

**Devon and Cornwall Police Authority**

**3 June 2005**

Open for the purposes of FOI

Report of the Chief Executive

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**Race Equality Scheme (PA/05/269)**

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (i) that the Race Equality Scheme be approved and adopted**
- (ii) That the Terms of Reference of the Human Resources Committee be amended to include “The approval, amendment and monitoring of the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan.”**

**Introduction**

1. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires public bodies to produce and publish a race equality scheme and revise it on a regular basis.
2. The Authority’s first scheme was published in May 2002, the revised document builds upon the work from that first scheme.
3. The proposed Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008 is included with the agenda.
4. It will be necessary to review and amend the Action Plan contained within the Scheme as further consultation and community engagement takes place. It is important that this is a dynamic document which reflects ongoing work, requirements and new information becoming available.

**Background Information**

5. The legislation places a general duty on authorities to:
  - Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
  - Promote equality of opportunity ; and
  - Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.
6. In order to comply with the general duty there are specific duties that the Authority must meet:
  - To prepare and publish a Race Equality Scheme; and
  - To monitor the authority’s employment procedure and practices

7. The Authority's Consultation Officer has met with representatives of minority groups and an opportunity to comment on the draft scheme has been made available on the authority's website. In addition letters inviting people to comment on the draft scheme have been sent to relevant organisations throughout Devon and Cornwall. Detailed information about the consultation undertaken is provided as Appendix 1.

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## Race Equality Scheme Consultation

This report presents a summary of the Race Equality Scheme action plan. It also describes the Police Authority's aims, achievements so far, and the outcomes of the consultation exercises that have been carried out to date.

Based on feedback from a series of consultation exercises, the Police Authority Race Equality Scheme will be updated, amended and improved in line with the advice given by representatives of minority ethnic communities.

This is currently a work in progress and further consultation exercises are to be carried out based on the feedback from the current exercises. Impact assessments on Police Authority policies will also be carried out in due course.

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## Race Equality Scheme Consultation

### Action Plan:

- Promote Race Equality Scheme (RES) to diverse communities
- Consult on Race Equality Scheme (wording, design, appearance, layout, content etc)
- Consult on Race Equality Strategy
- Review Police Authority policies in order to assess any potential impact (both actual and perceived) on minority communities.

### Aims:

- To involve ethnic minority communities in designing the action plan
- To liaise with Force Diversity Team and BCU Diversity Managers
- Make the consultation process representative of Devon and Cornwall's entire diverse population
- To involve young people's groups such as language schools, Youth Parliament, Plymouth Youth Service etc in the consultation process
- To develop partnerships with other local authorities so we can work together and share resources
- To develop a database of representatives from local communities to advise us on how to implement the scheme, training issues, improving services to minority communities etc.
- To contact local colleges and universities to make them aware of the scheme, give their comments, and act as potential distributors. Also ask for links such as Diversity Group at Exeter University and foreign students at Plymouth University
- Contact Workers Union for regional Black Workers' Group

### Achievements So Far:

- We have liaised with the Force Diversity Team who in turn are in contact with BCU Diversity Managers. We are now working jointly on our RES consultation exercises.
- Shei Ling Wong (Chief Executive - Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association) and Dr Paul Newgrass (Vice-President of Exeter Hebrew Congregation) are both willing to advise us on how to implement the scheme, training issues, improving services to minority communities etc.
- Contacts have been made and the potential to work jointly with other local authorities has been achieved with Plymouth City Council and Exeter BME Consultation Partnership. On May 18<sup>th</sup> a consultation event has been organised jointly by Plymouth City Council, the Police Authority, The Police and the Health service to consult with Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The event will be held in the Greenbank Neighbourhood Office as Greenbank and Mutley are the areas in Plymouth with the highest population of ethnic minority groups. The event will be advertised in a letter circulated to all the houses in the area and flyers will also be posted and circulated in the area. The event will be held from 9am to 9pm and will be organised in the form of a drop-in polling station so people can turn up as and when they choose.
- The Race Equality Scheme is now available to view and comment on via the Police Authority Website. This fact has been widely advertised through a press release in the local media as well as being publicised on local radio. This has resulted in 41 'hits' however; as yet no feedback has been given. A tool has been used to ensure that people who access the site more than once using the same computer terminal will only be counted as one 'hit'.
- A simplified glossy summary of the RES has been designed as a consultation tool; this is also available to view on the Police Authority Website.

