

Inclusion London's response to the Mayor's Policing and Crime plan consultation

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-and-crime/community-engagement>

March 2013

1. Introduction

Inclusion London welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Mayor's Office Policing and Crime plan 2013 -2017. More information about the consultation is available at:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-and-crime/community-engagement>

Inclusion London

Inclusion London is a London-wide organisation Deaf and disabled people's organisation which promotes equality for London's Deaf and disabled people and provides capacity-building support for Deaf and disabled people's organisations in London.

Disabled People

- There are approximately 1.4 million deaf and disabled people in London¹

2. Inclusion London's response

Disability hate crime

Disability hate crime is the priority issue for disabled people in London.

The Director of Public Prosecutions in a public statement on disability hate crime, said, "I think we are still in the foothills when it comes to disability hate crime and supporting victim and witnesses with disabilities. Such crimes are based on ignorance, prejudice, discrimination and hate and they have no place in an open democratic society²." Inclusion London agrees with this statement

The Mayor's draft Policing and Crime plan 2013-2017 provides an opportunity to develop a positive disability hate crime strategy to prevent disability hate and improve disabled people's experience when reporting hate crime or harassment so barriers are eradicated.

¹<http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk/all-in-this-together>

²http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_hate_crime_report_2011.pdf

Inclusion London's response contains:

- Information concerning disability hate crime and harassment
- Key issues regarding disability hate crime
- Inclusion London recommendations to combat hate crime
- Inclusion London response to the set questions.

Disability hate crime statistics

- Metropolitan police figures show a tripling of reports of hate crime against disabled Londoners in the past five years but the conviction rate in London for disability hate crime is much lower than the national rate³.
- 20% of repeat victims of anti-social behavior are disabled people⁴.
- Research by Mind found that 71% of those with mental health issues had been a victim of crime in the preceding two years and 22% had been physically assaulted⁵.
- There is massive underreporting of disability hate crime (DHC): British Crime survey 2010/11 suggests there were 65,000 DHC per year but police data for 2011/12 shows that only 1,744 DHC were recorded by police – nationally.
- Hostile media portrayal of disabled people as scroungers and fraudsters is increasing DHC⁶.
- More than half of disabled people say they have experienced hostility, aggression or violence from a stranger because of their condition or impairment (56%)⁷.
- Multiple discrimination increases risk and impact of hate crime on disabled people. Disabled women are between twice and four times more likely to be sexually assaulted or experience domestic violence (DV) than non-disabled women⁸.
- There are no current figures on the impact upon disabled lesbian gay, bisexual and transvestite (LGBT) people but anecdotally it is reported

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-13752408>

http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_hate_crime_report_2011.pdf

⁴ <http://www.scope.org.uk/news/ehrc-report-disability-hate-crime>

⁵ http://www.mind.org.uk/campaigns_and_issues/report_and_resources/894_another_assault

⁶ <http://www.scope.org.uk/news/disabled-people-experiencing-benefit-scrounger-abuse>

⁷ <http://www.scope.org.uk/news/attitudes-survey>

⁸ <http://www.independentliving.org/docs2/daakit61.html>

that low level hate crimes are endemic and actual violence or hostility common.

Key issues for disabled people

There are low levels of understanding amongst disabled people that what they are experiencing is DHC and that they can report it. Many disabled people need training and support to help them identify what is unacceptable behavior by another person. There is little confidence in police and/or physical, communication and attitudinal barriers prevent disabled people reporting DHC.

Disability Hate Crime is a human rights issue – no disabled person in our society should experience harassment, discrimination or violence because of their impairment.

DHC is also a complex issue, many factors have a bearing on its prevalence for instance housing, transport, health and the provision of support to remain independent all can promote prevention or contribute to the likelihood of DHC.

Despite significant work being done by the predecessor organisation to the MOPAC (Metropolitan Police authority), Deaf and disabled people in London are still not, (in Inclusion London's view) policed fairly. Disabled people find that:

- Targeted crimes such as disability hate crime and domestic violence are not taken seriously by the police. Because of the low confidence in the police disability hate crime⁹, domestic violence (DV) and other crimes are seriously under reported.
- Deaf and disabled people have low confidence in the police's understanding of Deaf and disability equality. Whilst some efforts have been made to consult with and engage Deaf and Disabled people and their organisations, the current arrangements for gaining independent advice is considered to be inadequate as the DIAG is not adequately resourced and rarely asked to give advice. It is not encouraged to

⁹ <http://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/disability-discrimination/disability-hate-crime>

spontaneously offer advice on issues that are not on the police radar already.

