



Metropolitan Police Authority

## Executive Summary

### The Metropolitan Police Authority Independent Evaluation into the Metropolitan Police Service Community and Race Relations (CRR) Training

This report details the findings of an extensive review of Community and Race Relations training in the Metropolitan Police Service. Commissioned by the Metropolitan Police Association (MPA), the research was designed to provide an independent evaluation of the training, and to more specifically:

- Assess the impact it has had on bringing about changes to the views, attitudes and behaviour of police officers and civil staff at all levels in the MPS.
- Assess the extent to which this training has contributed to 'increasing the trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities'.
- Assess the extent to which the diversity principles promoted during the training have been integrated into the management systems and processes, and in management responsibility polices at local borough and operational command units.
- Assess the extent to which the training has achieved value for money in achieving outcomes.
- Make recommendations that will inform the policy direction of Phase 2 of the MPS Diversity training.

The evaluation was underpinned by the Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation, which is the best-known and most widely used framework for classifying evaluation. The model consists of four stages:

- **Level 1: Reaction** – what the participants thought of the programme; normally measured by the use of reaction questionnaires.
- **Level 2: Learning** – the changes in knowledge, skills, or attitude with respect to the training objectives; and is normally assessed by use of performance tests.
- **Level 3: Behaviour** – changes in job behaviour resulting from the programme; and seeks to identify whether the learning is being applied. Assessment methods include observation and productivity data.
- **Level 4: Results** – the bottom-line contribution of the training programme. Methods include measuring costs, quality and return on investment (ROI).

The research took place in a number of distinct phases:

1. We began by undertaking key interviews with a range of internal and external experts.
2. Detailed case studies were conducted in four boroughs, and involved interviews with senior officers, race and training specialists and front line officers. The case studies included the gathering and review of performance data.
3. We also gathered community views through focus groups and a survey of residents in a number of London boroughs.

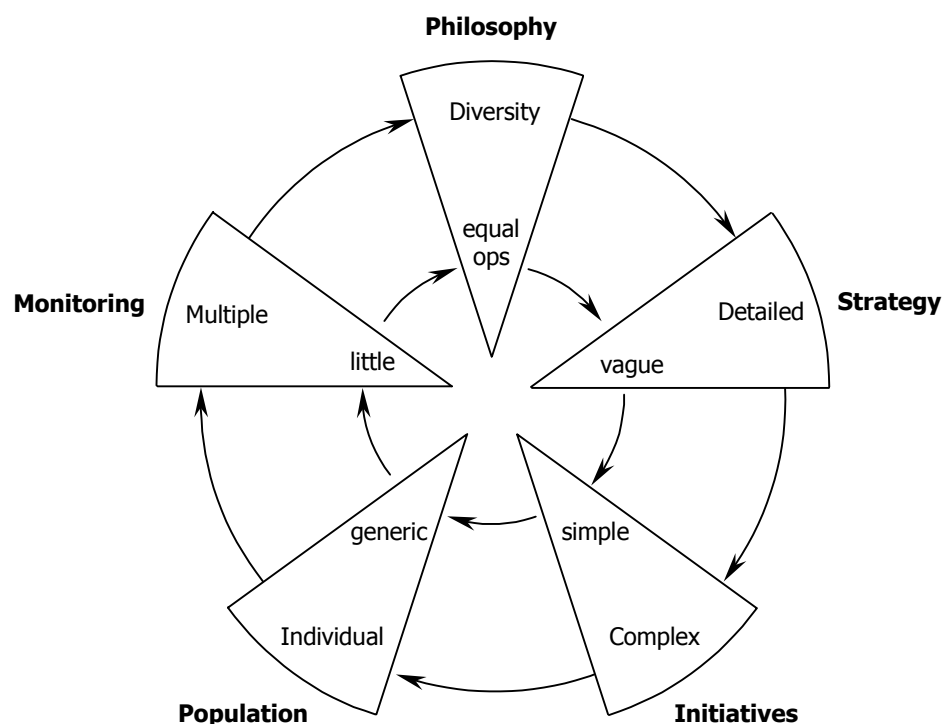
## Findings

From all these sources we sought evidence against our cycle of best practice (see Figure 1). The cycle was developed after extensive research across a wide range of public sector organisations. It captures a best practice model of activity, beginning with an articulation of philosophy, *ie* the overall approach, driving activity in the organisation; then moving to strategy – broadly, how the organisation intends to achieve this; followed by the detail of the initiatives the organisation has adopted; consideration of the population the initiatives are designed to impact on; and finally an exploration of the evaluation and monitoring processes in place.

