

October 2010



**Bedfordshire Police Authority**  
**Single Equality and Human**  
**Rights Scheme**  
**Annual Report 2010**

**Available in large print**

# Introduction

Bedfordshire Police Authority's vision is to be an organisation that inspires trust and confidence, that listens, responds and meets the needs of individuals and communities. To achieve this we seek to ensure that every person who receives or is affected by the Authority's activities has an experience which is fair, accessible to all, promotes positive attitudes and eliminates discrimination.

The Authority also has a duty to monitor Equality and Diversity within Bedfordshire Police which it does through a range of quarterly meetings. The Authority expects all people of Bedfordshire, including Luton, whether a resident or visitor, to be treated with respect; free from harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination.

The Authority wishes to be open and transparent in the way in which our functions, policies, roles and responsibilities are delivered. Like all public authorities, we are subject to legislation that promotes equality. We are required to comply with a range of duties to tackle discrimination and harassment and to promote equality and good relations in everything we do.

To help us consider the different needs of people we use a number of 'diversity strands', now more commonly referred to as 'protected characteristics'. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We also seek to take account of socio-economic disadvantage, language and urban/rural living.

Our Single Equality Scheme includes an action plan with seven objectives. The following pages outline progress against the actions and outcomes for each objective.

**In September 2009, in recognition of the diversity amongst the individuals and communities we represent, Bedfordshire Police Authority developed a Single Equality Scheme. One year on, this is a report to tell you how we have been doing.**

# Equality impact assessments

**ACTION: Identify priority functions, policies and procedures and complete equality impact assessments**

At January's Equality and Diversity Panel Members set a plan for Authority equality impact assessments that included approximately one prioritised area per quarter. This target is being achieved and as a result greater consideration is being given to the different impact our activity can have on people.

The following Authority equality impact assessments have been completed so far during 2010/11.

- Budget Consultation
- Vetting Policy
- Lead Members Scheme
- Chief Officer Appointments
- Equality of Access to Persons Detained in Police Custody
- Young People's Forums

**OUTCOME: Equality impact assessments are completed and published for priority functions, policies and practices.**

Outcomes are already being shaped through our equality impact assessments, particularly in relation to consultation. Recent Youth Forums gave particular consideration to and successfully involved an ethnically diverse range of young people, with different socio-economic circumstances and including those with disabilities.

The budget consultation impact assessment influenced the Community Engagement Committee decision to move away from a Citizen Panel model of consultation and is supporting the incorporation of deliberative forums with usually excluded groups within this autumn's strategic planning consultation. The impact assessment had identified a number of groups that were significantly underrepresented in last year's budget consultation. These included people aged 16-25, people with council tax bands AC and people who identify themselves as Black African.

# Promoting equality, diversity and human rights within Police Authority priorities

**ACTION:** Relevant Police Authority Committee work plans include diversity activities

The Police Authority has agreed a shared vision for both themselves and Bedfordshire Police, 'to be organisations that inspire trust and confidence'. From this the Authority developed a Business Plan with four themes to be taken forward across the committee system.

- Managing Performance
- Community Engagement
- Equality and Diversity
- Partnership working

**“The Authority is focused on tackling inequality and improving outcomes for people in vulnerable circumstances. It has supported improved policing in rural areas and is actively trying to reduce the gap between White and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) user satisfaction.” HMIC / Audit Commission Inspection Report 2010**

**OUTCOME:** Evidence is available to demonstrate that service equality and fairness contribute towards the Police Authority strategic objectives

During the last twelve months the Police Authority's Performance and Planning Committee has regularly considered the difference in satisfaction people had following interaction with the police. Comparative satisfaction of the BME community was the only poor score for Bedfordshire Police in March's HMIC Police Report Card. The issue has been treated seriously and improvements are already being seen. A commissioned review reported, changes were implemented and over the year the gap has reduced from 12.5 per cent to 8.1 per cent.

The Police Authority promoted equality more directly by contributing Members to sit on the Parity Gap Gold Group which considered qualitative comments from satisfaction surveys to identify the issues that lay behind the numbers.