- Perceived or actual lack of access and facilities for disabled people to report crimes is a significant barrier, (inaccessible front counters and police stations, inaccessible websites, lack of interpretation such as British Sign Language interpreters and text phone services).
- The practice of stop and search which appears to target young men, particularly from black and ethnic minorities, some of whom have learning difficulties or mental health issues, reduces Deaf and disabled people's confidence in the fairness of the police. There are worries that some of the people inappropriately detained by the police for their own protection are Deaf and or disabled people – mainly with learning difficulties and mental health problems.
- Since the “manhandling” of Jody McIntyre, Deaf and disabled people's confidence in the police in public order situations has diminished. Disabled people wish to use their democratic right to demonstrate against the austerity cuts and need to know they are safe to do so.
- Deaf and disabled police staff and police officer recruitment, retention and progression are lost in the scrabble for jobs, due to the reduction in staff both on the front line and in the back office. The disbanding of SAMARII group structures including the Disabled Staff Association leaves Deaf and disabled police staff without a voice.
- Representativeness and accessibility of police community engagement structures for Deaf and disabled people are inadequately resourced and supported. As a consequence, not enough Deaf or Disabled people feel able to participate in them due to access needs not being meant and their issues not taken seriously.

Inclusion London's recommendations

Strategic and operational approach

Disability hate crime (DHC) is rising. There needs to be an overarching strategic and operational approach to preventing and tackling (HC) and DHC, developed in partnership with Deaf and disabled people's organisation's. This must be a core part of the Police and Crime Strategy.

20/20/20 aims in the police and crime plan¹⁰ will not be achieved unless specific and strategic HC work is undertaken. A preventative HC strategy is needed that actively engages and holds to account other statutory agencies like housing partners. This also enables pooled resources and more effective use of resources. A Multi-Agency Hate Crime forum needs to be re-instated to implement HC strategy; oversee monitoring and reporting to increase understanding of DHC, assess agencies performance and carry out strategic awareness rising of HC. The previous HC Forum was an internationally recognised example of good practice.

Other recommendations include:

- Engaging and working with DDPOs is key to increasing reporting, raising awareness of DHC and tackling DHC on the ground. DHC training is needed – training by victims of DHC and disabled people is more effective and powerful at raising awareness and changing attitudes.
- A range of fully accessible 3rd party reporting centres (including DDPOs) is urgently needed.
- There needs to be a Disability Liaison Officer in every borough with the time and resources to devote to building relationships with Deaf and Disabled people and their organaistions and in supporting victims and witnesses of crime affecting Deaf and Disabled people.
- The Mayor and the MPS need to proactively make a stand against DHC including developing a communications strategy.
- The Police and Crime plan and the HC strategy must incorporate recommendations made in a range of reports looking at Deaf and Disabled People and Policing produced by the MPAC predecessor organization the MPA. It must also implement the Equality and Human Rights Commission detailed recommendations in their 'Out in the Open' report¹¹ including: reporting, recording and recognition issues, support and advocacy issues; improved practice and shared

¹⁰ <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Draft%20Police%20and%20Crime%20Plan%202013-2016%20CONSULTATION%20DRAFT%20FINAL.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/inquiries-and-assessments/inquiry-into-disability-related-harassment/out-in-the-open-manifesto-for-change/>

issues and prevention. The Police and Crime plan must also address the findings and recommendations from the IPCC report into the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter Francesca.

As mentioned above, the development of a Disability Hate Crime strategy is key to combating DHC. Inclusion London would welcome the opportunity to work with MOPAC to develop this important strategy.

Inclusion London's response to the set questions

1. What, if any, other objectives and goals would you add to the Mayor's objectives and goals?
 - Add to the first objective under the list of crimes: hate crimes, sexual and domestic violence.
2. What, if any, other things could be done to address police performance and resource?

Inclusion London recommends that:

- Targets are set for the reporting and detection rates for domestic violence, rape, other serious sexual offences, and hate crimes including DHC.
- Transparent, active monitoring of these types of crimes which includes accurate information about who is a victim and who is a perpetrator, including recording race, faith and ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability.
- The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) develops transparent methods to drive up current low reporting rates and equally low sanction detection rates.
- The MPS to provide accurate evidence that these serious offences are being addressed effectively to increase public confidence in the police.
- The MPA to state how data will be collected effectively and accurately on the effects of crime by race, faith and ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, given the emphasis on removing so called red tape.

- The MPS to find a balance between the right to peacefully protest with that of keeping order on the streets. Specifically the MPS to ensure that Deaf and Disabled people have the right to freely protest without their impairments used against them to prevent their participation, as in the case of Jody McIntyre. Officers to receive training and guidance to appropriately handle communication, participation and safety of Deaf and Disabled People in exercising their right to peacefully protest.
- The Metropolitan police to address the increasing sexual violence, mainly but not exclusively, targeting girls as part of their gang work, and collect evidence about the coercion of Deaf and disabled young people into gang activity through bullying and harassment.
- To increase public confidence in the police, the MPS has to communicate with London's marginalised communities, particularly those from poor white and black and ethnic minority communities through community engagement processes which are tailored to the needs of those communities and which are inclusive – including addressing the concerns of girls and women, of Deaf and Disabled people and the LGBT community – amongst others.
- Estates strategy: Many police stations are not fit for purpose not the least because they are totally inaccessible, which is not mentioned in the list of problems. There are concerns about only having one front counter opened 24 hours a day per borough because transport provides a major barrier for Deaf and disabled people so getting across the borough may be an issue. Central, 24 hour, public counters need to be in a venue that is easily accessible by public transport and be accessible to Deaf and disabled people.
- Before any police station is closed and new alternative counters open, an equality impact assessment must be undertaken for each decision, to chart the effects upon all communities of each single proposal. Issues regarding access, geographical viability, the natural neighbourhoods of different communities and whether any might be excluded by the sighting of a front counter in a particular place, need to be considered. There will be a need to combat 'Nimbi's' and sentimental attachment to icons that contravene access and health and safety. The seeming articulately and loudness of middle class, white communities needs to be balanced

