding everything that is currently in place, it builds on current practice and tries to draw together what is known about improving confidence in one place. While some suggestions will require additional resources to provide new initiatives, much of what is suggested will be simply changing the way in which practice is implemented in minor ways in order to improve confidence or remove negative confidence drivers.

## The audience for whom the guide is written

The audience for which the guide is intended includes:

- The Local Criminal Justice Board
- The West Yorkshire Race Issues Group (WRIG)
- Officers at operational levels within the main criminal justice organizations – the police, probation, courts, the CPS, and youth justice
- Other (voluntary) agencies involved in criminal justice such as Victim Support.
- Community consultation groups or panels.
- Local Authority community safety teams
- Other organizations or policy makers whose work relate to BME criminal justice issues



## Minority ethnic people's confidence in the criminal justice system



Nationally, the figures have shown that BME people generally have a little **less** confidence that the criminal justice system respects the rights and treats fairly people accused of committing a crime while the local survey found there were no significant differences by ethnic group for this issue. Nationally and locally BME people have **more** confidence in aspects of the criminal justice system's effectiveness than do White people.

Nationally, Asians rate the job the police are doing **above** the 48% average (51%) and black people **below** (45%) while minority ethnic groups rate other agencies almost universally better in the job they are doing than Whites. Locally the survey found no significant differences in the various ethnic groups' ratings of the police but BMEs were more likely to rate other agencies highly than Whites.

It is important to recognise that views and attitudes vary widely between different BME groups. Locally, Indians generally had more confidence than other ethnic groups. They were strongly more confident that the criminal justice system is effective in bringing criminals to justice, deals with cases promptly and efficiently and is effective in reducing crime. They were also most likely to rate the other agencies highly, with between 65% and 80% of Indian respondents rating the agencies as fairly good to excellent, and to have trust in the courts. Pakistanis had more confidence than White people but less than Indians. Nationally Black people tend to have more confidence than Whites although less than Asians. Locally, "other ethnic groups" respondents, who include Black, Mixed, and Asian other than Pakistani and Indian, rated the probation service highly and had trust in the legal services. The majority of focus groups participants viewed the probation service as a very positive agency in tackling the root causes of criminal behaviour although few had had direct contact with it.

It is important also to recognise that ethnicity is only one of the many other factors affecting confidence. The local survey showed that, while being a victim of crime, age and gender were alone not important in predicting confidence, when combined with other factors, victims of crime tended to give lower ratings and trust in agencies, Older victims showed less confidence, high ratings or trust. Being female seems to show the reverse, female victims tending to have more confidence, high ratings or trust. Combinations of factors resulted in the identification of specific groups with particularly low confidence in particular issues. For example, Pakistani and "other ethnic group" female victims are particularly lacking in confidence that the criminal justice system is prompt and efficient and older Paki-

stani victims that the criminal justice system respects the rights of those accused of crime. Older respondents from other ethnic groups were particularly likely to rate probation poorly. The focus group participants felt that younger BME people were more likely to have low confidence in the criminal justice system because of increasing intolerance of perceived discriminatory or racist practices.

It is known that there are a wide variety of influences on confidence other than those specifically considered by the research, including importantly first hand experience of crime and the criminal justice system or experiences of family and friends. A national study found that low confidence group participants had a number of characteristics, some of which were particularly related to local conditions. For example low confidence participants talked about specific local crime problems, commented on the perceived lack of community policing and saw their local area as the same as, or worse than, the national picture regarding crime. The local study found geographic clusters of low confidence, in the main irrespective of ethnicity although with some evidence of particularly low confidence in the only predominately Black area surveyed. The focus group participants also identified a strong area element to confidence based on perceptions of the image of particular localities and of discriminatory practice in servicing them. This suggests that drivers of confidence may act at a very local level. It is also possible that confidence is very volatile, that some of the concentrations are caused by particular recent local events and patterns may be very temporary.

