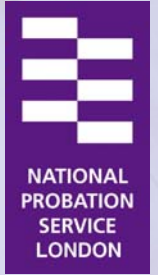**Evaluation of the London–wide Race Hate Crime Forum as a model of good practice between statutory Criminal Justice Agencies and Voluntary Sector Non- Governmental Organisations**

**January 2007**

**Preface**

Preface to The London-wide Race Hate Crime Forum: A model of good practice for "Third-Tier"multi-Agency Partnerships Against Race Hate Crime in Europe.

We are delighted to commend this evaluation of a model of multi agency good practice for your consideration and, we hope, replication.  London has an important place in the world, with a population of over 7 million people, 14 major Faith groups, over 200 cultural communities speaking 300 languages or dialects. It is one of the most diverse cities in the world and benefits greatly from the vibrant energy of its constantly changing population. London and the UK have long recognised the devastating disproportionate impact that hate - and particularly racist hate - crime has on individual victims, their families, friends and the communities from which they come.

London Probation has spent a number of years developing expertise in containing and changing the attitudes of offenders who are at risk of offending because of hate, and under our leadership, guided the Reducing Hate Crime in Europe project (RHCE)/  This project developed the concept of evaluating London's unique Race Hate Crime Forum as a model of good practice. London Probation has been an active statutory member of the forum since it was established in 2003.   We fully recognise and support the added value of multi-agency and inter-community involvement in this area of work.  The benefits of such full involvement will help to better protect the public and reduce the numbers of future victims of hate crime.

This work has been jointly commissioned by the Reducing Hate Crime in Europe project and the London-wide Race Hate Crime Forum (LRHCF) and offers positive evidence of a joint approach that works. The partnership developed by the RHCE and the forum has enabled an impressive and inspirational piece of work to be documented and made available to others both in the UK and Europe.

We would like in particular to thank Paul Iganski for a thorough academic review of the Forum in a style that is very readable. Thanks also to Alan Weston who manages the RHCE Project, Chitra Karve who as Director of Equality and Diversity supports its work and the LRHCF manager Bennett Obong without whom this work would not have been possible.

**Suhail Aziz**                                  **David Scott**
**Chair, London Probation Board**              **Chief Officer,**
                                               **London Probation**

# THE LONDON-WIDE RACE HATE CRIME FORUM: A MODEL OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR 'THIRD-TIER' MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST RACE HATE CRIME IN EUROPE

## Abstract

The London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum was established in 2003 to promote co-ordination and co-operation between the key agencies responsible for dealing with race hate crime within each of the thirty-two London boroughs and also between agencies across the capital. This paper reports the findings from a qualitative case study carried out in May, June and July 2006 to evaluate the Forum as a model of good practice for multi-agency working against race hate crime that might be transferable to other cities and regions in Europe. The project was commissioned by the Reducing Hate Crime in Europe project, and supported by London Probation Service and by the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum. The research findings are set in the context of a review of the policy literature which indicates that the importance of co-operation between the police and other statutory agencies in tackling race hate crime, and between the statutory agencies and NGOs, has long been recognised in European countries and in EU policy recommendations. However, it is also observed that multi-agency working at city-wide level which provides the rationale for the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum has been neglected by the policy literature. The research for this paper shows that the Forum has initiated and manages a process of review, accountability and action that has stimulated policy activity within the London boroughs, and by those agencies that operate at the pan-London level as well as at the local level. This paper proposes the Forum as a potential model for multi-agency working in other cities and regions in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe where agencies dealing with race hate crime at the local level also have responsibilities at city-wide or regional level.

Paul Iganski
Department of Sociology
University of Essex

**Introduction: multi-agency working and race hate crime in Europe**
The importance of co-operation between the police and other statutory agencies in tackling race hate crime, and between the statutory agencies and NGOs, has long been recognised in European countries. Significantly, the principle of multi-agency cooperation is enshrined in the European Constitution. Article III-257 states that: 'The Union shall endeavour to ensure a high level of security through measures to prevent and combat crime, racism and xenophobia, and *through measures for coordination and cooperation between police and judicial authorities and other competent authorities*…'[1] The provenance of this article lies in the recommendations of the Kahn Commission in 1995, which set the agenda for policy intervention against racism and xenophobia for the next decade. Amongst its recommendations the Commission called for 'close coordination between the police, the courts, the local authorities and the anti-discrimination centres' and recommended that the police 'should play a role in developing an integrated, preventive security policy in close cooperation with other local authority services, commercial circles and the public.'

Despite the recognition of its significance the practice of multi-agency working has been subject to little attention in the European Union reports on race hate crime. For instance, in its recent report on *Racist Violence in 15 EU Member States*, the EUMC suggests that: 'Although the majority of Member States suffer from a lack of comprehensive data collection and accompanying practical responses to racist crime and violence, examples do exist of 'good practice' responses to racist violence' (EUMC 2005: 193). However, in the few examples of good practice initiatives that the EUMC report provides there is little mention of multi-agency working. Where some indications of cooperation between agencies are provided the information is so scant as to be of little value in informing good practice. Similarly, in its recent report on *Policing Racist Crime and Violence* the EUMC concludes that it is 'essential that the police work closely in cooperation with all the other agencies who can contribute to the eradication of racism, especially other public authorities and — most importantly — community groups and NGOs' (Oakley 2005: 45). This echoes the recommendations of the Kahn Commission ten years earlier. However, policy guidance, or indeed any information, about how such cooperation should work in practice is absent from the EUMC report.

Evidence of multi-agency working in EU countries is also patchy in the scholarly literature on policy intervention against race hate crime in Europe. Rob Witte's analysis of state responses to racist violence in Britain, France and the Netherlands for the period 1945 to 1995 indicates that in Britain the multi-agency approach was 'the key feature of state policy against racist violence' (Witte 1996: 77) for the period, but there are no similar indications in his analysis of the policy response in France and the Netherlands. Likewise, in Björgo and Witte's edited collection of essays on *Racist Violence in Europe* (1993) the only evidence of multi-agency working against race hate crime is from the United Kingdom in a case study of Plaistow in East London (Bowling and Saulsbury 1993). Despite it being suggested in the volume that the multi-agency approach is 'commonplace in several other European countries' (Husbands 1993: 122-23) no evidence of practice is provided from any other country apart from the UK. Some evidence of multi-agency working against race hate crime elsewhere in Europe is provided in the Commission for Racial

---

[1] Emphasis added.

Equality's publication *Racially Motivated Crime. Responses in Three European Cities* (CRE 1997). In the case of the German city of Frankfurt in the early to mid 1990s, the publication details instances of close cooperation on racist crime between the police and the public prosecution service and cooperation between the city's Department for Multicultural Affairs and other statutory agencies. No indication is provided, however, about whether any regular institutionalised processes for multi-agency working had been put in place. In stark contrast to the case of Frankfurt a lack of cooperation between agencies in tackling race hate crime was noted in the case of Rome. Similarly, in Lyons, the third city studied; there was no evidence of policy cooperation between the statutory agencies or cooperation between the police and voluntary sector organisations. In both Rome and Lyons, the prevailing national political climate at the time the case studies were carried out was hardly conducive to the development of committed policy intervention against race hate crime as both were characterised by electoral advances of far-right political parties and strong anti-immigration sentiment (Dummett 1997: 136). Overall then, evidence of multi-agency working against racist crime in countries apart from the UK appears to be sparse[2]. In the case of the scholarly literature a search of the leading English language journals concerned with 'race', ethnicity and migration studies, social policy and crime and criminal justice from January 2000 to the time of writing (August 2006) produced no articles on inter-agency cooperation against racist hate crime.[3]

Given the apparent contradiction between the recognition in the European Union of the significance of multi-agency working against race hate crime and the paucity of policy and scholarly attention to the issue outside of the UK this paper provides an in-depth analysis of one multi-agency initiative, the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum, that it might serve as a model of good practice that is transferable to other EU Member States. The multi-agency approach to dealing with race hate crime has a long provenance in the UK and central government has a long record of evaluating multi-agency working and issuing recommendations for good practice.[4] Given the plethora of official guidance on multi-agency cooperation on tackling race hate in the UK and the paucity of information on multi-agency cooperation elsewhere in the EU it is instructive to briefly review the history of policy exhortation and the dimensions of policy guidance in the UK to set the context for the discussion that follows of the work of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum.

