Unity Project – West Yorkshire Police First Year Research Findings and Evaluation

This document contains the primary findings provided by West Yorkshire Police (WYP) from:

- Unity Deliverable 3.1: Report on Existing Approaches and Best/Effective Practices to Community Policing (originally submitted October 28, 2015)
- Unity Deliverable 2.2, Report on the Social and Cultural Limitations of an ICT Tool for Community Policing.
- Unity Deliverable 2.3, To Capture the User Requirements for Ethical and Legal Engagement with the Police.
- Unity Deliverable 2.4 Ethical, legal and socially responsible framework for training, awareness raising and exploitation.

The data collection took part in eight countries, namely Finland, Belgium, UK, Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Estonia and Macedonia.

This report summarizes the main findings from Deliverable 3.1 and Deliverable 2.2 for dissemination purposes relating to the WYP research.

Within deliverable 2.2, the findings were based on a total of 17 interviews conducted in England in 2016 with 5 young members of minority communities, 5 with intermediaries and 7 with police personnel. Police participants consisted of 4 males and 2 females from ranks of Police Constable to Senior Management, with a combined average tenure of 22.5 years.

Sharing information

Out of 7 Police Officers and staff, the majority of were likely to share information, with the exception being the personal details of local residents or young people. The main theme in this section highlighted concerns focused on the security of information collected. One frontline officer commented in relation to Information Sharing Agreements (ISA) ''There is a lack of understanding and knowledge with regards to who we can share information with".

The general consensus from the 5 intermediary participants was that they were likely to share most types of information with the police. Three out of the 5 participants advised that they had no concerns, the others based their concerns on data security and data protection. In contrast to this, one of the participants who had no concerns qualified their answer by claiming that they trusted their information in the hands of the police. "I have trust in the police that information will be stored and managed in line with relevant legislation"

With regards to the 5 members of minority communities, all 5 were prepared to share most information with the police. The overall replies from the young members of minority communities were that in general they trusted the police and believed that they were able

to support safe information sharing. "[We] trust that the police have processes in place to keep information safe".

When participants were asked about concerns or aspects of their group/community which made sharing information difficult or unsafe, again the majority of answers suggested little concern - 4 participants had no concerns sharing information however one participant commented that "If people found out I was giving information to the police they would think I was a 'grass' "

Improving Information Sharing in England

Police participants were asked what could be done to make information sharing with agencies and the public easier. Three participants offered the following suggestions:

1. A simpler process and processes to suit all partners
2. Clear policies and training
3. Amended legislation.

Overall, the main concern for intermediaries, when asked the same question, was the implementation of a joint system which all partners could access to share information. One participant from the group from minority communities supported the concept of an integrated system.

Specific Issues minority groups find more difficult to discuss with the Police.

The main focus of issues which minority groups found difficult to discuss with the police focused on 'personal issues'. Comments included concerns around informing the police about domestic violence and problems occurring in LGBTQ relationships. Participants commented that they felt the police had little understanding of some of the issues faced by what are termed 'unique' minority issues occurring within the community. This emphasises the important role that CP training could have on supporting local police community engagement. Culturally sensitive issues such as FGM, domestic violence and human trafficking were also highlighted as prominent issues citizens are reluctant to discuss. One participant commented that 'the disabled community aren't aware what the police are there to do.' With regards to training for frontline CP officers, the data collected indicated that the content should focus on supporting victims of domestic violence and understanding the specific needs of minority cultures.

Consistent Delivery of Community Policing

The participants were asked whether they thought Community Policing in their country was being delivered equally within and between communities. Although there is no single definition of community policing, participants were asked whether in their view CP was

being delivered consistently. The general perception was that at present, CP was not being delivered equally between communities. One police participant from England suggested that a lack of specific knowledge or understanding about some minority groups prevents them from engaging in the first instance.

Deliverable 3.1 research findings

Within deliverable 3.1, the findings for the West Yorkshire Police were based on 38 interviews - 10 with members of the police service and 28 with members of the community. The definitions of community policing had a strong focus on local understanding and working in local contexts, including the expectation to address local problems and needs.

Examples of CP from the participants are as follows: "Police engaging with the community to understand their priorities" and "Local officer working in the community who knows the community and issues". Community policing definitions also included regular references to crime fighting and prevention. For instance, "making the community safe and feel safe. Keeping order in society", "day to day safeguarding of people who live, work and play within our area". Participants also identified fostering trust as an important aim. For example "provide reassurance and remove barriers. Build confidence" and "Local officer working in the community building up relationship with the community and offenders". Participants also highlighted the importance within community policing of being present and visible, with an emphasis on communication and interaction.

Primary Goals and Tasks

The biggest number of primary goals mentioned by participants focused on three topics:

1. Information gathering
2. Creating an environment in which citizens feel safe
3. Crime fighting/ensuring safety

In contrast to most other countries, fostering citizen engagement and participation was mentioned as an important goal as well as an important task. In addition to this, the creation of trust in the police organisation. Strong emphasis was placed on an officer's presence and visibility on the streets - this aspect was mentioned more frequently than tasks around crime fighting and ensuring safety.

Important groups and organisations

The participants stated that the most relevant groups and organisations for community policing were citizen-oriented partners groups. The majority of community partner groups related to specific age groups i.e. either children, adolescents or elderly. Very few additional community partner groups and intermediaries were mentioned. Of the six times

intermediaries were mentioned, four were parent support organisations. This emphasises the focus on the importance of age-specific groups.

Examples of Good and Bad Practice

Coordination and Communication – examples of good practices

1. "Riots of 2011 – Good working relationship with the police allowed community advocates to diffuse the situation before any significant disorder took place"
2. "Involve families of vulnerable victims to assist with issues and problem solving"

Attitude towards the public – examples of bad practices

1. "Stereotyping of communities and individuals"

2. "Innovative ways of working. Mobile data devices for officers allowed a crime to be input at the scene which provided reassurance to the member of the public that report had been taken and had been actioned. Also allows officers to spend more time in the community than having to travel back to the police station to make a report".

Indicators of Community Policing Performance

Participants provided a considerable range of indicators to determine the success of community policing. While crime reduction was named most frequently, this was closely followed by citizen participation. Citizen participation was expressed in four different ways:

- As (positive as opposed to negative) feedback from the community
- More crime reporting by the public
- Willingness to help police by providing information either voluntarily or on request
- General support by community

As already observed in goals and tasks, ensuring and increasing the participation of citizens as such was a comparatively strong indicator. Related to this aspect were also recurring mentions of relationship building between police and other groups, either with a focus on closer cooperation (e.g., "effective partnership working" - community member response, or "community engaging with police" – police response) or improved relationships ("good relationship with the community" - community member).
Additional indicators relied to a large degree on subjective perceptions of citizens, either in terms of their appreciation of community policing or in terms of a positive police image. For example:

- "Positive public perception of police which will be visible on social media and other outlets"
- "Positive public perception of police - the community will be more likely to say hello and engage informally with officers"