Nationally, BME people believe that they receive worse treatment from criminal justice agencies which undermines confidence mainly in terms of rights rather than effectiveness. The local questionnaire survey did not ask questions specifically about this issue but, when asked what was wrong with the criminal justice system, BME respondents were more likely to say that the system is inconsistent or unfair, outdated or corrupt or not representative than white people. Several Pakistani and Black survey respondents expressed concerns about police discrimination in stop and search and seven BME respondents were concerned about racism in prison, even though there was no significant difference between ethnic groups in experience of stop and search and few respondents had been in prison. Focus group participants felt much more strongly that they were more likely to experience discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and therefore were less likely to have confidence in the criminal justice system. Some participants thought that racism was endemic at all levels of the police force although others recognised higher level efforts to eradicate it, while being sceptical about the reality at working level. In addition to the issue of stop and search, participants felt that calls to the police by BME people or those from particular postcode sectors were less likely to be attended promptly. When a suspect, treatment of minority groups at all stages of the criminal justice process was thought likely to be discriminatory. For example, it was felt that those convicted of committing an offence in the Bradford, and to a lesser extent the Leeds riots, were treated unfairly particularly in relation to the sentencing. Comparisons were made between the length of sentences given to South Asian rioters in Bradford compared with those given to white rioters in Temple Newsam. The perception that racism is embedded within, and amongst, CJS agencies formed much of the underlying subtext of focus group discussions.

# What should be done to improve confidence? Views of West Yorkshire BME residents



The two key messages identified in the task of raising confidence were to improve performance and quality of service delivery and to improve communication and engagement with local communities.

## **Improve performance and service delivery**

One of the important factors affecting confidence was seen in the focus groups to be the perception of the time it takes for a particular crime to be dealt with in the first instance, and for any case to be seen through to completion. Another, made in every group, was the need for CJS agencies to behave in a fair and equitable manner.

More than half the Pakistanis and other ethnic groups survey respondents said that more police on the beat would improve confidence and this was also a priority for the few Chinese respondents. This is in line with national research which recognised lack of police presence as a confidence inhibiting factor for BME people and is consistent with the focus groups participants who also called for a greater police presence. This was in spite of their equation of a greater police presence with greater intimidation in some instances, for example in the context of stop and search. However, both survey respondents and focus group participants pointed to the need for specifically community policing in order to develop an amiable and non-confrontational relationship with the police, a theme found by previous research commonly to emerge from low confidence groups. This is linked to the view that the police should be seen as an agency there to help law abiding citizens, rather than one simply there as a means of deterring criminals. Several Pakistani and Bangladeshi survey respondents also suggested that more confidence would be achieved if the police cracked down on particular problems such as drugs and the gang culture.

Many focus group participants called for consistent and tougher sentencing but emphasised that sentencing should be tough for all groups, and not just those of BME heritage. Whilst the length of sentence served was only discussed in one focus group there was general agreement that if a crime warranted a lengthy sentence then criminals should be made to serve the full sentence. Similar comments were made in the survey. In respect of the probation service there were calls for better and stricter monitoring and supervision of offenders and in relation to the youth justice service similar numbers advocating more punitive measures and better support for young offenders. Many respondents thought that prisons

should be more punitive but others were concerned about treatment of prisoners, including racism, or proposed more rehabilitative approaches. Focus group participants thought that prisons should be places of educational and employment reform.

There were no comments by BME respondents about increasing the number of BME police officers and the majority of the focus groups participants felt that BME police officers would not achieve anything, but rather make the situation worse. It was felt that the pressure put upon such officers to be seen to be doing the right thing within the police force, the racism that they themselves faced and the lack of trust members of the community had in them meant that they would not be able to do their job effectively. In addition, it was felt that these police officers often go further than their white counterparts in mistreating members of the BME community as a means of gaining acceptance from their colleagues. In relation to other agencies, however, survey respondents did refer to lack of representation the diversity of the community and lack of understanding of different cultures and advocate for example more BME prison officers and more effort by the CPS and courts to understand cultural issues relating to cases.



### **Improve communication and engagement with local communities**

It was apparent from both the survey and the focus groups that there was limited knowledge about criminal justice agencies other than the police. For example in the survey, many respondents had “no view” with regard to rating the performance of agencies other than the police, and few gave views as to what these agencies should do to improve confidence. Those that did give a view included several who appealed for more information. Almost none of the focus group participants knew what the acronym CPS stands for, or the role of the Crown Prosecution Service.