**Multi-agency working against race hate crime in the United Kingdom**
The reference point commonly used in policy literature for the origins of multi-agency working in the UK is the 1986 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee report Racial Attacks and Harassment which proposed a multi-agency approach as critical for dealing effectively with race hate crime (U.K. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 1986). Multi-agency working subsequently became one of the dominant official state responses on the future policy agenda for tackling race hate crime over the next two decades. The Home Affairs Committee recommended that police forces and local authorities in areas with appreciable ethnic minorities should develop a multi-agency response to the problem of race

---

[2] This observation is based on an evaluation of English language publications only.
[3] *British Journal of Criminology, Critical Social Policy, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Ethnicities, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of European Social Policy, Journal of Social Policy.*
[4] The notion that co-operation between agencies is an effective strategy for dealing with crime more generally has an even longer provenance (Bowling and Saulsbury 1993: 222).

hate crime that would include local authority education, housing and social services departments, along with the police, Crown Prosecution Service, the local Race Equality Council where one exists, and voluntary organizations involved in supporting victims of race hate crime. Pilot racial incident prevention panels, established by the Metropolitan Police in the early 1980s, bringing together local authorities, teachers, community relations officers, minority community groups, and the police (Witte 1996: 67), provided an early model for the multi-agency approach.

The Home Affairs Committee's recommendations were strongly supported by the Government at the time and the Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention established an interdepartmental working party — the Racial Attacks Group — chaired by the Home Office, with representatives from key government departments[5] along with the Metropolitan Police, Commission for Racial Equality, and the Joint Committee Against Racialism. The terms of reference for the Group were to consider the potential for increasing co-operation between the police and other agencies in preventing and responding to race hate crime and the provision of support for the development of local multi-agency working. The Racial Attacks Group first met in February 1987 and subsequently held thirteen meetings, inviting oral and written evidence from organizations and individuals, to gather information about the nature of racial attacks and harassment and actual or potential measures for tackling the problem. It also visited a number of areas to gather first hand views of the local agencies and members of minority ethnic communities.

The Racial Attacks Group's first report — *The Response to Racial Attacks and Harassment* — published in 1989 concluded that although it:

> found some instances where two different agencies were working together successfully, it soon became clear that there were very few examples of effective multi-agency liaison. Moreover — and this we found particularly depressing — we encountered relatively few examples of effective unilateral action by individual agencies (U.K. Home Office 1989).

The report consequently proposed that multi-agency panels should be established so that the key statutory agencies along with community and voluntary groups could work together systematically at the local level. The report's recommendations set in motion a significant volume of specialist guidance over the following decade on multi-agency initiatives coupled with evaluations of the extent to which the guidance was being followed.

Following the publication of the Racial Attacks Group's report the Government re-established the Group and a second report *Sustaining the Momentum* was published in 1991 which reviewed the extent to which the first report's recommendations had been successfully implemented (U.K. Home Office 1991). Further guidance on multi-agency initiatives was published by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) in 1995 produced following a two-day seminar that brought together practitioners with experience in multi-agency working. Notably, the CRE guidance emphasised the distinction between multi-agency working and multi-agency panels, observing that:

---

[5] Home Office, Scottish Office, Department of Health, Department of Education and Science and the Department of Environment.

Multi-agency working takes place when agencies responsible for dealing with racial harassment work together as partners to address the problem….Multi-agency working means a better service for victims of racial harassment or violence (CRE 1995: 7).

Whereas:

Multi-agency panels go further. They provide a formal structure for the agencies' work, allowing them to plan and evaluate activities, develop policies, improve practices and resource and support new initiatives. Multi-agency working is valuable, but the development of a formal panel provides an engine to generate momentum and ensure a consistent response (CRE 1995: 7).

A third report from the Racial Attacks Group, *Taking Steps*, followed shortly thereafter in 1996. Drawing from questionnaires sent to the key statutory agencies at local level to determine how successfully the multi-agency approach was working in practice, the report observed a number of difficulties limiting the effectiveness of multi-agency working. Amongst those difficulties it noted a lack of trust between agencies and a lack of understanding by agencies of the roles and priorities of other agencies involved in local partnerships. Further guidance and models of multi-agency working were provided by the report (U.K. Home Office 1996). The Racial Incidents Standing Committee was established in 1997 by the Home Office to continue the work of the Racial Attacks Group, and in its report published in 1999, *In This Together*, it observed that 'successful multi-agency panels have tended to rely heavily on the commitment of a few individuals. Where high level commitment has been lacking, panels have floundered and turned into talking shops or have collapsed' (U.K. Home Office 1999: 4). A year later, research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggested that although 'multi-agency working has now come to be the accepted wisdom for all crime and disorder and community safety matters', multi-agency forums for dealing with race hate crime had not been established in some of the biggest towns and cities in Britain (Lemos 2000: 47).

Some key observations can be made about the succession of official policy recommendations and evaluations of multi-agency working against race hate crime that are relevant to the discussion presented in this paper of the work of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum. They are relevant to proposing the Forum as a model of good practice for other cities and regions in Europe:

- As noted above, virtually all of the policy guidance in the UK has focused on multi-agency co-operation on the ground at the local level.
- Within that policy guidance, two-tiers of multi-agency working have been explicitly recognised in distinctions drawn between partnerships at the service level of case-work, and partnerships at the level of policy-making, and the guidance has included recommendations about the separation of activities between these two tiers.
- Little attention has been given to multi-agency partnerships at the wider strategic and geographic level at which the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum operates, as will be discussed below. Whilst the third report of the Racial Attacks Group (Home Office 1996) acknowledged that a policy forum might be appropriate for a wider geographical base at borough, district or county-wide level (Home Office 1996: 53), the point was not developed in the report or elsewhere in the policy literature.
- With regard specifically to the evaluations that have been carried out of multi-agency working in the UK, whilst some of the research has been extensive in

terms of the number and geographical distribution of the agencies included, and other research has focused in-depth on multi-agency working in a specific geographic location (cf. Saulsbury and Bowling 1991), none of the research has addressed the third tier beyond policy and casework partnerships at the local level that provides the rationale for the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum.

**Multi-agency cooperation city-wide in London**
In the late 1990s a further significant official recommendation was made about multi-agency working in the UK that had a direct influence over the establishment of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report published in 1999 (Macpherson 1999) noted gaps in the 'co-operation, sharing of information and learning between agencies', and recommended that the degree of multi-agency co-operation and information exchange[6] be included as one of a number of performance indicators in a Ministerial Priority to be established for all Police Services with the aim of increasing the trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities.[7]

The Metropolitan Police Authority[8] formed a working group to consider the Inquiry's recommendation with representatives from agencies covering the statutory and voluntary sectors, local and London-wide. The group carried out some initial analysis of arrangements, strategies and practice in London, which confirmed the need for closer co-operation, information sharing protocols, and the spreading of best practice between agencies. From this, the working group recommended a membership structure and terms of reference for a permanent Forum to provide leadership and guidance on dealing with race hate crime in the capital.

The London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum was formally launched at a meeting in the House of Commons in May 2003.[9] The overall aims of the Forum are to improve the co-ordination between the key agencies responsible for dealing with victims of race hate at the local level in the London boroughs and also London-wide, to promote a uniform service across London, and to identify and disseminate good practice policy learning. The stated objectives of the Forum are to improve the effectiveness with which perpetrators of race hate crimes are brought to justice, to help reduce and prevent race hate incidents, and to improve the confidence and satisfaction of victims in reporting race hate crimes to the police and other agencies.[10] The

---

[6] Macpherson (1999) recommendation 2(iv), page 327.

[7] Ibid., recommendation 1, page 327.

[8] The Metropolitan Police Authority is an independent statutory body established in July 2000 by the Greater London Authority Act 1999. It scrutinises and supports the work of the Metropolitan Police Service.

[9] 'London–Wide Race Hate Crime Forum House of Commons Launch', *Metropolitan Police Authority*, press release, 13 May 2003; http://www.mpa.gov.uk/issues/race-hate/lrhcf-01.htm.

[10] The published terms of reference of the Forum in full are to:

1. Effect policies, protocols and processes that will contribute to the effective and efficient implementation and monitoring of performance of the Race Hate Crimes "aspect" of the Crime and Disorder Audits and strategies by the local partnerships at a pan-London level.