In addition, both the Community Engagement and Performance and Planning Committees also provided valuable scrutiny of the Policing Pledge, supporting adherence to minimum standards that contributed to fair treatment and quality of service.

Police Authority scrutiny has focused on many other issues over the year where sections of the community had particular needs. The Performance and Planning Committee was praised by inspectors for the challenge they provided over poor performance on rape detections, questioning when detection rates would improve following increased officer numbers. The link between performance scrutiny and Authority priorities was noted and Members were described as well prepared and knowledgeable by inspectors. Members provided greater investment for rape investigation and the quality of cases reaching court is said to have improved.

## **Communication, consultation and engagement plans take account of the views of all communities**

**ACTIONS:** Include diversity questions within surveys and consultations and ensure that results are considered in relation to results.

**Collate details of statistically significant or qualitatively important differences in the responses and disseminate feedback to Police Authority Members via committee briefings.**

This year saw the launch of the Local Confidence Survey commissioned by the Authority to provide an accurate reflection of the concerns of the county's population. The survey is representative by age, gender, ethnicity and

geography. It is predominately conducted through randomly dialled telephone surveys and also includes face to face interviews and use of a translator to ensure representativeness. Demographic data on respondents suggests that the Local Confidence Survey does not access some parts of our community and so we must do more to ensure as many people as possible have an opportunity to be heard.

**OUTCOME: Evidence available that diverse communities' voice is listened to and acted upon.**

In July the Police Authority ran a Blue Light survey where the questions were based on known concerns and the respondent demographics were monitored. The results were used in the August Complaints and Professional Standards Committee to indicate any significant differences between the samples available. Through providing this information the Authority supported a Force equality impact assessment on accessibility to the complaints system with views it had collected from the community.

Since November 2009 Members have been attending and evaluating attendance at Community Safety Forums which meet regularly to determine local policing priorities. Members report on how visibly reflective attendees are of the community across a number of diversity strands. These forums have been found not to attract usually excluded groups to attend.

A similar point was drawn out by this year's Police Authority inspection that described our consultation with vulnerable people as limited. Feeding back the results and outcomes of consultation activity needs to be improved. A first step will be to make better use of our website for this purpose. Since May the Authority website has included an Equality, Diversity and Human Rights page linked directly from the main homepage.

# Monitor Bedfordshire Police's single equality scheme and governance arrangements

**ACTION:** Receive regular reports on progress against equality related objectives set through the strategic planning process  
Conduct dip-sampling exercise of force Equality Impact Assessments to determine effectiveness of this process.

**OUTCOME:** Improvement against targets through committee reports

The Police Authority contributed to and approved new equality and diversity governance arrangements over the last year. This has included a greater role for the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel that meets every three months to scrutinise Bedfordshire Police on equality issues, and thereby hold the Chief Constable to account. The panel has been chaired by Police Authority Member Shahzad Choudhry.

The Panel Chair has been a particular advocate for a national framework, known as the Equality Standard for the Police Service, developing his own expertise at national events. In July the Authority agreed that progress against the standard be reported quarterly to the Panel for scrutiny. Members supported the publication of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Force which included detailed governance arrangements.

Scrutiny of Force equality impact assessments takes place through a process of dip-sampling. In April the National Police Improvement Agency ran a training session in Kempston for all committee chairs. Since then impact assessments have been included on committee agendas or included Members as consultees.

Police Authority Members have also been involved in the establishment of Independent Advisory Groups and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel currently sits on the Strategic IAG at Force level. The Chair of the Youth Panel is currently working with the Force to scope a Youth IAG.

# Promoting equality, diversity and human rights in strategic planning

**ACTION:** Include performance improvement targets within the Police Authority business plan which promote equality & diversity.

**OUTCOME:** Year on year improvement against targets set

This year's Authority Business Plan includes a range of activities to improve performance in this area. These included working with the force on the Equality Standard, and considering ways to dip-sample complaints resulting from Stop and Search. Member involvement shaped the Force's Critical Incidents policy, promoting equality, diversity and human rights considerations.

In April 2010 and despite the financial challenges the Police Authority agreed to continue to set a police officer recruitment target of ten percent from BME groups. In doing this, Members expressed that working toward a reflective workforce was a long held and consistent aspiration. Bedfordshire reported BME recruitment at almost seven percent in the year to April 2010, one of the highest rates amongst county forces nationally.