Focus group participants advocated better communication channels between themselves and all aspects of the CJS. This was not only to have a better understanding of the institutional frameworks that affect their lives, but also to develop a sense of empowerment whereby they are able to understand and perhaps influence decisions made and have access to the various agencies that are responsible for their own safety and security. Pakistani survey respondents were more likely than Whites to refer to better communication of the police with the public and this was important also for Indians. There was an emphasis on local community policing and active efforts to improve relationships. These included both the building of relationships by

day to day contact with local people and specifically local young people but also the proposal of public workshops, police organised events and public meetings. In relation to other agencies, survey respondents, besides general appeals for more information, also asked for workshops in relation to youth justice and probation.

## GOOD PRACTICE

Many of the suggestions made by BME residents were also made by Whites and are issues of concern to the whole population. Such measures as increasing the visible police presence, more punitive sentences, prisons and youth justice services, ensuring that sentencing is consistent, stricter monitoring of offenders, and improved rehabilitation and support for offenders are wide policy issues. The following recommendations for good practice concern only matters which can be directly related to the raising of confidence. Some are related specifically to racial issues but others consider drivers of confidence in the population as a whole and their implementation is relevant to white as well as BME residents.

### Effective management of activities to improve BME confidence in the criminal justice system.



**Coordination** There is a need for a more visible and effective coordination or monitoring of agency activities to raise confidence. The West Yorkshire LCJB provides the umbrella structure for the coordination of policies and programmes designed to improve criminal justice provisions in the county. The West Yorkshire Race Issues Group (WYRIG) is a sub-committee of the West Yorkshire LCJB with the specific task of finding and implementing ways of increasing confidence in the criminal justice system amongst minority ethnic groups in the county. WYRIG has stated key objectives relating to the achievement of BME confidence but it has not been clear how much it actively coordinates activities. Procedures should be set in place to encourage coordination.

**Partnership working** Partnership working is important in providing opportunities for exchange of ideas, avoiding of duplication of effort and facilitating joint projects. Agencies already recognise the need for teamwork in the formulation of policies and delivery of strategies. Membership of panels such as scrutiny panels is essentially multi-agency and there is some representation on fellow agencies' executive com-

mittees. Some agencies already do collaborative work on joint ventures. These practices should be encouraged and further developed.

**Dedicated officer** There is a need for agencies to have a dedicated member of staff responsible for improving confidence in order to ensure that the issue is kept to the front rather than overtaken by pressure of other work. A dedicated officer will have time to provide leadership, manage resources, monitor quality of initiatives and coordinate both internal and external publicity. It is essential that the person appointed should have the ability to inspire and motivate others and be able to provide guidance to and monitor the performance of staff. Recently, the West Yorkshire LCJB Board appointed a Diversity and Consultation Officer to coordinate the Board's race and diversity activities. The North East region of HM Court services (of which West Yorkshire Court services is now a part) is also in the process of appointing a Diversity Officer. The idea of diversity officers is appropriate but may prove ineffective if the incumbents are not adequately equipped to be able to energize others to act.

**Monitoring and evaluation** It is important to be able to assess the success of initiatives intended to improving confidence in order to consider whether they are worthwhile and in order to be able to publicise results which may in turn lead to further improvement in confidence. Although a variety of projects have been implemented in West Yorkshire by different agencies, there is little evidence of measurement of their success in improving confidence. Normal good practice principles for evaluation should be followed. All projects should therefore have clear objectives, defined mechanisms by which confidence will be improved, clear and measurable anticipated outcomes, and measurable intermediate outputs or targets in order that progress can be measured. For example, an intermediate output might be the number of BME people attending an event while an outcome would be an improvement in confidence amongst a certain group of people, measured from a base line.