### *Philosophy and strategy*

We found that there is much more sophisticated understanding at senior levels of the reasons for engaging with diversity issues, with a strong

**Figure 1: The diversity cycle**



articulation of acknowledging diversity as essential to modern policing. Senior officers are also clear that the focus of activity is now diversity rather than simply race equality. Operational staff however, tend to be much more cynical and believe that the service is seeking to 'cover its back' and ensure that staff rather than the organisation are held accountable. They also feel that the emphasis on the initiatives in place is still strongly focused on race; and whilst some believe this to be the right approach, many think it is overdone. There is general agreement that CRR training is focused on behaviour and awareness. Most feel that this is appropriate and that attitudes are not amenable to change. A few believe that a more clearly attitudinal focus would be beneficial.

### *Initiatives*

The Met adopted a relatively centralised form of delivery, and some interviewees felt that they would have liked a more flexible approach to the delivery.

In the course of delivery there are a number of issues that recurred in our interviews with officers. Despite the fact that trainers give broad reasons for the training, most officers only hear the Met's liability and the legal reasons with any clarity. The term '*institutional racism*' still causes an immense emotional reaction.

The community interface included in the training has generally been seen as having a high impact and also as positive, but it can go much less well and can generate strong feelings if it is not managed properly, or if officers or the community participants approach it in a defensive frame of mind. We saw some excellent examples of developing interface work in Greenwich and Harrow.

The trainers were generally felt to be good, but some officers show a lack of respect for trainers and can be difficult to manage. Many come to the training having heard negative stories and some approach the training in a hostile frame of mind. In this environment, openness and honest participation can be difficult to facilitate.

### *Population*

The training has been mandatory to date, which was probably essential to ensure attendance. But some interviewees felt it should not have been so mandated. Administrative staff especially often struggle to appreciate the significance of the training.

Training seemed to work best when officers did not attend with those they know, which could inhibit participation.

### *Evaluation*

Very little evaluation takes place at a local level, with the exception of the evaluations conducted by the Quality Assurance Team. At the local level, there has been little or no attempt to identify key performance indicators and access to data is difficult.

### *Impact on individuals*

Officers, whilst generally positive about the training, do not feel that it has made more than minor changes to their behaviour. Where they identify change, and where they most value the training, is in giving them greater understanding of cross cultural differences and traditions. But officers, nevertheless, acknowledge that the force itself has undergone considerable change over the past few years.

In describing their responses to specific operational incidences, however, officers display many examples of sensitive and appropriate behaviour; and although they do not directly attribute this to the training, we believe will have been influenced by it to some extent, no matter how little.

### *External impact*

We acknowledge that it is an immensely difficult task to look for some measurable impact of the training on the community. Their perceptions of the police are subject to a host of influences, many of which will be unrelated to officers' behaviour. Community views are also relatively rigid, *ie* they are not easily changed regardless of actual changes in officers' behaviour.

Not surprisingly therefore, there was relatively little evidence of positive outcomes. The performance data was not easy to interpret and different measures might point to different outcomes. There was no evidence that the stop and search procedure has become less disproportionate in its impact on minority ethnic groups. Complaints against the police are low, and there is a reduction in racist incidents. But it is difficult to say whether or not this is a positive or negative indicator.

The public attitude survey (PAS) at borough level has such low numbers as to be unreliable for detailed conclusions. Our own survey revealed generally positive attitudes towards the police, with women being more positive than men. Respondents were more positive about being treated well if they were a victim than if they were a suspect. There was little difference in view by ethnic group, in terms of their confidence in the police to deal with them seriously if they were a victim of a crime. However, ethnic minority individuals were more negative about being treated fairly if they were suspected of a crime.

Participants in our focus groups articulated the most negative comments and generally felt the police stereotyped on the basis of ethnicity or residential area. This stereotyping also meant that the police did not take crime against those (stereotyped) groups as seriously as they would against the majority White population. The police were seen to be remote and aloof from some communities and, perhaps unsurprisingly, focus group participants said they would not report a crime they have witnessed to the police.

## Recommendations

We pull on all aspects of our research to make recommendations for both the MPS and the MPA.

### Understanding why

- The argument for CRR training and diversity initiatives more generally, must be made and made again at all levels, and in as many ways as is possible.
- Engaging champions to support senior officers in this message will be helpful – the Police Federation, the Association of Black Police Officers, HMIC, the MPA can all play a role in supporting and emphasising the message.
- Middle ranking officers must be fully engaged in understanding and delivering the message.
- Clear messages need to be given on the relevance of diversity, and the relationship between diversity and race to all staff. All aspects of diversity are important to the delivery of a sensitive and quality service, while managing issues of race effectively is essential to successful resolution of crime.
- The key question still needs to be answered: *What do you hope will be the specific outcome of training?* And this needs to be made explicit at the beginning of any development programme which is intended to address issues relating to race equality and diversity.
- In arriving at a methodology for community and race relations training, explicit training needs should be identified, *ie* there should no longer be blanket coverage of delivery.
- Articulate the aims and objectives of the training, and clarify what success will look like.