2. Engage with key central government departments and pan-London agencies to secure agreement to a pan-London Protocol for responding to and dealing with Race (and other) Hate Crimes at local partnerships.

membership of the Forum itself is structured on the basis of a multi-agency partnership. They are drawn from the key agencies that have a London-wide remit in dealing with race hate crime, principally, the Metropolitan Police Service, Crown Prosecution Service, Government Office for London, London Probation Service, and the Greater London Authority. Members have also been drawn from the non-statutory sector — providing a mix of governmental and non-governmental organisations on the Forum.[11]

This paper presents the findings from a qualitative research project carried out from May to October 2006 which aimed to evaluate the Forum as a model of good practice for multi-agency partnerships in other cities and regions in EU Member States.[12] The key elements of the research design are briefly unpacked here for transparency so that the research findings can be evaluated against the context of the way in which the data were collected. To meet the research aim, the research objectives involved:

- An investigation to make explicit the background, context, history, terms of reference and modus operandi of the Forum.
- A critical assessment of the perceptions of the key agencies and stakeholders about the impact of the Forum as measured against the Forum's terms of reference.
- A review of the published evidence from other countries on strategies for developing and supporting local and city-wide partnerships against hate crime so that the approach of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum can be contrasted with other possible models.

With regard to the third research objective, the review of published evidence from other countries apart from the UK is provided in the introduction to this paper which observes the scarcity of such evidence and the absence from the

---

3. Secure the agreement among key agencies, pan-London and locally, for the sharing of personalised and depersonalised information in order to satisfy agency responsibility under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988.

4. Co-ordinate and disseminate good practice examples in dealing with Race (and other) Hate Crimes across the key statutory and voluntary agencies in London.

5. Provide Policy and guidance to local Crime and Disorder partnerships in their dealings with Race (and other) Hate Crimes.

6. Continuously monitor and review the learning gained from developments on Race Hate, to inform the development of policies, protocols and practices on other Hate crime areas.

7. Proactively establish relationships with other stakeholders, central government departments and pan-London agencies.

8. In consultation with ministers, central government departments, the Association for London Government (ALG), Government Office for London (GOL) and other key agencies, develop protocols and agreements that would hold the partnerships accountable for the delivery.

9. In addition to the above, it is proposed that, due to the range of key organisations that will be members of the Forum, that it could act 'as a one-stop-shop' to local authorities, the police and other partner organisations, that require the provision of expertise and coordination in the event of critical race hate incidents.

Source: http://www.mpa.gov.uk/issues/race-hate/tor.htm

[11] Full lists of the Forum's membership are provided in the Forum's annual report at: http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/issues/racehate/lrhcf-annualrep2004-5.pdf (page 14).
[12] The aims and objectives and design of the research are discussed in the research note at the end of the paper.

literature of other possible models of city-wide cooperation between agencies in tackling race hate crime. With regard to the first two objectives which are concerned with the Forum's terms of reference and an evaluation of its impact when measured against those terms of reference, the Forum's stakeholders, the pan-London agencies involved in the Forum, and its constituency, the key agencies in the multi-agency partnerships at local level, provided the obvious respondents for the research. So too did those closely involved in the running of the Forum; the project manager and the Forum administrator. The research employed an inductive qualitative approach to attempt to gain an in-depth insight into the perceptions of the respondents about the operation and impact of the Forum.[13] The initial research design planned to carry out in-depth face-to-face conversational interviews with a purposive sample of five participants in the Forum from the statutory sector and with ten representatives from the key statutory agencies in five London boroughs. The research design was, however, amended in the process of carrying out the research to adequately pursue themes and lines of inquiry that inductively emerged. One key theme that emerged early on was the significance of borough presentations to the Forum as noted in the discussion of the Forum's work below. In consequence, a participant observation exercise was carried out in two of the presentation events, and they had not been included in the initial research design. In turn, participation in the first event highlighted the significance of victims' contributions to the Forum presentations and interviews were subsequently conducted with representatives of agencies supporting victims who were present at the meeting. Again, this was not in the original research design. A presentation of the research findings was made to a meeting of the Forum in August and as a consequence of the discussion of the meeting the research extended to include interviews with six forum members from the non-statutory sector. In total, twenty-five respondents participated in the research with ten of those respondents drawn from five different boroughs. The interviews (with one conducted by telephone) ranged in length from twenty minutes in one case to seventy-five minutes in another.

**The London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum at work: review, accountability and action**

It became evident early on in the research that the core of the work of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum has involved the key agencies responsible for dealing with race hate crime at the local level in the London boroughs making presentations to the Forum about their progress in tackling

---

[13] The research used a number of elements of a grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis. However, because of the constraints imposed by the size of the budget available for the research, a purely grounded theory approach was not possible and the funds consequently played a key role in the design and the scope of the research as is frequently the case with real world policy research. Although a grounded theory approach was not fully followed in practice, it was followed in spirit. The key elements were:
- *Analytic induction* — themes and issues were derived inductively from the data. Given the resource constraints on the research the data were interrogated broadly, rather minutely.
- *Theoretical sampling* — themes and issues drove the data collection in terms of the research participants and the lines of inquiry pursued.
- *Flexibility* — because the lines of inquiry emerged and developed in the course of data collection no two interviews were the same in respect of the questions asked. Each respondent therefore constituted one piece of a jigsaw put together to represent the work of the Forum as presented in this paper.
- *Data analysis went hand-in-hand with data collection* — and the relevant literature was also consulted as lines of inquiry emerged. The research therefore involved an iterative process of movement between data, analysis, and literature.

racist incidents. The presentations began in early 2004 with a selection of eight boroughs that had the highest reported levels of racist incidents for the years April 2002 to April 2004 according to police records.[14] In 2005, a further eight boroughs representing the next tranche of boroughs in terms of the number of recorded racist incidents were selected to give presentations.[15] A further eight boroughs that had not presented to the Forum previously were selected in 2006 on the basis that they were among those boroughs showing the highest percentage rises in race hate crime in 2004-2005 compared with the earlier period.[16]

The presentations made to the Forum provide a vehicle for multi-agency co-operation both at the local level in the London boroughs, and also at city-wide level for those agencies that are members of the Forum and have a London-wide responsibility in addition to responsibility at local level for dealing with race hate crime. The composition of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum is by no means unique given the long history of policy initiatives on multi-agency working discussed above in terms of the agencies that are represented among its members. However, the borough presentations arguably provide the definitive innovation of the Forum. Given the significance of the presentations for the Forum's work the discussion below unfolds the various steps in the presentation process with the aim of illuminating the value of the process for the participants: the boroughs involved and the Forum members. The presentations involve a process of review, accountability and action, and the key elements (summarised in figure 1) are discussed below.

Figure 1. Process of review, accountability and action. The London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum at Work



---
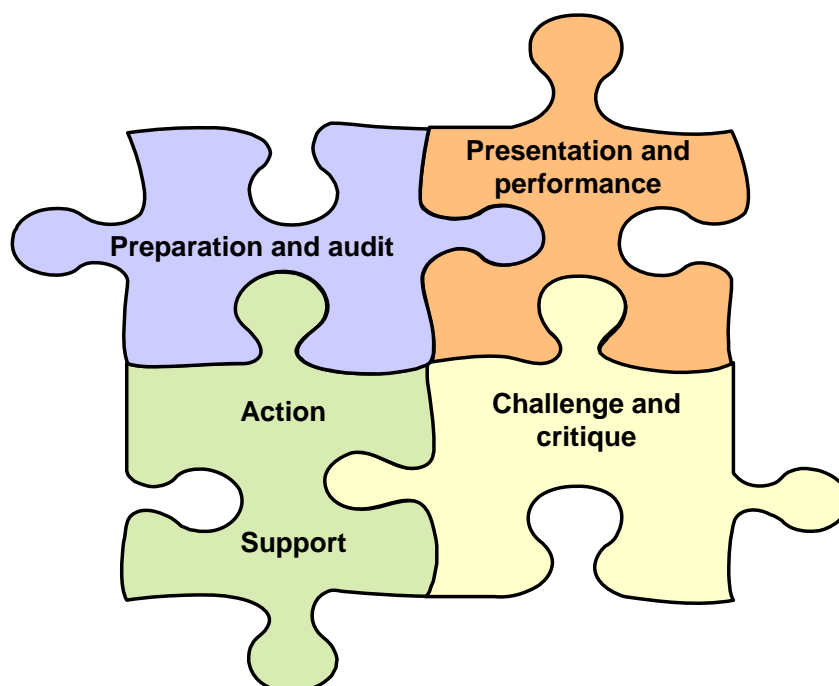
[14] Barnet, Croydon, Greenwich, Hounslow, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Westminster.
[15] Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Camden, Hackney, Havering, Islington, Lambeth and Lewisham.
[16] Bexley, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Merton, Richmond Upon Thames, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth.