# Issues relating to the improvement of CJS performance and quality of service delivery



It must be emphasized here that the issue is how the CJS is perceived to perform rather than how it may in reality operate. Confidence is driven by public perceptions which are influenced most strongly by personal experience. However, many people have little contact with the CJS and therefore one minor encounter may generate positive or negative views according to the experience at that time. Experiences of relatives and friends and those reported by the media also affect confidence. It is therefore important that CJS agencies are aware of and take account of sensitive issues such as those relating to race and ethnicity when conducting day to day work. Since the majority of people, whether White or BME, have little experience of CJS agencies other than the police, views of the police tend to colour people's opinion of the entire CJS. It is therefore the police who have the greatest opportunity to impact on confidence by care in their service delivery.

**Fair and equal treatment for all** It is not enough to ensure that agency policy is for equal treatment of all people, however well publicised, if the practice at the public face does not reflect the policy. It is evident from the perceptions expressed in the local research that the CJS is still regarded as discriminatory. While individual officers were cited as promoting good practice, it was evident that discriminatory behaviour by individual members of staff may lead to the whole agency being perceived as racist. It is therefore important to make clear to all staff that equal treatment must be practiced at all times. It is also important that staff understand the issues that are culturally or racially sensitive and are thus less likely to offend minority people through ignorance. For example, visible signs of faith (a beard, a long tunic or a head scarf) were stressed by the majority of focus group participants as being signs of piety and respect of faith and its laws, rather than a willingness to commit violence. Race awareness training for staff has been introduced and currently includes a manual on different religions and cultural practices. However, staff may have compulsory training but not necessarily put into practice the principles learned. There is a need for regular reinforcement and for monitoring of staff on this issue.

**Dealing with racist and homophobic crimes.** It is important to take seriously and be seen to take seriously racist and homophobic crime. The establishment by the police of independent reporting centres for hate crime with a 24 hour free phone service in 9 languages, on line reporting and self reporting packs at community venues is a praiseworthy initiative which has shown some success in take up. It is however important to ensure that reported incidents are promptly acted upon in order to avoid charges of lip service. The Victim Support scheme for support to victims of racist and homophobic crime in Wakefield and Calderdale is also a step in the right direction but extension to the rest of West Yorkshire is desirable.

**BME representation among CJS staff** Continued efforts must be made to recruit BME people to work in the CJS. Numerous attempts have been made by CJS agencies to recruit BME personnel but for most the extent of their success is not clear and agency representatives stated in interview that the process was difficult. Those interviewed attributed this difficulty to suspicion of the initiative, because of a perception that the CJS is only for white people, and apathy. Evaluation of the results of events such as Careers Fairs, open days and attempts to recruit magistrates directly from BME communities might help to identify the attributes of success. The Court Services have reported successes in recruiting BME workers via work placement schemes, an approach which may be relevant to other agencies. West Yorkshire Crown Prosecution Service (WYCPS) has exceeded its BME recruitment target with 13% of its working population from BME backgrounds. The Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) have succeeded in recruiting an increasing and significant number of volunteers, panel members and mentors from BME backgrounds. Sharing of the methodologies of the successful approaches, particularly the means of overcoming suspicion and apathy, would help to spread good practice.

The police have not met their targets for the recruitment of BME uniformed officers. From the focus groups it appears that there may be particular problems here. When asked, the majority of participants said they had not, nor would they ever, consider joining the police force or allowing their children to do so. Where BME people have applied and been rejected need care that reasons not seen to be connected with ethnicity. Problems seem to have been fewer with recruitment of BME Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who help to provide a visible police presence in the community but are also members of the communities they police. Focus group participants welcomed PSO's but emphasized a need for their proper direction. Further investigation is necessary of the reasons for this difference in recruitment success, which may include the perception of racial discrimination within the police force mentioned elsewhere. However diversity in police was not a priority of residents in what the police should do to raise confidence.

## Issues relating to Communication



Communication is important at the individual level in managing the confidence of those who are victims or accused of crime and in the wider sense of addressing the public ignorance about the processes of the CJS, dispersing misconceptions in order to promote confidence, actively promoting “good” publicity and engaging the community in the CJS.

