



Avon and Somerset Police Authority

Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008-09

1. Introduction

This report sets out the progress that the Police Authority has made over the last year to fulfil its duties to eliminate discrimination and to promote race, disability and gender equality. It also describes the Authority's broader efforts to embed an understanding of diversity within its work.

2. What is the Police Authority?

Avon and Somerset Police Authority is an independent body of local people who are appointed to ensure that the Constabulary is accountable to the communities it serves. Our primary role is to provide an effective and efficient police service in Avon and Somerset. Details of our specific duties and functions can be found on our website, and in our equalities schemes (see www.aspol.a.org.uk).

The Chief Constable is responsible for day-to-day policing. Avon and Somerset Constabulary produces its own Diversity Annual Reports which explain the steps that it is taking to promote equality and diversity in its work. These are available at: http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/information/Documents/Section.aspx?s=86#DID_1049

3. Leadership of equality and diversity within the Authority

The Police Authority continues to drive forward its promotion of equality and diversity through an Equalities Working Group comprised of five members, including the Chair of the Authority. The group meets on a quarterly basis. The Authority also has a Lead Member for Children and Young People.

In addition, all Police Authority Committees continue have responsibility to identify and address all equalities issues arising out of their area of business. This is described formally within the Committee terms of reference. All Committee reports are required to contain a section explaining the diversity implications of the issue under discussion. In 2008-09 Authority members have challenged reports where diversity implications have not been explained sufficiently which has led to increased focus on this theme.

A Policy Officer provides support to the Equalities Working Group and wider membership on equalities issues as well as linked areas of Human Resources, community engagement, and partnership working.

Members of the Equalities Working Group attend the Constabulary's Diversity Board (which coordinates the Constabulary's work to promote equality and diversity), Strategic Independent Advisory Group, Representative Workforce Board, Stop Search Board, Citizen Focused Delivery Group and Change Management Executive.

4. Equalities Schemes

In 2008-09, the Police Authority has begun to bring together its three Equalities Schemes (covering Race, Disability and Gender) into one combined Scheme. We also aim to also to reflect broader diversity issues -- especially those relating to religion and belief, sexual orientation and age -- within the new Scheme. The progress we have made on actions listed in the current schemes is described further below.

5. How the Authority has promoted equality and diversity within the Constabulary

Policing Strategy and Plan

The Police Authority is responsible for agreeing and publishing the 3-year Policing Strategy, the annual Policing Plan, the HR Strategy and Learning and Development Plan. These plans each include sections to explain what the Constabulary will do to manage and increase the diversity of its staff base and ensure all communities receive services appropriate to their experiences and needs. The 2008-09 Policing Plan, which was developed over the course of the last year, includes a range of diversity targets. These are to:

- Ensure the same level of satisfaction with the police service for all ethnic groups;
- Improve the satisfaction level of victims of racist incidents to at least 80%;
- Increase the proportion of racial and other hate crime where the offender is brought to justice to 42%;
- Improve to the proportion of rape offences where the offender is brought to justice at 22%;
- Increase representation of ethnic minority groups to at least 3.1% of the total recruited; and
- Increase representation of ethnic minority groups and women at the ranks of Sergeant and Inspector.

Performance and Audit

The Police Authority has encouraged the development of a 'diversity scorecard' – a brief document that helps the Authority and Constabulary to track progress in meeting a broader range of diversity targets. The Authority contributed to the scorecard by broadening its focus from customer satisfaction to include information relating to complaints, staffing and stop-search. The scorecard will help the Authority to understand better the experience of minority and underrepresented groups in 2009-10. The Authority will monitor the scorecard on a quarterly basis through the Performance and Audit Committee and Equalities Working Group.

This year the Performance and Audit Committee has received information about diversity in a range of reports, particularly those covering performance within Criminal Justice and Youth Offending Teams.

Following on from last year's race and community relations Audit, the Authority commissioned a further piece of work focusing on arrangements for dealing with racial hate crime. This highlighted the need for improvements in arrangements for recording this form of crime and in training for officers and staff. Action to meet the recommendations of the audit will continue to be tracked by the Performance and Audit Committee in 2009-10. The full audit report can be found at: http://www.aspola.org.uk/cache/PDF/Document3234_73341.pdf

Human Resources

The Police Authority's Human Resources (HR) Committee receives 6-monthly reports on the Constabulary's diversity monitoring and progress against its diversity action plan.

This year has seen the end of the national 10-year target for representation of ethnic minority groups in the police service. Following the Green Paper 'From the Neighbourhood to the National' it is now part of the Police Authority role to set targets locally to work towards achieving a representative police workforce.