*Audit and review: preparing for the presentation*

The presentations by the London boroughs provide a mechanism whereby practice and performance of dealing with race hate crime is interrogated and scrutinised systematically borough by borough by the Forum members. The process of planning and preparing for the presentations is highly choreographed by the Forum staff, and the presentations themselves are carefully staged performances. A letter sent to the Chief Executive of the invited borough some months ahead of the proposed presentation with a copy sent to the police borough Commander, begins the presentation process. The letter identifies a number of specific areas for which the borough is asked to report on in their presentation. In the spirit of working in partnership the letter offers a 'closed door meeting' in advance of the presentation with the Chair and delegates from the Forum — including the Metropolitan Police Service member of the Forum to brief the borough Commander in particular. The purpose of the meeting is to advise the boroughs about the information that the Forum wants to see in their presentation. As a member of the Forum explained:

> We try to give them as much information as possible so they can come to the meeting armed with as many answers as possible. It's not about trying to set them up and trip them up; it's about demonstrating that you are supportive and wanting a working partnership.[17]

The support offered in advance of the presentation was clearly useful, for as one respondent from a borough reported:

> The list of questions was quite prescriptive but then we did have some contact with the officer who manages the group who came and offered advice and guidance on the best way to deal with the list of questions they asked. So we took advice from him which was useful.

Importantly, the preparation involved for the presentation can provide for the borough concerned a valuable opportunity for an audit and review of multi-agency working arrangements and of services dealing with race hate crime in their locality. As a respondent from another borough explained:

> We welcomed it as an opportunity because I think it enabled us to do in a very short period of time a bit of an audit around partnership work and that was timely, and that was opportune, and that was helpful to us — although we had other things that we needed to be doing. But it was helpful, and it did enable us to put together a snapshot if you like of what had been going on. And I think that what flowed out of that presentation there was actually quite a lot of work going on…

This was the first time that such an audit of multi-agency working and services dealing with race hate crime had been carried out in the borough. Whilst it was reportedly on the work plan for the borough's hate crime co-ordinator, the preparations for the presentation brought the process forward and highlighted some gaps in provision:

---

[17] To facilitate an open discussion in the interviews all respondents were given a guarantee of anonymity in that none of the words they use would be attributed to identifiable persons directly by name or indirectly by other means such as identifying their organisational affiliation and position. Verbatim extracts are used from thirteen of the nineteen interview respondents.

> There was a lot of good news…It did provide us with a kind of evidence base of what was going on. But it highlighted that there are some issues….The Forum was very interested in third-party reporting….third-party reporting was on the partnership agenda but what it did show us was that it hadn't really moved forward and more to the point we needed to engage in quite some robust and honest discussion about taking forward third-party reporting for us as a partnership.

The perceived value of the preparations for the presentation were not, however, shared by all of the boroughs, for as one respondent explained, it duplicated work that had already been carried out in the borough:

> It did create more for the local authority to look at their own books and gaps, which we already realised and were working together to try and improve that…..there was some learning for us to maybe make sure our partnership and race forum perhaps work a bit better. But I would say it was minimal – minimal. What I would say is that we have our own processes in place and our own performance regimes in place – so don't duplicate what's going on and try and find out a bit about that first.

However, even though this respondent was concerned about potential duplication of work, they did admit that preparation for the Forum presentation provided some impetus to evaluate the effectiveness of the agency partnerships in the borough.

The process of preparing for the presentation can also potentially provide a stimulus for action by the participating agencies. To take the case of policing, it was suggested by one member of the Forum that:

> Candidly speaking, on the list of policing priorities and various political influences…hate crime is not at the top by any stretch of the imagination. Obviously over the last few years it has been very much street crime, street robberies – that kind of thing. And hate crime and indeed, domestic violence tends to be lower on the agenda.

This sentiment echoes the findings of a recent Home Office research study of the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on policing. On the one-hand the study concluded that although the evidence is variable, significant progress has been made by police forces in dealing with hate crime with the Lawrence Inquiry seemingly providing an important impetus for change. The most significant structural changes in police forces noted by the research are evident in the Metropolitan Police Service (Foster, Newburn and Souhami 2005: 92) as described by Hall's research at New Scotland Yard (Hall 2005). However, the Home Office study also observed the continuing low status of police work on hate crime and even in the study's three case study sites in the Metropolitan Police Service:

> it was commonly felt such work was not perceived to be 'real police work'…CSU staff felt their work was not valued in the wider policing environment…It was widely disparaged as 'pink and fluffy' in contrast to the 'glamorous and sexy' work in other departments. (Foster, Newburn and Souhami 2005: 91).

Despite the considerable policy exhortation for intelligence-led policing it was suggested by one of the Forum's members that at the local level police forces in the London boroughs are not adequately analysing and utilising their data on race hate crime for intelligence purposes and preparation for the presentation provided the impetus for them to swing into action:

> Most boroughs don't really look at their profile of hate crime until they start preparing for the presentation for the forum. Some do, but a lot of them don't. In fact there was a borough commander who came up a few months ago who said that until they went through the process, they didn't really understand what the problem was in the borough…It's hard to generalise but I would say that the data and intelligence is there but it's not looked at…At the borough level they have the borough intelligence units and an awful lot of pressures on them to produce their daily intelligence, depending on what the priorities are, and street crime, vehicle crime, burglary and now violent crime policy is a key thing. There's not a lot of scope, or capacity to do the same with hate crime… The information is there but the priority is not there for them to do it…. how on earth are you going to tackle hate crime if you are purely reactively dealing with it — there's an allegation of crime and you investigate it. You must do some kind of proactive research, some informed policing work…I think it's absolutely essential and it should inform borough policies.

Such intelligence should in theory assist in the establishment of preventative measures; enable the targeting of resources on areas of need (U.K. Home Office 2000: 5); provide monitoring of changes in patterns of need (Stanko 2004: 280); and enable police forces to determine whether they are responding correctly to the needs of victims (Stanko 2004: 280). In this context, the impetus provided by the Forum, as just noted, is critical to intelligence-led intervention at the local level.

*Presentation and performance: putting the best face forward*

The actual presentations made to the Forum by the London boroughs are polished and carefully staged events, for as one respondent from the police suggested:

> Borough Commanders don't want to go to forums like this to be made to look wanting. They want to go and look professional and so does the team. For that, there's lots of work that goes in beforehand.

In contrast to the support and partnership offered to boroughs preparing for the presentation meetings were perceived by some respondents from the boroughs as adversarial events given the manner in which some Forum members were reported to have engaged with those presenting:

> When we started off there was an unfortunate issue which really threw the local authority presenter who started off the presentation and was pulled-up within two minutes regarding terminology used. It created more issues and pressures on the presenter and local authority. They didn't use any derogatory term, just the wrong term for ethnicity — not the same codes as what we use on the CRIS[18] reports.

---

[18] Crime Report Information System.

A respondent from another borough similarly reported that:

> I spoke first and I got interrupted half way through by a member of the committee who didn't want to hear what I was saying. He said 'I don't want to hear about x'. He actually interrupted me in the middle of my talk and I thought it was very rude….there were quite a number of issues with our presentation and I think it was far too long but it meant then that there was very little time for any meaningful discussion…I think the style of the Forum…I think that the way the Forum operates isn't actually helpful…I don't mind being challenged and having challenging discussions …it is a huge group…and in fact quite a few questions were statements rather than discussion and it was too big to have a discussion. It could have been a lot more useful if it had been done in a different way. It felt like it was an old style adversarial event.

This respondent went on to question the whole value of the presentations:

> I thought it was inappropriate. If you really want to discuss these issues seriously with boroughs then I think a more sensitive and partnership style of approach is required…We were being asked to provide information about what we were doing…it was presented as 'well we are trying to help you'. Well I don't think that's the way you help partners improve their practice….what it does is that in terms of the presentation it means you are put on the defensive….so I think it doesn't encourage honesty in presenting groups because they will want to present as good a picture as they can…you are also very conscious that there are members of the group who have got their own agendas and I think they are more interested in giving those agendas space than really exploring what our issues were.

*Telling it like it is:  the victim's perspective*

Each presentation includes a victim's account. The significance of the victim's contribution was strongly recognised by a respondent from the Metropolitan Police Service in one of the boroughs:

> We are now giving a much more victim-orientated service and so victims need to be heard in order to give that side of policing. So it's a necessity to have them at the forums just to hear their views, their concerns, their wants and their needs.