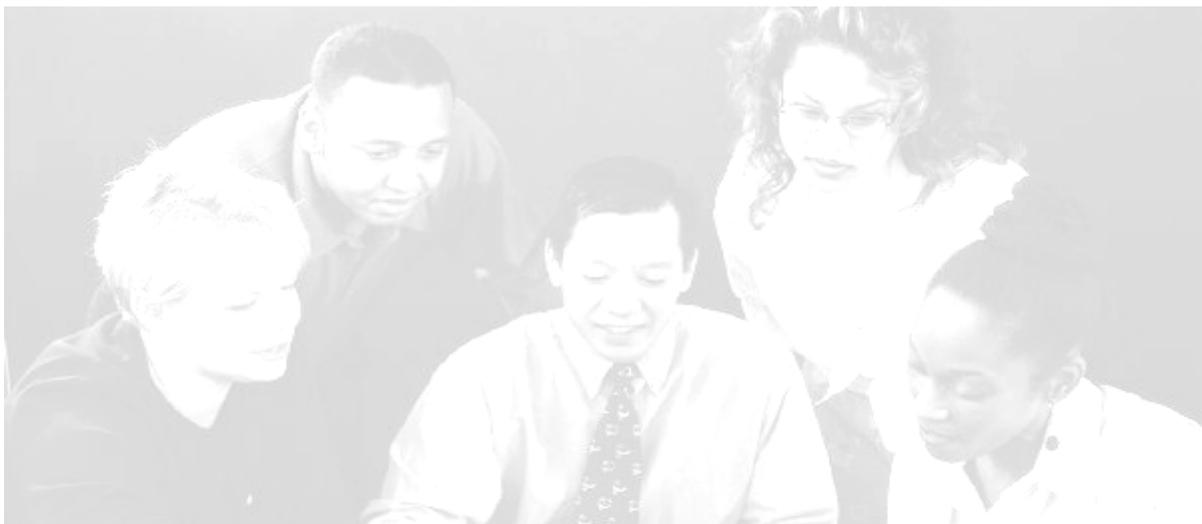
**Individual level** Survey respondents and focus group participants experienced reduced confidence because of the perceived extended time which the CJS procedures take. Confidence may be improved if reasons for delays are given. Residents assume slow response by the police is the result of discrimination where there may be resource problems, conflicting demands etc. Few respondents who had reported crimes to the police knew what further action had been taken and even fewer knew the reasons for decisions made. There is a need at all stages of CJS to keep people informed about what is going on, the reasons for delays and to provide follow up information on crime incidents to victims.

**Addressing public ignorance** It was clear from the research that ignorance of the CJS is widespread and agency representatives have recognised that there is a lack of mechanisms to inform BME people about the CJS and how to get legal support and advice. Existing initiatives have included leaflets which have been mainly simply translations of documents in order that BME people in contact with the CJS understand the procedures. These have been made available to the public in printed forms as well as on the internet. It is understood that newsletters are planned to send out to various community groups and key agencies about updates within the criminal justice system. These will require care both in content and in method of distribution if they are to improve confidence. The research stimulated requests for workshops and public meetings. It is understood that there have already been public meetings and conferences which have been well attended. The issue here would seem to be who those attending were since the residents who gave views to the research were apparently unaware of them. Future workshops and public meetings will require care in order to reach a wider public.

**Dispersing misconceptions** Misconceptions exist both by minority ethnic groups of the CJS and by the CJS agencies of the minority ethnic people. For example there is a perception that the police are focussed on achieving targets and have no real interest in communities and the failure of an agency representative to attend one focus group was seen as a sign of the agency's lack of real intent. On the other hand, there is a perception that minority people are suspicious of what the criminal justice agencies are trying to do to raise confidence in the county. As a result, it is felt that it is often difficult to get them to participate or get involved without thinking that there are ulterior motives. Concerns were also raised about a general lack of interest or willingness on the part of BMEs to participate in criminal justice activities, such as coming forward to be jurors or, when already taking part, to become actively involved in non-essential but confidence building activities such as those of the magistrates' association. In the wake of the Bradford and Leeds riots, BME groups felt that they were not adequately protected by the police from the BNP but the police were confident that the BNP were not carrying out illegal activities. These problems are in effect failures in communication. Measures to address them may include active public consultation meetings, where views are exchanged rather than agencies simply providing information, and less formal contacts. The community policing which residents suggested would improve confidence is relevant here as well as specific initiatives such as the existing police involvement in sport with young people and various agencies' visits to schools.