The HR Committee has taken a leading role in this process, analysing the diversity monitoring reports that it receives to identify the key issues to be addressed in local targets. As a result, for the first time this year the Authority set targets on progression of ethnic minority groups and women at sergeant and inspector ranks. The Committee has emphasised its wish to see active monitoring of white minority groups where this is feasible.

The HR Committee has ensured it receives regular reports on the use of market factors, honoraria and other matters that may have equal pay implications.

It has also recently received a report on the likely requirements of the Equality Standard for the Police Service, which is being developed by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). A Police Authority member attended the consultation event on the planned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspection of Workforce and Diversity which is due to take place in 2010. The inspection will use the Equality Standard as part of its inspection framework.

Professional Standards

The Professional Standards Committee has continued this year to focus on issues of domestic abuse and mental health, considering the implications of the Independent Police Complaints Commission 'Learning the Lessons' recommendations on vulnerable people.

Members of the Committee have continued to express their concerns about the use of police custody as a place of safety under s.136 Mental Health Act and have pressed local health agencies to ensure alternative facilities are in place.

The Committee has also scrutinised how complaints made by, or on behalf of, children are dealt with and focused a dip-sampling session on this topic.

Stop and Account / Stop and Search

In late 2009 there were national changes to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code of Practice which regulates situations when the police stop people and ask them to account for their actions. Police Authority members explored how the new recording procedures would be implemented in Avon and Somerset to ensure that there would continue to be clear opportunities for people to provide feedback about their experience to the Authority.

At the Authority's request, a link to the Association of Police Authorities survey of peoples' experience of stop and search has been added to the Constabulary stop and search pages. The Police Authority website also now includes a front-page link to information about stop and search rights. The details on the page have been updated and improved.

The Authority has printed the new 'Know Your Rights' stop search pocket cards and distributed them to a wide range of community groups. A Somali version of the cards is being produced to meet the needs of the growing Somali community in Bristol, a number of whom have been affected by the use of stop and search powers.

The Police Authority received its annual report on the use of Stop/Search powers in March 2009. Disproportionality in the recorded use of stop and search in Avon and Somerset continues to be lower than most forces.

Children and Young People

The Police Authority has continued over the course of the year to have an active focus on the needs of children and young people in relation to policing. The Authority has a Lead Member for this area who sits on the Constabulary Children and Young People's Strategy Group. The group has overseen the development of a new youth website, Cranium Caviar, to improve engagement with younger people.

The Authority has also established links with local Youth Parliament representatives.

The Partnerships Working Group has developed a stronger relationship with Children's Trusts with members now sitting on the Bristol and Somerset partnerships.

Southwest One

The Police Authority requested that all members receive the equality impact assessment that was conducted on the agreement on join Southwest One. The Locality Based Service Delivery and Contact Management projects being conducted

as part of this agreement have included more detailed understanding of the demographics and needs of local communities.

The Police Authority ensured that the specification for Expressions of Interest in delivering the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Accommodation project included a requirement to demonstrate details of how equality and diversity duties would be met through the project. Issues required to be covered included disability access, proximity to transport, and flexibility of accommodation use.

6. Consultation and Engagement

Public Feedback Survey

Through its participation in the Joint Citizen Focused Policing Programme Board, the Authority is closely involved in the development and oversight of the Constabulary Public Feedback Survey. This tracks the satisfaction and confidence of local people in policing services, whether or not they have had occasion to use those services, providing results on a quarterly basis.

In 2008-09 there were some difficulties in achieving the booster element of the survey that provides statistically valid results about the experience of BME groups. Nationally, the Home Office, Association of Police Authorities and Association of Chief Police Officers are currently examining the use of such surveys with a view to producing guidance so changes in local arrangements await the results of this work.

Avon and Somerset Police Authority has represented to the APA that the national guidance provides a prime opportunity to ensure that data on the experiences of diverse communities is collected rigorously.

Partners and Communities Together (PACT)

In 2008-09 Police Authority members attended Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings across the force area. Members oversee the level, quality, and apparent representativeness of community engagement taking place. There are a number of examples of PACTs which focus on the needs of specific groups across the force area, such as young people, Polish communities, gay and lesbian urban communities.

Members have questioned, however, the extent to which minority communities are engaged with regular community PACTs. This issue has been explored with the Strategic Independent Advisory Group and associated work is being taken forward by the Constabulary Diversity Unit.

Community Policing Awards

In 2009 the Authority and Constabulary ran the second Avon and Somerset Community Policing Awards in which members of the public could nominate police officers and staff for an award to recognise their service to the community. The nominations provided a range of examples of neighbourhood activity with minority communities.