Another respondent similarly emphasised the important contribution made by the victim's perspective:

> I think obviously the victim's perspective is one of the most important.  It's easy for people to say what they feel, like the Council and Metropolitan Police to say what they think that they have done and haven't done. But obviously it's a lot more productive if the victims can have their say as well.

One respondent was quite blunt about the value of the victim's perspective:

> What's the whole point if you are not going to speak to the victims and find out how they are feeling and what's going on? This is alright at the very top

and maybe these people have good intentions. The borough commander and chief execs have good intentions but it's at the ground roots. What is happening when they are presented with a victim of racial harassment? They don't deal with it. They don't have an idea who deals with it. It's at grassroots level.

Some time before a presentation is scheduled to be held contact is made by the Forum with as many of the community groups in the borough as can be identified. This is not a straightforward process due to the often transient nature of groups as a consequence of time-limited funding for projects. The local Race Equality Council, where one exists, is always consulted as it is best placed in terms of knowledge of local projects, and also:

> sometimes we ask the borough in their presentation to present the worst case scenario from their own work and that's good for them because at least they can talk about why it was the worst case scenario and what they did in response.

The victim's account is presented either by a victim in person or by an agency serving as an advocate for the victim, such as the local Race Equality Council or Victim Support. In the words of one member of the Forum, this serves as a 'reality check' on the presentation:

> We also have a reality check. So what we have is a well written presentation and then we have the reality with a victim in situ. For the most part we have tried to ensure that we have a live individual there: it's not always possible and if not we try to have a representative… What we do is we try and ensure a balance. So we have the presentation and lots of reality on the ground.

The aim is to present a case that is sufficiently longstanding to provide policy-learning as a case study in general for the agencies in the borough and across London. Ahead of the presentation the boroughs are informed that the Forum will be aiming to present a case, not with the expectation that the particular case will be resolved at the meeting, but to serve the purpose of broader policy learning:

> The reason we say that we are having those people in situ is because we can use that to be aware of where good practice can be improved and where learning can be gained. We are very clear that it's not about embarrassing them and hopefully they'll see that because we have told them that that's what we are going to do.

As another Forum member explained:

> When you have day to day investigations you have an isolated allegation and crime…The day to day investigations tend to be fairly high but the strategic overview appears to be a little bit less. There are some issues about repeat victimisation because the police are pretty good at dealing with isolated incidents, but what they are not so good at is dealing with longer term problems. For instance if you have a victim who's reporting non violent harassment, a bit of criminal damage, bit of verbal stuff although take an individual case you may look from the outside and it appears to be fairly minor, taken as a course of action over a period of a

few months, the impact appears to be very large. What they are not very good at is making those links and linking up that series of crimes on the strategic side. A case in point as the success of the Forum where exactly this was happening and the Forum stepped in and members of the Forum stepped in and really changed a whole borough's attitude to how they dealt with…I think that was directly with the Forum's intervention and putting the pressure on the borough, they talked about a particular case that highlighted it and the Forum really instigated procedures on how to deal with this and put pressure both on the police and the local authority to get an outcome which they did — there was a criminal prosecution and a civil prosecution, something that had been ignored for a number of years. And since then the process of learning from that, all the feedback is that that particular borough is far more effective at dealing with it.

Although the provision of a victim's perspective was proposed as one of the strengths of the presentations it is clear that the process needs to be managed very carefully. The practice in one Forum meeting observed in the course of the research was not a positive one as far as the victims were concerned as little time was allotted for them to speak. As some of the participants in the meeting pointed out:

> They said that you can bring a victim who has suffered from racial harassment.

> Yes but due to time constraints, even though you bring a victim, the victim doesn't have an opportunity to express their opinions and views…

The contrast with the time allowed for the presentations made by the representatives from the key statutory agencies in the borough was stark as emphasised by some of the participants in the meeting:

> The time allocation wasn't done properly. The council and the police had the majority of the time to have their say…They get the majority of the time to say how good they are and how they are tackling race hate crimes as such, but the reality and criticisms – there's not enough time for that.  The Forum is there to address the real needs of race hate crime, the real needs from the victim's perspective of what's really going on…Basically the victim wasn't even able to finish. What he said could have been more succinct but he wasn't able to get half, even a tenth of his story across. I think less time for the council and more time for the victim.

The provision of adequate time for victims to present their stories to the Forum meetings was emphasised by another of the respondents from the boroughs:

> I think sometimes they have to understand from the victim's point of view that they might find expressing what has happened in their lives quite difficult and instead they kept interrupting saying 'look you've got to stop' and 'other people have to have their say'.

This was echoed by another respondent present at the meeting:

> When you are a victim of racial harassment it consumes your life, it completely takes over your life. Sometimes they do go on, but it's the only

time that they felt that somebody was actually listening. Maybe they could have let him have a bit more time to talk about his problems. I don't think he was given enough time to talk about his problems…I don't think he was given the chance. He did start off and because he wasn't getting anywhere, he was cut off. With racial harassment, there is a lot of spin offs, a lot of issues that become entangled and I think that maybe he got into all these issues and was cut off. I don't think he got a fair chance to speak.

The impact upon the victim was clear:

…he came out feeling very upset and angry because he wasn't able to have the opportunity to have his say. His case has been going on for many many years and obviously he has a lot to say and he wasn't given that chance.

Some believed that victims' perspectives should drive the meeting:

I think it should be a more victim-led than a council and police led forum. Obviously they should be allowed to make their presentation, talk about their data but they should do a separate time where victims, if they have grievances, speak about what experiences they've had, what their frustrations are and how it has affected their lives…It should be more of a victim-led forum, than authoritarian led in that sense…where the other agencies are not listening to them it's really crucial and important that the victim's perspective should be the most important perspective than anybody else.

In addition to the lack of opportunity for victims to present their own experiences to the Forum some participants felt that victim advocacy groups and those involved in support for victims were similarly denied a voice at the meetings:

I feel like there is a lot of frustration from charity organisations who are not able to have their say. It's all very well the council have done theirs and the police have had their time and voluntary organisations don't have a chance to have their say.

Voluntary agencies are there to help the victims and the reality of what's going on and if the Council and Police are really doing what they should have.  We weren't given the opportunity.

Some suggestions were made by participants in the observed meeting to allow more opportunity for the inclusion of representations by victims and other agencies in addition to the police and the local authority:

 The whole thing is too short.  It did overrun and I feel that any kind of work, the local authorities will come in and tell you what they have done. I think it should have started with what's going on on the ground. Maybe two hours because they were going on and on about what they do and what they have been doing and there were people there who are living proof that it's not alright…Hold the presentations in such a way and let the victims speak first. 'I live in this borough and I've been going through this'

and then ask the borough to do their presentation and ask if they are doing so well, how come this has happened…The whole reason that we are there is for the victims and if they don't get their chance to say what they are going through…give them at least a bit of time to talk about their experiences.

*Challenging the Forum's assumptions*
The discussion of the presentation process up to this point perhaps leaves the impression that the presenting boroughs are relatively passive participants put on the defensive whilst they are being held accountable for their policy and practice by the Forum. Such an impression would be misleading, however, as borough representatives critically engaged with what some respondents described as the Forum's 'assumptions'. For instance, a respondent from one borough observed that:

We were challenged about the way we organise our crime reduction strategy and there was the view that…we have organised under five things, we have anti-social behaviour and we have lodged the prevention work around hate crime under anti-social behaviour and that was challenged, we have not shifted it because violent hate crime will still be dealt with as a violent crime issue…the impact of logistically putting something somewhere is that somebody has responsibility for it and that is what is what we have done.

The Forum's view on the borough's crime reduction strategy clearly stimulated some reflection in the borough with arguably the positive effect for the borough of re-affirming its strategy, even if it was not one shared in principle by the Forum. The confinement of the Forum's remit to race and faith hate crime provided another area of contestation reported by respondents in two boroughs, with one respondent referring to it as 'silo approach':

This kind of silo approach is just not the right approach. If you are a black gay out man and you are attacked is that because you are black, is that because you are gay? …There are a huge range of different equalities issues for people…..and it isn't that kind of silo approach to equalities and kind of white on black issue and I think there was a strong feel that that was what they were looking for…. I think those issues need to be discussed in the Forum because it isn't any more simply a white on black issue.