**Active promotion of “good” publicity** The focus group participants were vocal in criticising the role of the media in inappropriate reporting of race, faith groups and youth in connection with activities and stories where these characteristics are not necessarily relevant. While the criminal justice system can do little to control the inflammatory reporting which is prejudicial to the development of confidence, it can attempt to balance the situation by actively publicising initiatives where agencies or individuals have developed good relations with communities. For example, three of the focus groups were able to name particular officers who were recognised as proactive in the community. The participants suggested that this kind of approach should be publicised.

**Community engagement** Although there have been problems as described above in recruiting BME staff and jurors, from the response to the focus groups where 226 BME people took part over a short period, there is evidently no lack of interest in the CJS. Since nearly 40 White people also wanted to take part in focus groups this is a population wide interest. Moreover the focus groups were confined to a small number of selected wards and it is therefore probable that far greater numbers of people in West Yorkshire as a whole are interested in learning more about the CJS and making their views known. It seems essential therefore to access that interest which may then develop into active participation in the CJS. Although many agencies are undertaking activities under “community engagement”, a criticism has been that these are frequently “top down”. Agencies should encourage communities themselves to initiate community engagement projects. Focus groups may provide a forum to gauge the views of the community about engagement, form community groups to instigate community engagement projects, publicise opportunities in such varied work as panel membership, jury service, employment in CJS agencies, translation work or mentoring and empower local communities to be able to take up those opportunities.



# Selected examples of practice in West Yorkshire

In West Yorkshire a number of agencies have set up projects aimed at improving confidence in the criminal justice system. While there is little evaluation of these initiatives, they may be considered as promising ways forward.

## **Police racial and homophobic crime reporting system**

The West Yorkshire Police have set up 180 independent hate incidents reporting centres in the five policing districts of the county. These provide an alternative route to reporting hate crimes to the police, for example, by victims who, for some reasons, are unable to report directly to the police. The project is set up in collaboration with community groups and BME people are involved, for example, as community advocates. In excess of 700 cases had been reported by spring 2005. In addition, a 24-hour free phone service has been set up, also by the police, for reporting racist and homophobic incidents and obtaining advice on available support services for victims. The information available on this service is provided in the nine most common languages in West Yorkshire. From June 2005, the local scheme joined the True Vision national initiative for reporting racist and homophobic crimes. This scheme allows on-line reporting and self-reporting of racist and homophobic incidents. As part of this scheme, the West Yorkshire police distributed self-reporting packs for hate incidents at community venues so that people, who do not feel confident to report their victimisation direct to the police, can use the form and the pre-paid envelope in the pack to send their complaints to the police. This initiative was advertised on buses and by media campaigns.

## **Racial Minority Community Consultation Panel**

This was set up by WYRIG in 2004, in accordance with the Race Relations (Amendments) Act, 2000, which requires criminal justice agencies to consult with community groups regarding their policies, practices and procedures. The Panel is a forum for debating criminal justice issues of local interest and providing information to the public about the work of the various criminal justice agencies. The panel provides the opportunity for communities to question the activities of criminal justice agencies and offers the latter the opportunity to answer back and engage in dialogue with community representatives, individual and groups over contested issues. Members of this panel are wide ranging including agency representatives working with young people, students and activists.

## **Scrutiny panels**

The West Yorkshire CPS has set up scrutiny panels to engage the public in assessing CPS decision making procedures with regards to the prosecution of racially and/or religiously aggravated offences. The procedure includes a random selection of finalised case files for review by the panel, in order to identify good or bad practice and in the process raise public awareness of the decision making process of the CPS, increase confidence and improve performance. The panel met for the first time in November 2004 is committed to meeting six times a year and is shortly to undergo evaluation. West Yorkshire Police have also set up scrutiny panels in each

police division, specifically to review randomly selected on-going cases of racist and homophobic crimes being dealt with by the police. The membership of scrutiny panels vary. The WYCPS Scrutiny panel is made up of agency representatives and an independent external facilitator but no community representatives. In contrast, the police scrutiny panels include community representatives from the five race and hate crime panels, the Race and Equality Councils and members of voluntary, statutory and community groups.