- with the seeming indifference, silencing or discouraging of other communities less versed in how to complain and put their views forward. Marginalised communities will need specifically to be engaged with to chart their views on each closure and resisting proposal.
- Crime prevention desks and the like in community buildings including post offices are welcome but only if they are accessible and offer confidential space to report crime, especially considering the serpentine queue usually found in the post office where what is said by a victim of crime could be over heard!
 - We welcome the offer of home visits for every victim of crime especially of serious crime. However, sometimes victims of hate crime may feel the arrival of obvious police officers in their neighbourhood might put them in further danger and therefore alternative venues for such meeting are also welcomed.
 - Third party reporting centres are welcome. Third Party reporting is best served by close partnerships between local police and community groups and particularly when specific officers are designated to respond e.g. disability liaison officers. These DLOs can work with community groups to build confidence and provide a presence. The LGBT Liaison Officer schemes have been very effective where enough resources are given to them, there are no or very few Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) so if the MPS is serious about driving down DHC and driving up reporting and detection of DHC, DLOs need to be rolled out in all boroughs. DLOs need to have the time and support by management to actually do their job rather than have to squeeze it in on top of their everyday duties.
 - Any victim support contracts must include Deaf and Disabled People inclusion targets and financial support to make these services accessible to Deaf and Disabled people.
 - We welcome initiatives on repeat victimisation and would like to know how evidence will be collected to identify repeat victims given the red tape assault that is affecting monitoring figures and in particular the collection of intelligence about race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age and faith.
 - Support to be given to Deaf and disabled people as witnesses to crime. Deaf and Disabled people are often discounted as witnesses due to officer assumptions about impairment. Stop and

- Search initiatives need to chart the effects upon Deaf and disabled young people in particular in relation to stop and search.
- A professional response by the police is best fostered through a robust training programme which includes Disability Equality Training (DET). There is only a brief on line programme, which does not address the core issues exhibited by officers failing to interact, respond and plan policing initiatives and this needs improvement. Monitoring how police performance is increased via public satisfaction in boroughs which have had Disability Equality policy will provide a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of DET.
 - If MPS implemented the findings of the Mental Health Review of 2004, this would go a long way to building confidence in how police respond to deaths in custody. The recommendations of the various inquiries into individual deaths in custody will provide some learning points which if implemented, should decrease deaths and raise public confidence.
 - Independent custody visitors need training in DET to increase their skills in supporting people in custody and public confidence.
 - If the leadership of the MPS reflects London, then London has suddenly become overwhelmingly white and middle aged! The MPS to demonstrate tangible moves to ensure the further progression of black, ethnic minorities and women into senior posts.
 - Support to be offered to enable police officers disabled whilst working for the MPS to stay in a meaningful policing role so their knowledge and skills are not lost. This will enable the demography of the MPS to reflect the 1.4 million deaf and disabled people who live, work or socialise in the capital.
 - Has the 20% reduction in budgets over 2 years been thoroughly equality impact assessed and has or will this be published?

3. Do you think the confidence in the Metropolitan Police needs to be improved? How do you think that could be done?

- More community engagement, clearer monitoring of crimes across diversity. A disability liaison officer in every borough. All police stations to be accessible. Implement previous equality strategies,

which have made recommendations for change that will improve confidence, be more diverse as a police service at all levels, especially the top!

4. The Mayor has prioritised keeping police officer numbers high rather than keeping underused buildings open. Do you feel that the focus should be on maintaining police? Numbers or police buildings? How else could budget savings be made?

- We need police buildings that are fit for purpose. Closing down old and inaccessible buildings is a good idea. Having more counters in public is good provided they are accessible and offer confidential space.

5. What, if any, other things could be done to prevent crime?

Police Community Support Officers offer a visible and approachable presence on the streets. Police Community Support Offices more often reflect the community they police. They are able to take on roles supporting victims for example, which police officers may not be able to do. This reassurance activity helps to support victims and limits repeat victimisation. Proposed cuts in PCSOs will affect this work.

For more information contact:

Inclusion London

Can Mezzanine

49-51 East Road

London N1 6AH

Email: tracey.lazard@inclusionlondon.co.uk

Telephone: 020 7237 3181

www.inclusionlondon.co.uk

London Deaf and Disability Organisations CIC

Company registration no: 6729420