- Through discussions with Shei Ling Wong (Chief Executive - Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association), Sonia Francis-Mills (Devon Race Equality Council) and Carola Salvadori (Plymouth and District Race Equality Council) we have established links into minority ethnic communities. They will provide us with contacts and mailing lists as and when we need them.
- Sonia Francis-Mills and Carola Salvadori advised us on which communities need to be involved in order to make our consultation sample representative
- A consultation exercise with 34 13 to 14 year olds has been organised (18<sup>th</sup> May) and will be used as an initial tool to find out how best to consult with young people on the RES.
- Further consultation interviews have been organised with Mandeep Sandhu from the Cornwall anti racism project (6 May) and a representative from the Gypsy Traveller community (date as yet to be confirmed).

### **Outcomes Of Consultation So Far:**

- Meet requests to provide translations of RES as well as any other relevant information/leaflets.
- Try to gain the confidence and trust of all sections of the community. Different cultures have different attitudes towards the Police as highlighted during consultation with Shei Ling Wong (Chief Executive - Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association) and Maria Wu (Secretary - Chinese Association). They highlighted that the Chinese community respect authority and they do not understand why firmer action is not taken with some of the nuisance youths who terrorise the community in large gangs.
- Shei Ling Wong and Maria Wu felt the introduction in the RES was useful but that communities need more information in this section such as 'access to information and services' which is 'hidden' much later on in the document.
- It was felt that members of the public would be more interested in the general information outlined in the scheme as well as information that is useful to them (such as contact numbers, their rights, useful information etc) and that few people would want to read about policies and statutory requirements etc.
- Shei Ling Wong and Maria Wu believe the majority of communities will not read such a lengthy document and a summary should be produced with a different title (Race Equality Scheme has negative connotations to some), and with pictures explaining simply what this means to the individual. This would need to be available in other languages. The red/white and blue/white consultation forms were felt to be attractive and a similar layout in A5 size booklet would be the preferred format incorporating the Commission for Racial Equality logo as well as the Police Authority/Force logo (the Police Authority/Force logo frightens some people). It was even suggested that the Police Authority/Force logo would put people off picking up the leaflet in the first place due to fear and a lack of trust in the Police. Shei Ling Wong and Maria Wu believe the full RES is only useful for officers.
- Shei Ling Wong and Maria Wu thought that the Chinese community would want to know what sanctions would be imposed if the RES was not followed by members of staff. An example was given of an alleged racist attitude of an officer in Plympton the previous night towards a member of the Chinese community (this is now being followed up). Rumour of one alleged incident like this will spread throughout the community and confidence in the police could be affected.
- It was also highlighted that some communities wanted to know how to complain when they had repeatedly reported crimes and no action appeared to be taken.
- There was also a concern that actions outlined in the scheme should be 'owned' so that staff had a direct responsibility to ensure that the Scheme was adhered to. They were concerned that the scheme should not be "just words" to fulfil a statutory requirement.