*Support and follow-up*
After the boroughs have made their presentations to the Forum a letter is sent to the key agencies involved with requests for clarification of issues raised and further information where necessary. Boroughs are also asked to provide a plan for future action in dealing with race hate crime. Respondents from each of the boroughs that participated in the research for this paper would have welcomed support from the Forum in pursuing their further action. However, resource constraints on the Forum greatly restrict the amount of support that can be offered. One respondent suggested that:

Supposing there was a gap in the borough on partnerships and how partnerships tackle race hate crime, the support they give the Police and how they actually deal with that. Then, if they feel that that's the case then

they should help us to rectify it and I'm not too sure that bit came out of it and would have been a real benefit to the borough – to really put pressure on…the local authorities to say 'you've got a bit of a weakness in how you are dealing with injunctions, you are out of sync with the rest of the boroughs and should work with the local police more to improve the situation for residents'. That would be a real good outcome and I'm not too sure that the board helped us with that process. I'm sure it's one of its aims and whether you see that in reality some months on, I'm not too sure.

A respondent from another London borough made the point more emphatically:

We provided them with a great deal of information. Presumably other boroughs have done the same. Presumably if they are remotely doing their job they are evaluating that and drawing out strands of good practice and also areas where there is weakness across London and I see no mechanism by which that's coming out again….. Our experience was feeding a lot of information in and really not getting anything back…We really had been thinking the end product of this will be some good practice guidance, recommendations that we would incorporate in our action plan and that would have been quite a good payoff for us actually that would have been worth having.

Another respondent recognised how resource constraints impeded the Forum's ability to follow through with support:

I've not had any further contact with them since we responded to their follow-up letter but a member of my staff has joined the race hate crime officers forum that they have set up…I think we would always welcome support and assistance…but I think that I'm very conscious that there is one officer isn't there that is covering thirty-two boroughs. And that is why there is a hate crime coordinators group... he obviously can't get around everybody, so I think that is a good way forward.

Some respondents also suggested that the Forum could be more supportive in the way that it undertakes the reviews of action in the boroughs to shift the balance away from accountability towards support for the borough:

I do question the purpose and the value. I understand the MPA have the function of accountability for the Metropolitan Police Service. However, how you do that could perhaps be done in a more efficient way. I would say that if they wanted to find out more, they should come to the borough and spend time and investment. To put together a presentation is useful because as you go through it you do learn gaps but it would be more useful for them to adopt a method of coming out to boroughs because it involved distractions, it involved people preparing, it involved virtually a day out for all of those concerned to do the presentation…I would say that the best way to do it would be to come out to boroughs…to speak to DI's in charge of CSU's[19], to speak to victims. There's lots of different ways of getting proper feedback rather than relying on presentations.

These sentiments were echoed by other respondents:

---

[19]  Community Safety Units.

I think for me the whole process and the whole approach wasn't helpful…For example, if somebody was approaching saying 'can we talk to you about what is happening in your borough, can we have a meeting, can we come and discuss this with you', I think we would have felt far more comfortable with that, but it was made clear was that we were expected to come and attend a public meeting and I think that is where…it wasn't helpful…

*Impetus for action by the Forum members: working with 'head office'*
It was noted above that a review of multi-agency working and services carried out as part of the preparation for the presentation to the Forum can potentially stimulate policy action in a borough at local level where gaps are identified. Action can also potentially be stimulated by the presentation itself among the London-wide agencies that are members of the Forum. Where particular issues of concern are raised as a consequence of the presentation the Forum works directly with the London-wide agency that is responsible for effective service delivery at local level. In the case of policing race hate crime, a Forum member explained that:

> …where we have difficulties with some boroughs for example, where they are perhaps under-performing, as well as going into the boroughs and informing them that we believe they are under-performing and giving them reasons why and giving them places where we can see improvements can be made, we are also working directly with head office at New Scotland Yard to raise our concerns. So the Area Commander will then be informed about the concerns that we do have.  It'll mean working with them directly so that they can then, from a strategic perspective, monitor actually what's going-on on the ground.

The impact on police performance was echoed by another member of the Forum who recalled that following a review of police data on sanction detections in the boroughs in a Forum meeting one Forum member asked: "What's the Met doing about poor performing boroughs"? In an ACPO[20] level inspection that subsequently followed shortly afterwards, reportedly:

> The ACPO officer drew the 6 worst performing boroughs to their office and beat them up over the performance. Basically what happened was that they produced action plans and this is a direct result of a question being asked in the Forum about what the Met was doing about poor performing boroughs.

The process is expedited by the fact that a representative from the 'head office' of each of the main London-wide agencies with responsibility for dealing with race hate crime is a member of the Forum. As was explained:

> Those Pan-London agencies are actually sitting around the table as part of the Forum. So any discussions that we have will be with those organisations in situ. They will know about the concerns and will take those concerns back and instigate some form of investigation...It doesn't require us to report up to, if you like, because we have the people sitting round the table already.

---

[20]  Association of Chief Police Officers.

The presence on the Forum of a representative from the 'head office' of the other London-wide agencies responsible for dealing with race hate crime lends weight to the impetus for any particular agency to act if an issue of concern under their remit is raised:

> …what we have around the table is the other pan-London partners so when we are having the discussion and concern is levelled at one particular area, those other pan-London agencies are also involved in that discussion and agree that that problem needs to be explored and needs to be looked at. So there's an added weight if you like.

The process of working with 'head office' has achieved some results:

> There are a fair number of boroughs where we have raised issues and the borough command has actually altered because these issues have come to light. They may well have come to light in the borough but the fact that we as a Forum can identify those issues and then action has been taken. It may be that action was in the process already, but the fact that we have identified it too then obviously that's something that's noted, not only internally but externally too…It's quite difficult to actually say that as a result of the Forum, writing or speaking to individuals, the action of removing that borough commander had occurred. But that's part of the process in itself, the fact that we have identified the issues, the gold group has gone in to assess the situation and filed a report and improvements haven't been made at the level of expectation and a command change has happened on two occasions. The difficulty with the work of the Forum is that it is quite difficult to say 'the Forum did this and that happened directly'. It's happened as a consequence, but whether the Forum intervention was the last straw or not, one is not to know.

The significance of the borough presentations to the Forum is exemplified by the use of the presentations by 'head office' at the Metropolitan Police Service for monitoring the performance of policing in the boroughs. This function is particularly important given the perceived inadequacy of central monitoring of local policing on hate crime as suggested by one member of the Forum:

> I don't think there is a political pressure on the Met to do it. They're not particularly asked to be held to account regarding hate crime. They are certainly asked to be held to account on things like managing sex offenders, on street crime, things like burglaries, things like violent crime and stuff like that. Although the moral argument's won and no one says it should be ignored, but how far it is up the political agenda and I suppose the question why it's not being done, it's being done to a certain degree but it hasn't got the priority amongst the vast areas of business that they have.

As another respondent explained:

> An action point may be that we are concerned about the performance in a borough and we want to find out about why it's under-performing. Those reps from the forum will then make contact with the borough commander to organise to go down there and offer support and advice. Where it moves

out of their jurisdiction for example it would also feed into the individual who has overall, area –wide responsibility; area commanders if you like.

**Participation of the voluntary and community sector**
The process of feeding back the findings from the research project from which this paper is drawn to a meeting of the Forum, generated a particular inquiry into the participation of the non-statutory sector in the Forum's work. Each of the Forum members initially involved in the research as interview respondents were drawn from statutory sector agencies in accord with the initial steer given to the research by the Forum management. The possible reason why that direction was given is illuminated by the additional research involving the non-statutory sector members of the Forum who argued that the Forum is dominated by the statutory agencies.[21] Significantly, as will be unfolded below, although the non-statutory sector Forum members interviewed supported the Forum in principle and were keen to actively participate, the interviews revealed some fundamental concerns about the composition and the consequent working of the Forum.

There was a strong view that the voluntary sector does not enjoy parity with statutory sector agencies in terms of the membership of the Forum with the consequence that ownership and control of the work of the Forum is ceded by the voluntary sector to the statutory agencies involved. One remedy proposed to this situation was for an equal division of membership of the Forum between the non-statutory and statutory agencies, with the chairing of Forum meetings shared between members from the two sectors. Another proposed remedy was for the establishment of a sub-group of voluntary sector members to work on particular issues of Forum business. One Forum member who shared the view about the lack of parity between the voluntary and statutory sectors on the Forum also believed, however, that the statutory sector should take the lead:

> I think it's right that perhaps the leadership of the Forum, in terms of administering the Forum, ought to rest with a statutory body as it's recognising that the statutory bodies have a responsibility that relates to preventing race hate crime. And I think that where voluntary agencies sit is in influencing that agenda and working in partnership with the statutory body, but not necessarily owning it as their lead responsibility.