### Embedding the training in need

- All managers' roles with respect to diversity need to be made clear, diversity commitment should be an integral part of all HR systems, *ie* appraisal, recruitment and promotion systems.
- Whatever replaces the training must be tailored to the needs of individuals and boroughs. Now there has been a comprehensive roll-out of a generic programme, the next stage should logically be the development of programmes tailored to specific circumstances, *eg* handling accusations of racism, dealing with racism, engaging with the community *etc.* Other ways of changing perceptions and approaches should also be explored, *eg* community immersion initiatives such as that tried out in Greenwich.
- Training programme outcomes should be supported by other organisational initiatives and activities, such as appraisal and reward systems.

### Ensuring impact

- Working effectively and sensitively with different communities will require different skills and understanding, to working effectively and sensitively with colleagues. This needs to be recognised and addressed in any training programme. It should not be assumed that learning can be automatically transferred from one environment to another. Administrative staff have different needs to operational staff and this needs to be recognised.
- Community engagement can be very powerful but needs to be dealt with carefully in order to break down psychological distance rather than increase it. Community interface is valuable, but would benefit from relocation to the community itself rather than on police premises; should be small numbers rather than large groups; should have clear objectives for both police and community participants; should be pre-briefed and debriefed, and should be facilitated skilfully.
- It is essential that trainers are highly skilled in facilitation and able to deal with sometimes difficult and aggressive trainees. Trainers should be evaluated regularly to ensure they have the skills needed to deliver the training effectively. Those who receive consistently negative reviews should be asked to focus on other areas of training.
- Innovative approaches to training solutions are generally more successful in engaging staff and in achieving learning outcomes (providing they are not too counter-cultural). The police should look at the experiences of other organisations in the public sector where diversity activity has been greatest.
- The use of the term '*institutional racism*' should be dropped from training programmes unless a sufficient amount of time can be devoted to explore the concept and what it might mean for the organisation and individuals in it. At present, the only place where this is likely is during their probationary training.
- It is important to use levers to facilitate individuals who are considering issues in a more positive light. These might include positive examples of behaviour or outcomes used to open up a debate on what the police did that helped things go well; using difficult or challenging issues to help the debate on what might need to be done to resolve things; providing support to officers to accept and utilise any feedback constructively; and building on core skills (such as dealing with conflict) to enable officers to see their ability to receive constructive feedback as a positive asset.
- Support can be provided by training facilitators, mentors or peers. Facilitators can provide support by preparing participants for sensitive sessions; for example, what they might have to deal with, and then to debrief afterwards.
- Despite the general belief by officers that they do not need training that challenges attitudes, we believe that this remains an important area and needs to be woven into the training, but skilfully dealt with.
- Attendance can be maximised by creating formal links between training and staff benefits and progression; attendance on courses by senior staff; line manager endorsement; and provide a comfortable training environment (perhaps with refreshments).
- Attendance rates can be improved with effective administrative support, and by enabling participants to select convenient courses.

- Management objectives can be set to ensure that training is attended and policies implemented.

### **Understanding if it works**

- Evaluation must be an integral part of any training or other diversity initiative. It should be done early so that it can feed into further development work and shape the programme.
- Key performance indicators must be identified and data collected on a regular basis.
- Evaluation should not just take place at the level of a training input, but more widely at the level of the borough and its progress on diversity, from the point of view of both staff and the community.

### **Recommendations for the MPA**

- Review evaluations by the Training Policy Unit – there have been a series of borough level reviews of training which could be analysed across all boroughs for common messages that might be useful to highlight and act upon. Any new training should be subject to early evaluation and this used to inform and influence the design process.
- Ensure there is a set of clear objectives – it is an appropriate role for the MPA to ensure that all training and development initiatives in diversity are prefaced by clear objectives with regard to what they are intended to achieve.
- Build on positive experiences – some boroughs have undertaken some innovative and helpful training (especially in community engagement); learning the possible wider benefits of this should be encouraged.
- Agree a list of key performance indicators – the MPA should set key performance indicators for the impact of diversity work. We suggest these include some of the indicators used in this report. But others are being devised nationally, and liaising with the Home Office over these should also help.
- Ensure performance data is available at borough level, and consider what is feasible to collect on a regular and consistent basis. We used an Association of London Government (ALG) survey which, although not currently designed to explore attitudes to the police in depth, has much greater coverage of the population of London than any of the public attitude surveys used by the Met. We suggest continuing to use the ALG survey and placing a number of items to help boost the PAS.
- Regular scrutiny – the MPA should receive regular reports on the chosen indicators (at least once a year) to ensure it can fulfil its scrutiny role.

Our overall view of the impact of the training is that, although well received, it has not made a major impact on the boroughs. We believe that there are a number of key reasons why this is so:

- lack of a clear strategy with regard to the training and other initiatives
- lack of coherent objectives for the training
- cynical views on the rationale for training

- defensiveness on the part of some officers
- inability to relate training to the demands of officers' roles
- lack of consistent organisational and managerial support for the learning.

We have sought to directly address these in our recommendations. Despite this overall conclusion, we have also noted that officers behave in ways that are consistent with the training and, therefore, believe that alongside many other influences, the training has made a difference.