- With regards to consultation it was highlighted that a lot of people, particularly Black and Minority Ethnic communities do not have any trust or confidence in the police so any marketing or consultation must be done with that borne in mind. In particular the Chinese community sees the police as people to be obeyed and respected so what may appear to us to be a request for information to be volunteered, may seem to them to be obligatory.
- Dr Paul Newgrass (Vice-President of Exeter Hebrew Congregation) has suggested that the Police should not alone be responsible for promoting race equality. He has stated that the Police and the Police Authority are “just one party to the debate/dialogue that could be established at local/community level”. Implying that we need to work in partnership with other local authorities to promote race equality.
- When asked which of the Police Authority’s roles and functions he felt affected him or the group he represents, Dr Paul Newgrass suggested “Local community police in Exeter (Neighbourhood Beat Managers) covering the synagogue area near Mary Arches” and “Free Diversity Officers for wider issues or events”.
- Dr Newgrass believes that the best way of carrying out consultation with members of diverse minority ethnic groups would be to establish individual contact with leaders of these groups – as has been achieved in the Jewish Community.
- In order to encourage members of the Jewish Community to take part in our consultation exercises Dr Newgrass suggests marketing the event and it’s purposes would help.
- Dr Newgrass believes that to make information accessible we must establish a forum for local debate on diversity/equality issues instead of just responding to incidents. However, he states that this is not primarily a Police issue but should be part of Police/Public dialogue. He believes there are too many small groups trying to do the same thing.

### **Interview with Mandeep Sandhu from the Cornwall anti racism project and Tanya Hayward**

- **Format:** Mandeep agreed with the proposed glossy leaflet format suggested by the Chinese representatives. She highlighted that BME groups need to know their rights (such as when reporting a racist incident or making a complaint) and that these should be clearly presented in the scheme. She also suggested that more information on how to access services should be included. BME groups need to know where they can go to be listened to. Mandeep said she had been informed of occasions when members of BME groups had tried to report a racist incident at a station but were told they couldn’t because the Diversity Officer wasn’t there.
- **Actions:** Must take details of the ethnicity of complainant as well as the officer the complaint is about. This will highlight if a certain minority group is experiencing more negative feedback from the Police than other groups. Improve confidence in the complaint system by providing feedback of the outcome to the complainant. Put ACPO hate crime manual in all police stations so that people and officers can refer to it (this would highlight the fact that all officers should know how to deal with a reported racist incident). Look at Cornwall independently to Devon when conducting impact assessments (not one size fits all!). For example employment recruitment in a more rural, sparsely populated area. Make BME groups more aware of career options within the force. Let communities know what actions come out of the scheme and who they are to be achieved by. Improve links between the Special Branch and Diversity Officers so that local stations and communities can be kept informed of issues such as when the BNP visit local areas. This way the Police will be prepared for any potential backlash.
- **Training:** Make sure that those who deal with complaints are given training in race equality issues. Train all officers on use of language as officers sometimes do not realise that what they are saying may cause offence to some people. Officers must be aware of different cultures’ beliefs and attitudes when investigating incidents. Make performance and reaction to racist incidents standard at all police stations so that it isn’t a lottery of where the incident is reported and who the incident is

reported to. Make officers aware of how to deal with racist incidents (Mandeep highlighted reports that people had been turned away by officers stating that only the diversity officer could deal with such complaints).

- Suggestions: Need to encourage people to report racist incidents by improving trust in the Police by demonstrating that something will be done and by feeding back the outcome to the victim. Mandeep suggested that people who mistrust or fear the Police might prefer to report incidents and grievances at a BME forum or a drop-in centre. These forums could be designed with vulnerable people in mind such as women and children. Mandeep highlighted that it is the women and children who are at home during the day who are more likely to suffer from racist abuse but who are unwilling or unable to come forward because of their beliefs or language barriers. A drop in centre could be held somewhere not associated with the Police as this might make people feel more comfortable reporting an incident. At BME forums/liaison meetings have an officer in attendance who has the power to create change so that people's suggestions/comments are adhered to. Employ a non police officer (civilian staff) who could have links into anti-racism groups and Race Equality Councils, who would be a first stop for BME groups to discuss any problems they may have.
- Additional Comments: People's negative experiences of the Police are more likely to be remembered and will have a stronger effect on people's attitudes than positive experiences. Past failures on behalf of the Police need to be acknowledged so people know that we realise we have made a mistake and are trying to improve our services. Focus groups and workshops have been successful for Cornwall County Council when consulting on their RES. They give the opportunity to break down issues raised in the RES and make them easier to understand and discuss. They also provide an opportunity to audit policies and carry out impact assessments. Cornwall County Council paid attendees £50 each which resulted in a good turn out.