For this Forum member, whilst the expertise of the voluntary sector needs to be fully utilised by the Forum in its activities, they recognised that the initial rationale for the establishment of the Forum, in response to the failings of the statutory agencies identified by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, was for the statutory sector to respond adequately to the problem of race hate crime:

> Of course, people in the voluntary sector and voluntary organisations would recognise that tackling race hate crime is something that they have routinely done even without resources and funding because voluntary organisations are precisely about that, precisely about filling the gap where it hasn't been met and tackling race hate crime is a gap that has been longstanding: supporting victims of race hate crime and the lack of response from statutory agencies has meant that the onus of

---

[21] Six additional interviews were carried out in September and October 2006 involving Forum members from the non-statutory sector.

responsibility and care has fallen unfairly to the voluntary sector. Well the formation of multi-agency Forums was about trying to put that right: was about saying to the statutory bodies 'you have got a responsibility to take a leadership role in developing the agenda around preventing race hate crime.'

At first sight there might seem to be a contradiction in calling for equity in Forum membership between the statutory and non-statutory sectors whilst at the same time calling for the statutory sector to take the lead responsibility for race hate crime. However, there is no contradiction when the different contributions to be made by the different sectors are considered. Paradoxically however, putting the onus on the statutory sector to take the lead on interventions against race hate crime, to catch-up for the past shortcomings of the sector, has the potential to inhibit the involvement of the voluntary sector:

> The danger of asking the statutory sector to lead is that it dominates the agenda and therefore the interpretation of the model gets skewed towards the statutory agenda. The interpretation of the model should have been towards a partnership between the voluntary sector and the statutory sector but unfortunately the interpretation of the model means that we have got an over-emphasis on the statutory sector and a not so equivalent or a critical emphasis in relation to the voluntary sector…So you haven't got…an equitable number of voluntary organisations represented on the Forum: key critical voluntary organisations, well respected in this field, represented on the Forum. What has happened is that the administration of the Forum…has leant its way more towards getting on board the statutory bodies. In one way it is right because some of the statutory bodies sitting around the table have been stubborn to get to the table in the first place.

Despite the success of the Forum in bringing the statutory agencies to work in partnership at the pan-London level, the drawback of the inequitable representation and participation of the voluntary sector in the Forum's work is arguably that victims' experiences do not adequately inform the strategic work of the Forum, and this is particularly pertinent considering that only a minority of hate crime is reported to statutory agencies who are therefore informed by only a partial picture:

> What you have surely got is a strategic statutory response that isn't necessarily informed by the heart of the community, it isn't informed by the experiences, the real lived experiences on the ground. It isn't necessarily informed by the fact that all the knowledge and understanding…a lot of hate crime isn't reported to the statutory bodies, a lot of it, it goes on but is dealt with at a very localised level. Either the family unit itself tries to deal with it themselves or the immediate neighbourhood or the particular community organisations. Black and minority ethnic community voluntary organisations seek to provide that support themselves…it is the voluntary organisation that is more likely to receive the report as they are more likely to be in-tune with and touch with and command the respect of victims of hate crime. That's the missing factor, you haven't got those lived experiences.

Another Forum member from the voluntary sector argued emphatically that:

We are speaking up for people who cannot speak for themselves and we should be shouting.

A further consequence of the voluntary sector having an inequitable voice on the Forum is arguably that whilst the statutory sector has been encouraged to take the lead to overcome their past deficiencies, their lead is less likely to be subjected to critical scrutiny:

> Far too often the danger is that when you've got statutory agencies round the table talking to themselves you can have a tendency for those agencies to over-praise themselves to talk-up what it is that they are doing and there is nobody to criticise them or provide a proper critique of what they are doing because there is no comparison against the real experience or the lived experience and what we've got now it's almost become a talking shop in the sense that the statutory agencies talk about all the wonderful things that they do and you can't but help praise that….but you don't know if that means anything to the grassroots experience and whilst you have got some organisations round the table there's not many to provide the adequate critique that is necessary.

**The London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum: a model of good practice for the 'third-tier' of multi-agency working**
The EUMC's recent report *Racist Violence in 15 EU Member States* offers, as mentioned in the introduction to this paper, some examples of 'good practice' in tackling race hate crime. In suggesting that the term 'good practice' is 'much used and abused' (EUMC 2005: 193) the report offers a number of criteria that it suggests should be encompassed by projects that are offered as 'good practice'. These are:
- Positive results
- Sustainability
- Ethical
- Replication/transferability

The aim here is to offer the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum as a model of 'good practice' and to do so the EUMC's criteria are used to critically evaluate the work of the Forum that was described above.

*Positive results — policy impact*
In the discussion above on the establishment of the Forum it was noted that the overall aims of the Forum are to improve the co-ordination between the key agencies responsible for dealing with victims of race hate at the local level in the London boroughs and also London-wide, to promote a uniform service across London, and to identify and disseminate good practice policy learning. It was also noted that the key process through which the Forum carries out its work involves a borough-by-borough policy scrutiny in a process of review, accountability and action for multi-agency co-operation in dealing with race hate crime. The research evidence clearly shows positive results in that policy action has been stimulated by the Forum's activities both within some of the London boroughs and by the agencies operating at the pan-London level as well at the local level in the boroughs. Furthermore, co-ordination between the key agencies has been improved at the pan-London level by bringing together representatives from the 'head office' of each of the Forum's participating agencies both statutory and NGO around the same table. No such Forum existed on the topic of race and faith hate crime before the London-Wide Race

Hate Crime Forum was established and therefore the Forum represents a major policy innovation. With regard to co-ordination at the local level, it was observed in the discussion of the research findings that the preparation involved for the presentation to the Forum by the boroughs can provide for the boroughs concerned a valuable opportunity for an audit and review of multi-agency working arrangements and of services dealing with race hate crime in their locality. Illustrations were provided of how that review process can then stimulate further policy action. Overall, the evident impact of the Forum on policy activity in the London boroughs and amongst the key agencies operating at the pan-London level closely accords with the Forum's aim of promoting a uniform service across London.

The Forum falls short in meeting all of its aims, however, by providing little support or follow-up to the boroughs following presentations. As one of the Forum members acknowledged, the Forum is:

> the first attempt to bring together boroughs in some sort of process of accountability for their policy response and performance in relation to hate crimes. I think it is under-resourced to do that job and therefore it struggles with that agenda in terms of sharing best practice and being able to offer added value to the boroughs themselves rather than just being a place where they are called to account….It is absolutely clear that its under-resourcing is leading it to fail to meet some points of its remit and certainly its ambition to draw from the lessons of tackling race hate crime London-wide and crystallize that into documents and research reports that will enable improvements at local level.

This gap in delivery by the Forum, though, appears to be entirely due to the limited resources with which the Forum operates. The work that would be required to provide follow-up and support to boroughs is arguably beyond the capacity of the two full-time workers (the project manager and the project administrator) and the intermittent participation of the representatives of the agencies and NGOs who are members of the Forum.

*Sustainability*
The sustainability of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum arguably lies in two major factors that are important to consider in proposing the Forum as a model of 'good practice'. First, as one Forum member argued, 'the political clout' of the key agencies involved in sponsoring the Forum is critical:

> It is a Forum made up of the Metropolitan Police, the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Mayor's office, and regardless of who the personalities are that's a powerful pan-London combination and of itself is enough to bring boroughs' interest and attention.

Clearly, the political commitment of the Mayor's office and the senior organisational level commitment of the key statutory agencies, along with key agencies from the non-statutory sector, are fundamental to the sustainability of the Forum. The resourcing of the Forum noted above is the second major factor involved in its sustainability. The 'political clout' of the Forum serves to bring the key agencies in the boroughs to participate in the Forum's process of scrutiny through the borough presentations. However, the perceived lack of follow-up and support for the boroughs due to the Forum's resource limitations may potentially affect their future willingness to participate in the Forum's

presentations when the next cycle of scrutiny of the boroughs begins because their participation has not been reciprocated. Whilst the 'clout', or the authority, of the Metropolitan Police Authority over borough police commanders will always ensure that local borough police services will participate in the Forum's process of scrutiny of the boroughs, the strength of feeling about the perceived lack of follow-up support as illustrated in the discussion of the research findings above indicates that the withdrawal of future co-operation by other agencies in the boroughs, from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, is a very real possibility. At the very least, their commitment might be diminished if the agencies concerned do not see a value in their participation.