### **Public meetings**

Several public functions have been staged to raise awareness about race issues in the criminal justice system. The West Yorkshire CPS (WYCPS) has organised conferences to raise awareness about what they do and how racially-motivated offences are prosecuted. Other public meetings include a racial and religious incitement seminar led by the WYCPS and conferences on racial harassment, racism and diversity issues organised by the Kirklees REC. These events were attended by large numbers of delegates including politicians. Judge Kamil has organised meetings in the court house, attended by criminal justice agency representatives, various community leaders, group leaders and the media, to discuss important criminal justice issues relating to BME communities, especially issues relating to their effective participation in the criminal justice system. In addition, the judge has made visits to inner city schools, to explain to young people (including BME youths) how the system works.

### **Reachout**

The West Yorkshire Police, in conjunction with the Bradford Community Safety, secured 52 hours of live broadcast on each of two local radio stations (Sunrise Radio and MASTI) believed to be listened to mainly by members of Asian communities. The project involves a one-hour slot every week on each radio station, when police officers from the force are available on air to discuss important policing issues that have bearing on BME communities and members of these communities have the opportunity to call in to ask the police questions on these issues.

# PRACTICAL ISSUES IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Pawson and Tilley in their book “Realistic Evaluation” have shown that what evaluation should try to indicate is not just whether a project works but also how it works, for whom it works and in what circumstances. Therefore evaluation of measures to raise confidence in the criminal justice system is not simply a matter of collecting data on confidence at two different times and measuring the change, although that is part of the process. Evaluation may be considered at two levels; firstly an agency may wish to evaluate its total programme for raising confidence or secondly the evaluation may be of a project targeting one particular community. In both cases the evaluation should consider:

- The aims and objectives of the proposed programme/project. A West Yorkshire programme may have an objective of improving BME confidence but an individual project will need to tailor its objectives to the target group. For example, it may aim to improve confidence among Pakistani women in Bradford.
- The context of the proposed programme/project. A programme/project is unlikely to have similar effects on all minority groups or on age and gender sub-groups within those ethnic groups. What are the characteristics of the target group?
- The circumstances in which programmes/projects operate and which may affect their capacity to effect change. What resources were employed? How efficiently was the programme/project implemented? Were there implementation problems?
- Understanding the choice making behaviour of those whom it is desired to influence. What are the reasons for lack of confidence in some communities? How well have the programmes/projects been tailored to their target population? Is there understanding of the reasons for lack of confidence in a particular group or have programmes/projects been based on agency perceptions not necessarily rooted in the reality in the community.
- The causal mechanisms by which the programme/project may change confidence. How is it considered that the programme/project will impact on the causes of low confidence? Has the programme/project defined mechanisms? eg Provide information on CJS and opportunity to discuss difficulties.
- Measurable outputs of the programme/project which may be used as interim indicators of achievement. Has the programme defined measurable outputs and set up collection of data eg Number of women attending sessions, number of evaluation sheets completed.
- Measurable outcomes of the programme/project. In order to be able to measure progress it is vital to establish a baseline. For a West Yorkshire wide programme there is a British Crime Survey measure of confidence using five questions for all

people in the region but this is not broken down by ethnic group. The University of Hull recent research provided information with regard to minority views but in fact can only be regarded as an indicator as the survey related only to certain wards in the region. Agencies should consider whether a wider survey is necessary. For individual projects baselines and outcomes should be tailored to the objectives of the project and may therefore be varied. They could include measures such as numbers of BME employees/volunteers, those numbers broken down by ethnic group, numbers of panels with community representation and type of representation, number of staff having undertaken racial awareness training, numbers of BME people attending consultation sessions and numbers of participants who felt that sessions had been helpful, that they had learned something or that they would attend again.