### **Interview with Romany Gypsies Maggie Smith-Bendell and Freedom Cooper Bridgwater 19 May 2005**

- It was spelt out that there are 4 types of groups, which many lump into one "gypsy" category:
  - English Romanies
  - New Age Travellers
  - Irish (old) – who have links to Romanies and still respect traditions
  - Irish (new)
- These are very different groups who speak different languages. For the purposes of this consultation the focus is on the English Romany community.

### **What needs to improve in the Gypsy/police relationship?**

- Feedback: Reiterated example of incidents where the local communities have no idea how incidents they have reported have been progressed. *(However this is an area the Force needs to improve upon in general rather than being a particular community issue)*
- Attitude (on both sides): Fear and distrust of the police has been bred into the gypsies over generations and there is a perception that the police do not always engage well with gypsy communities.
- Respect: When 'raiding' gypsy camps and properties, it was requested that officers refrain from damaging doors and instead knock and wait for an answer! Examples were quoted of alleged assaults on gypsies by police officers and bailiffs during evictions.

## How can the police gain the trust of the Gypsy Community?

### 1 **Respect**

Gypsies are very proud of their properties and space and respect others properties too, although they are not often given the opportunity to demonstrate that.

### 2 **Training**

Maggie would be willing to help train police officers in ways and cultures of Gypsies and she also provided a copy of a guide produced in conjunction with the NHS to educate health professionals as an example of good practice. Maggie admitted that there is a lot of work required on both sides as not all Gypsies were good and likewise there are some police officers who do not always act in the most appropriate way - the actions of both sets can be very damaging. Maggie would like to go out with officers and observe them during stop and searches and not interfere – but then offer constructive feedback afterwards.

### 3 **Don't assume**

Gypsies believe officers' suspect them of offences and question how they can afford the goods and wagons that they possess. However Maggie advised that Gypsies don't have bank accounts or hidden assets in the way of pensions etc and all their worldly goods are on display. Most work extremely hard for cash collecting scrap, shelling peas and picking fruit and their money is invested in ensuring their vans and wagons are in good condition. Gypsies resent the way some officers are perceived as assuming their assets are obtained through crime proceeds.

### 4 **Be aware of cultural differences**

An example was given that Gypsies will not allow a break in their funeral procession and often many travel for miles forming long convoys. This can be seen as a nuisance to motorists and police but if police assist as they have done in some locations it is very well received and allows them to mourn in their traditional way.

## Communication

### 1 **Publication in Romani Language?**

The Romany Community would not allow publication of the Race Equality Scheme in the Romani and anyone translating it for the police would be considered an outcast. The Romany community could not afford for their language to be understood by the police as they use it to communicate privately (an example however was given of how this is used in a negative way to warn other gypsies who may have stolen goods that the police were here and to hide them!!!)

### 2 **Be wary of terminology.**

20 years ago the term Gypsy was used in a derogatory way and Romany Gypsies preferred to call themselves travellers. Since the emergence of new age travellers and the Irish travellers the Gypsies are claiming back their names as they wish to retain a separate identity. Gypsies are very proud and clean. Gypsies do not like to be called travellers. Gypsies also self-police and do not tolerate bad behaviour within their communities.

## **RES Audience**

In terms of who to communicate the RES to – it must be the children and younger generation. Therefore the RES must be in a format attractive to children. Maggie suggested getting into schools working along with the gypsy educational teachers. Maggie also suggested working in youth clubs and using pictures and booklets.