*Ethical*
The EUMC proposes that 'ethical working practices' are a key criterion of 'good practice' and an important ethical component is that 'Consideration should be given to the experiences, feelings, and opinions of victims' (EUMC 2005: 195). By including a victim's perspective in the scrutiny process of boroughs, whether by a victim in person, or a voluntary sector agency which works with victims, the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum provides an example of good ethical practice that is important to consider in offering the Forum as a model of good practice. The discussion of the research findings above demonstrates the important role provided by the victim's perspective, but it also indicates how the inclusion of that perspective is potentially one of the most sensitive and challenging elements of the scrutiny process of the boroughs. The participation of victims in the scrutiny presentation meetings needs to be very carefully managed to allow adequate time for the victim's case to be presented so that they are not disempowered by the statutory agencies participating in the meetings. It also needs to be carefully managed to ensure that the purpose of presenting the victim's case is to provide general policy learning on tackling race hate crime beyond the particular case in question, rather than it being a casework complaint about a particular individual's circumstances.

*Replication/transferability*
It was noted in the introduction to this paper that multi-agency working is arguably now accepted in the UK as the conventional wisdom for dealing with crime, disorder and community safety, and the importance of co-operation between the police and other statutory agencies in tackling race hate crime has long been recognised in other European countries and in EU policy recommendations. However, it was also noted in the case of the UK that research in the late 1990s indicated that no multi-agency forum for dealing with race hate crime had been established in some of the largest towns and cities (Lemos 2000). It was noted too that evidence of multi-agency working in EU countries is patchy.

In this context the comprehensive multi-agency provisions against race hate crime established in the London boroughs appear to stand as the exception, not the rule, for the national picture in the UK. The structure of local government in London whereby the city's population is divided by the London boroughs into the equivalent of thirty-two small cities or large towns (plus the City of London) clearly plays a part. Earlier research has shown that multi-agency working is easier to sustain in smaller conurbations due to the smaller number of agencies involved  and with consequently less potential for 'confused direction, poor communication, conflict and lack of commitment on

the part of some individuals and agencies' (Lemos 2000: 48) that might be found in larger conurbations. Despite the benefits of smaller scale, however, local-level arrangements for multi-agency working can be patchy and uneven when assayed from a city-wide or regional perspective. In addition, key statutory agencies participating in multi-agency partnerships at the local level, such as the police, crown prosecution service, and the probation service, are also managed and organised at the city-wide or regional level and a lack of coordination will prevail in the absence of partnerships at that wider geographic level. In the case of London, the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum provides such a partnership and it therefore serves as a third-tier of multi-agency working in addition to the two-tiers of partnerships on service provision and partnerships on policy-making at the local level in the London boroughs. But London is not unique when compared with some other cities and regions in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. With regard to the latter, the CRE's publication *Racially Motivated Crime. Responses in Three European Cities* (CRE 1997) as noted in the introduction to this paper, observed in the case of the German city of Frankfurt, instances of close cooperation on racist crime between the police and the public prosecution service and cooperation between the city's Department for Multicultural Affairs and other statutory agencies. Interestingly, evidence is also provided of third-tier multi-agency co-operation (the level of multi-agency working against race hate crime that is the concern of this paper) in Hesse, the *Land* in which Frankfurt is located:

> When racially motivated crime was on the increase all over Germany the Ministry of Justice in Hesse called monthly meetings in order to assess the situation in different cities, and to ensure that public prosecutors in Hesse were being consistent in their evaluation of cases with a xenophobic or right-wing extremist motivation. A number of seminars and conferences were held for judges, public prosecutors, probation and youth officers and victim support agencies. These conferences led to the realisation that only strong inter-agency cooperation would lead to an appropriate strategy against racially motivated crime (Das 1997: 44).

No information is provided, however, about whether there were any regular 'third-tier' multi-agency arrangements at the *Land* administrative level for Hesse beyond the specific arrangements mentioned. Nevertheless, the case of Hesse illustrates that the political-administrative structure that both necessitates and enables the establishment of 'third-tier' multi-agency co-operation on tackling race hate crime exists elsewhere in Europe and the model of the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum is potentially transferable to other EU member states.

The conditions for replication or transferability on a <u>city-wide</u> basis would be:
- Institutionalised management of the key statutory agencies of the police, prosecution services, probation services and local government *at city-wide level*.
- The devolution of management of the key statutory agencies of the police, prosecution services, probation services and local government *to geographic localities within the city*.
- Established arrangements or the potential for multi-agency co-operation on race hate crime between the statutory agencies, and between the statutory agencies and NGOs, *within those localities in the city*.

The conditions for replication or transferability on a <u>regional</u> basis would be:
- Institutionalised management of the key statutory agencies of the police, prosecution services, probation services and local government *at regional level.*
- The devolution of management of the key statutory agencies of the police, prosecution services, probation services and local government *to cities and towns within the region.*
- Established arrangements or the potential for multi-agency co-operation on race hate crime between the statutory agencies, and between the statutory agencies and NGOs, *within the cities and towns in the region.*

At the city-wide and regional levels high level political commitment and senior level commitment in the key statutory and non-statutory agencies would be fundamental to replicating the type of multi-agency cooperation involved in the London-Wide Race Hate Crime Forum.

## References

Björgo, Tore and Rob Witte (eds.) *Racist Violence in Europe*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Bowling, Benjamin and William Saulsbury (1993) 'A Local Response to Racial Violence', in T. Björgo and R. Witte (eds.) *Racist Violence in Europe*, pp. 221-235, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Commission for Racial Equality (1995) *Action on Racial Harassment. Guidance for Multi-Agency Panels*, London: Commission for Racial Equality.

Commission for Racial Equality (1997) *Racially Motivated Crime. Responses in Three European Cities*, London: Commission for Racial Equality.

Das, Anjana (1997) 'Frankfurt', in Commission for Racial Equality, *Racially Motivated Crime. Responses in Three European Cities*, pp. 31-65, London: Commission for Racial Equality.

Dummett, Ann (1997) 'A European Perspective', in Commission for Racial Equality, *Racially Motivated Crime. Responses in Three European Cities*, pp. 130-144, London: Commission for Racial Equality.

European Union Monitoring Centre (EUMC) (2005) *Racist Violence in 15 EU Member States*, Vienna: European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.

Foster, Janet, Newburn, Tim, and Anna Souhami (2005) *Assessing the Impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, Home Office Research Study 294, London: Home Office, Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Macpherson, Sir William (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, London: HMSO.

Hall, Nathan (2005) *Hate Crime*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Lemos, Gerard (2000) *Racial Harassment: Action on the Ground*, London: Lemos & Crane/Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Oakley, Robin (2005) *Policing Racist Crime and Violence. A Comparative Analysis*, Vienna: European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.

Saulsbury, William and Benjamin Bowling (1991) *The Multi-agency Approach in Practice: The North Plaistow Racial Harassment Project*, London: Home Office Research and Planning Unit.

Stanko, Elizabeth A. (2004) 'Reviewing the Evidence of Hate. Lessons From a Project Under the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme', *Criminal Justice*, 4(3): 277-286.

U.K Home Office (1989) *The Response to Racial Attacks and Harassment: guidance for statutory agencies*, Report of the Inter-Departmental Racial Attacks Group, London: Home Office.

U.K. Home Office (1991) *Sustaining the Momentum, Second Report of the Inter-Departmental Racial Attacks Group*, London: Home Office.

U.K. Home Office (1996) *Taking Steps. Multi-Agency Responses to Racial Attacks and Harassment*, The Third Report of the Inter-Departmental Racial Attacks Group, London: Home Office.

U.K. Home Office (1999) *In This Together. Tackling Racial Incidents: Good Practice in Multi-Agency Working*, London: Home Office.

U.K. Home Office (2000) *Code of Practice: Reporting and Recording Racist Incidents*, London: Home Office.

U.K. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (1986) *Racial Attacks and Harassment*, HC409, London: HMSO.

Witte, Rob (1996) *Racist Violence and the State*, London: Longman.

**Reproduction of this document and further copies**

It is forbidden to reproduce this document in whole or in part without the prior express permission of London Probation, who are the lead partner of the Reducing Hate Crime in Europe partnership. Further copies are available via London Probation from the Equality and Diversity Department at a cost of £10-00 per copy. Post and packing costs may be incurred depending on the quantities requested.

London Probation
Equality and Diversity Department
71 - 73 Great Peter Street,
London
SW1P 2BN

020 7960 1824