# PRACTICAL ISSUES IN COMMUNICATION



The local research has shown that there have been problems in communication at the individual level, in addressing public ignorance, in dispersing misconceptions, in inappropriate “bad” media reporting, in lack of “good” publicity and in community engagement. A common theme for good practice in all these kinds of communication is the need to consider the population with whom it is hoped to communicate.

- It may be necessary to pitch messages at different levels for different audiences. Generally, however, whether the communication is individual feedback about process of crimes reported or complaints or public meetings to convey information in general, it must avoid jargon and official report language and be comprehensible to the victim / complainant.
- It may be necessary to consider translation into languages other than English not only of procedural documents but of newsletters, flyers and other publicity material.
- It is important to consider the method of communication. For publicity material, do the population which it is desired to reach read newspapers? Or do they more listen to the radio? Are flyers more likely to be read if handed out at community centres or pushed through letter boxes? Publicity of forthcoming workshops may achieve more participation through active liaison with faith and community organisations than simply issuing newsletters which may not be read or their contents passed on to community members. Input from such groups will also help to ensure relevance to the targeted group and assist in practical issues such as those listed in the following section of this guide.
- Timing of provision of information may be important. For example, to state the obvious, telephone feedback on progress of crime incidents/complaints during the working day may not be received by those who are out at work.
- Where attempts are made to communicate, it is important to provide means by which feedback on the efficiency of the communication can be generated.

# PRACTICAL ISSUES IN RUNNING WORKSHOPS/FOCUS GROUPS

There are a number of considerations in running workshops in general and for minority ethnic groups in particular, many of which will seem obvious but may nevertheless be worth spelling out.

- Do recognise that venues need to be easily accessible, ideally local. People are unlikely to travel distances outside their local community. Confidence is related to local issues as well as to ethnicity.
- Do recognise the diversity of ethnicity. Different minorities will have different needs and views.
- Do respect the customs of minority peoples. For some minorities men and women will not be able to freely discuss issues when together. Refreshments need to take account of dietary restrictions.
- Do consider running separate sessions for young people who are unlikely to contribute freely in a mixed age workshop.
- Do cater for language needs. Some groups will be unable or less comfortable in expressing themselves in English.
- In large groups only the more articulate will contribute. Discussion is more inclusive when meetings are split into small groups at this stage. Spokespersons from the small groups can then feed back to the whole group.
- Workshops for women may require child care facilities.
- Skilled facilitators will be required with understanding of the minorities present. Facilitators will need language abilities.
- The presence of agency representatives to give information about the CJS is important but use of those representatives as facilitators is likely to dampen discussion. They should play a role at the feedback from small groups stage.
- Agency representatives must come prepared to listen as well as to speak.
- Level of representation of agency representatives is important. They must be sufficiently high level to speak with authority and for participants to feel that they can take on board their view but not too high to be removed from local issues.
- Dissemination of results of focus groups and workshops is vital to maximise effect on confidence and prevent the lack of confidence resulting from lack of information. There must be action as a result of the findings as participants will otherwise feel that their views are not valued and the consultation process may have a negative effect on confidence. It is important both participants and local communities are kept informed about the action that results from the findings. If there are reasons why particular changes cannot be made, it is important that the reasons are fully explained.

# SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL POINTS

- Local research in West Yorkshire found that views and attitudes vary between those of different ethnic groups but that there are many other factors influencing confidence in the criminal justice system, including victimisation, gender, age and a strong local area element based on the image of particular areas, on perceptions of discriminatory practice towards residents and, possibly, on recent local events.
- Key messages identified in the task of raising confidence were to improve performance and quality of service delivery and to improve communication and engagement with local communities.
- Effective management of activities aimed to improve BME confidence in the criminal justice system is vital. This includes a need for coordination of activities between agencies, partnership working, appointment of dedicated officers responsible for improving confidence and for evaluation of measures introduced.
- Issues relating to improvement of performance and service delivery include ensuring that policies for equal treatment are consistently practised, effective measures for dealing with racist crime, and increased recruitment of BME employees in the CJS.
- Issues relating to communication must improve the feedback to those who have contact with the CJS, address public ignorance and disperse misconceptions of the working of the CJS, actively promote “good” publicity and encourage communities to participate in and even initiate community engagement activities.