This year, the Awards Ceremony included a street dance demonstration by a group of young people 'Elementz' who are involved in delivering a community project 'Energise' in Somerset West District.

Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods Events

The joint Citizen Focused Policing Programme Board this year steered a series of events to promote the progress made in implementing Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods and garner feedback on further service improvements. The events included police and partner presentations on the work conducted locally to meet the needs of communities. The diversity of community needs was recognised through these events with focus on, for example: services to address domestic abuse in the North Somerset Roadshow; positive activities for young people through the development of Yate Boxing Academy in South Gloucestershire; and issues affecting fear of crime amongst older people through the 'no cold-calling' zones in Somerset East.

Independent Advisory Groups

Over the course of the year, members of the Equalities Working Group have continued to attend the Constabulary's Strategic Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and Disability Independent Advisory Group. A Police Authority Officer made a presentation to the Disability IAG on the Authority's role of running the Custody Visiting Scheme.

Mosques Forum

In May, a Police Authority member gave a presentation on the role of the Authority to a forum of community members from mosques across Avon and Somerset. An invitation has now been extended for a member to attend the forum on a regular basis to discuss relevant issues.

Staff Associations

Authority members have bi-lateral meetings with local representatives of the National Black Police Association (NBPA). Members have initiated contact with the Gay Police Association and have responded to Unison correspondence about Authority work to monitor equal pay within the Constabulary.

8. Equality Monitoring Information

In 2008-09, 56% of the membership of the Police Authority were female and 44% male. 94% were White British and 6% from a Black or ethnic minority background.

In terms age profile, 6% of members were between the ages of 30 and 39; 25% between the ages of 40 and 49; 19% between the ages of 50 and 59; and 44% aged 60 or above.

During 2008 the Police Authority ran an independent member recruitment campaign. In this process, the Authority received a broader diversity of applications than in previous years. Four per cent of applicants were from minority ethnic groups, 27% were women, 5% were gay, lesbian or bisexual, 4% were people of minority faiths, 23% had caring responsibilities and 13% disclosed having a disability.

The significant minority of applicants were in the 50-59 age group. Although only 6% of applicants were the age of 40, there were some applications from 18-29 year-olds in this recruitment round.

9. Equality Impact Assessments

In 2008-09 the Authority has conducted full impact assessments of some of its key processes – the review of its Custody Visiting Scheme; development of its Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy; and role in scrutinising the use of stop and search. A Police Authority Officer has also joined the Constabulary's Impact Assessment Sub-group.

The Police Authority also participated in a joint impact assessment of Somerset Local Area Agreement Delivery Plans.

10. Training and development

This year the Police Authority has run cultural awareness and diversity training for new Custody Visitors. The Lead Member for Criminal Justice, Chair of the Equalities Working Group and three Police Authority Officers also participated in this training. It is now to be rolled out to Custody Visitor Panel Coordinators.

Police Authority Members have attended a range of relevant conferences and other development events over the course of the year, including:

- The APA Equalities Seminar and Faith Awareness event which this year focused on Judaism;
- The Constabulary Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual awareness day;
- An Equality South West awareness day focusing on issues faced by Gypsies and Travellers;

Over the course of 2008-09 the Constabulary identified force 'champions' to drive forward work around diversity strands. Members of the Authority's Equalities Working Group have linked with these champions to understand further the issues they are tackling and to support them in this.

In addition, the Equalities Working Group receive a written update on local and national equality issues to each of their meetings.

The Policy Officer with remit for Equalities is an active member of the Association of Police Authorities Equality and Diversity Officers Network and receives regular updates on key issues through this group.

11. Future Plans

The Authority recognises that there are a range of areas in which it can develop its promotion of equality and diversity. In 2009-10, it plans to build on its strengths and turn its focus to:

- Understanding and meeting the challenges within a new equalities framework including the Equality Bill, Equality Strategy for the Police Service and Equality Standard for the Police Service
- Informing communities on the changes to procedures relating to stop and account and gathering feedback on their local impact
- Continuing to develop its understanding of its communities and links with under-represented groups;
- embedding the equality impact assessment process;
- monitoring the experience of disabled people within the Constabulary, and those in contact with the Constabulary
- introducing a training and development programme for Police Authority Members and office staff which includes a structured approach to equality and diversity development; and
- ensuring appropriate policies and practices are in place to promote a fair working environment for members and staff.

We are keen to receive your feedback on our plans. If you have any questions or comments on this information in this report please contact:

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