**“The Authority has a strong commitment to equality and diversity.” HMIC / Audit Commission Inspection Report**

This year the Authority's Strategic Planning Working Group has discussed a longer-term strategic direction for Bedfordshire Police with a possible focus on young people.

# Fair and proportionate employment procedures

**ACTION:** Inform the Human Resources Committee of the implications of the Police Authority's statutory equality employment duties

The Police Authority's Human Resources Committee receives detailed workforce information considering recruitment, retention and progression across the Bedfordshire Police, particularly in relation to gender and ethnicity. In particular, the Committee shaped and scrutinised an equal pay audit, broadening its scope to cover a more comprehensive range of diversity strands. A Positive Action Strategy has been introduced by the Force and this is actively monitored by the Police Authority.

In April the Police Authority ran a number of compulsory Human Rights and Critical Incidents training sessions for Members and Officers. A significant proportion of Independent Custody Visitors also attended. To support the wider development of this agenda across the sector Members and Volunteers from Thames Valley and Hertfordshire Police Authorities also attended in smaller numbers. During the last year more general Equality and Diversity training has been provided to three Members and one Officer as part of their induction.

**OUTCOME:** The Human Resources Committee is aware of the equality duties and informed of the Police Authority's employment makeup when considering appointments.

Recruiting and retaining a visibly representative workforce is a key challenge for policing, as it is important to remind the public that the police service is there for all people. As an organisation with a similar employer brand, the

**"The Authority works well with the Force to improve the make-up of the workforce. Members helped develop a Force positive action strategy and worked with the Force on a diversity recruitment campaign."**

**HMIC / Audit Commission  
Inspection Report 2010**

Police Authority has some of the same challenges when recruiting a Secretariat to support Members.

In the last twelve months the Police Authority has appointed a Policy and Project Officer and an Administration Officer. In an effort to enhance the diversity of candidates the Authority advertised more widely, including at the University of Bedfordshire in Luton. This resulted in a range of applicants that better reflected Bedfordshire's ethnic diversity, however this group were less well reflected amongst shortlisted applicants.

The ethnic minority population of Bedfordshire was estimated to be 18% (mid-2007) with significant variation between Bedford Borough (14.5%), Central Bedfordshire (2.7%) and Luton (32%). The county's ethnic diversity is expected to increase under housing and population plans for the Milton Keynes South Midlands region.

The Authority's Membership represents the broad gender, ethnic and geographic diversity of the county, performing well above the average for police authorities. A recent equality impact assessment looking at accessibility to detainees by custody visitors noted that these volunteers are also reflective of Bedfordshire's diverse ethnic heritage.

## **Statutory partnerships demonstrate commitment to equality**

**ACTIONS:** Request that disaggregated data is provided through the development of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships' annual strategic assessments and Children's' Trusts 'Children and Young Peoples Plans'.

Identify mechanisms being used by Local Strategic Partnerships, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Children's Trusts to engage with diverse groups to determine community priorities.

**Provide information to partners on Police Authority strategic priorities, including equality objectives**

**OUTCOME: Evidence is available to demonstrate that the promotion of equality across all diversity strands is in place.**

The Authority is well placed to consider socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decision making, as outlined by the new Equality Act. Our Vice Chair has had involvement in Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and has subsequently made a significant contribution to the development of child poverty strategies.

Bedfordshire's three Community Safety Partnerships all make use of Mosaic and other tools to help partners understand the diverse identities and needs of different neighbourhoods. The comprehensive range of services offered across Community Safety Partnerships has also supported joint action in neighbourhoods of particular socio-economic disadvantage. This may develop further through Operation Vision over the next year.

In July the Police Authority presented Local Confidence Survey data by gender, age, ethnicity, disability and geography to Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board. This showed that men were less confident in the criminal justice system than women and that confidence declined rapidly for those over forty. This analysis should allow for more targeted communication and engagement.

The Police Authority has also contributed to the development of partnership priorities. For example the Authority supported the inclusion of hate crime a priority for the Central Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership.