DELIVERABLE 2.3
Unity – To capture the user requirements for ethical and legal engagement with the police
Executive Summary

Revision 1

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Document Summary Information

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1. Introduction

In line with the rest of the deliverables form Work Package 2 and a focus on 'Ethical, Legal, and Community Issues', the purpose of this deliverable, D2.3 is to ensure that the proposed Unity communication platform is accessible to and functional for the majority of groups across each location, inclusive of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and disability.

2. Aims and Scope

The focus of Deliverable 2.3 is to report any perceived barriers to communication between the public and the police as identified by the groups listed below across the eight partner countries of the project. In order to meet these aims, qualitative structured interviews took place with a targeted "purposive sample" of participants who fitted the criteria given. The following section will set out the processes and research design employed in conducting data collection and analysis. The questions asked and the findings reported in later sections involve a consideration of the social and cultural factors associated with each group.

3. Sample

For the purpose of this project, each partner country was provided with relatively structured criteria to help support their selection of participants (as discussed above, a purposive sample), to ensure that all participants had the relevant experience or knowledge. Producing this type of criteria around sample selection supports comparative analysis across each partner country. The criteria for the selection of participants was identified as:

1. Legal experts in matters of diversity, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation etc.

2. Advocates - these would be people who work in the voluntary sector or hold some other unofficial position as advocates for diversity groups or minorities.

3. Academic researchers in matters of diversity in policing (in terms of police practice or in terms of the diversity of police staff themselves).

4. Police officers or staff who work with community members and other agencies in the public sector on matters of diversity in police practice.

Each partner country was then asked to conduct five interviews with participants from within each of the above groups. Policing in the UK however, is managed and delivered in very different ways within internal borders, with policing in England and Wales being a separate entity from policing in either Scotland or Northern Ireland. Therefore, in order to supply data which would be more comprehensive from a UK perspective, partners from West Yorkshire Police conducted five interviews from each grouping in England with the University of Dundee conducting five interviews in Scotland.

4. Findings

This summary will show how police, academics, minority group advocates and legal experts across the partner countries identified important minority groups and how they view current engagement and communication processes between members of these minority groups and local police.

4.1 Why are communication methods important in relation to local police engagement?

In order to ensure that trust and confidence in the police remains high, and the public continue to view the policing organisation as legitimate, the public need to be aware of what work the police are doing to support community safety. However, in order for the police to support communities they must first be made aware of the specific issues faced within each local community.

However, many minority communities across Europe find that engaging with the police can be complicated and difficult. There can be issues around language and cultural barriers; there can also be general communication and access barriers for people with disabilities such as deaf people, and experiences of previous discriminatory behaviour on the part of some police officers towards groups such as LGBT community members. Many of these minority communities can therefore be marginalised in terms of community and individual safety, with their voices and experiences never being heard in the public domain.

4.2 Local Groups identified as being important

This section will discuss the variety of local minority groups identified by participants as being important in relation to local police engagement before examining the reasons provided as to why these groups are important for engagement. The section will then explore the methods of communication identified by participants as being the best for police to employ to engage with local minority communities, whilst looking to see how the Unity platform could support these suggestions.

There were many similarities amongst the groups identified as important for local police engagement across the countries with the most common groups identified as being:

Young people
Refugees and Migrants
Ethnic/religious minorities
LGBT and victims of domestic violence
Disabled (physical and mental disabilities)

However, there were also many participants who were reluctant to single out any specific minority group as being any more important than another, (particularly UK participants) with comments made that all minority groups in the local community should be treated in the same way and provided with the same level of service.

The most common group identified across countries and between participants were members of the Roma community, with refugees and migrants being the second most common. The consensus from across countries was that members of the Roma community maintained a distance from the general community and there was reluctance on their part to integrate with wider society.

In relation to refugees and migrants, as well as ethnic and religious minority groups, the main communication issues were based on language and cultural barriers. There was also a general consensus amongst the participant groups that in the main, local frontline police in general did not have the appropriate language or cultural knowledge base to help them engage with these groups.

An additional issue which also faced police in terms of attempting to engage with these minority groups, particularly refugees, related to their previous negative experiences of policing from some of their home countries.

A particular example of a linguistic barrier with a minority group is the Russian speaking minority in Estonia. The majority of police participants claimed that Russian speaking youth accounted for the majority of low level crimes based on a lack of socialisation to Estonian community norms. However, Estonian advocates and legal experts in contrast defined Russian speaking minority communities as being vulnerable and in need of protection and education in terms of knowing local regulation and legislation.

Victims of domestic violence were also highlighted as an important group with whom the police should be engaging along with members of the LGBT community. Similar claims were made that there was a general lack of understanding regarding the specific issues both groups faced in terms of the impact of reporting incidents to the police. Fear of reprisals and a perception that there is no real understanding of the specific issues they face has the potential to prevent them from engaging with local police.

Disabled groups were most commonly discussed in the "any additional groups" question with comments regarding difficulties the police face in dealing with deaf people and those with mental handicaps or a language impairment with suggestion from police, advocates and legal experts that additional training be provided to some frontline officers.

A large majority of participants also identified young people as a minority group with whom the police should be engaging. In general terms young people were identified as a group who required police protection and legal education and sat within a welfarist context of policing. There was an acknowledgement that young people have their own particular experiences and view of the world and that positive engagement is needed to enable effective relationships to be built between them and the police.

4.3 Why are specific groups important for the police to engage with?
There were a variety of reasons which participants gave as to why these groups are important for the police to engage in community policing. However, in the main the majority of responses could be placed under three broad categories: education, prevention and protection.

Similar findings were evident across participant groups and between countries and indicate that in the opinion of many of the participants, community policing takes a more welfarist approach to policing with its focus on divergence, deterrence and prevention than the more response style of policing.

When ethnic minorities, refugees or immigrant groups were highlighted as important groups with whom the police should engage, many participants related the purpose of this engagement to providing a legal education in order to ensure that all members were aware of local laws and regulations in order to prevent them either intentionally or unintentionally being criminalised.

The concept of prevention cited above was used as an overarching theme for the purpose of this project and included replies which stated that positive engagement with the specific minority groups supported not only crime prevention, but also the prevention of groups becoming marginalised within their local community, the prevention of young people becoming radicalised and to prevent discrimination.

With regards to crime prevention at a local level, there was very little discussion from the participants acknowledging the role that community member's play as partners who work with the police to maintain community safety. Community members working alongside the police in partnership, assisting them with identifying and finding solutions for local issues, is a fundamental concept within the community policing literature with Tyler (2008:68), claiming that "[S]ecurity cannot be produced by either the police or community residents acting alone - it requires cooperation". English police participants were the only group who highlighted how local police engagement could be employed to support a consultative approach to the identification of local policing priorities.

Positive local engagement inclusive of the provision of effective communication platforms was also highlighted in the findings as a method of supporting immigrants to integrate with their new local communities. This theme was found in responses from across countries and between participant groups.

4.4 Which are the Best Methods of Communication?
The overwhelming response from participants when they were asked which methods of communication would be the best for the police to employ in order to communicate with the groups identified was *face to face direct communication*. Participants mentioned a wide range of face to face methods including private meetings and engaging in youth or sports projects and every variation in between. Social media and internet communication methods were also discussed by participants as effective communication methods with minority groups, however, these tended to focus on engaging with younger people. Some of the responses from participants who discussed the merits of face to face communication also included a discussion on police officer attitudes and behaviours during their encounters with minority community members and highlighted the positive impact which a familiar and approachable police officer has on local engagement.

Amongst the participants there was also a rather high response rate indicating that the most effective method for communicating with minority groups was working closely with intermediaries and group specialists. The police working in partnership with these external organisations was viewed as a positive concept with many participants, including police personnel, acknowledging the positive impact of sharing information between the organisations.

Listed below are some main points related to community policing which emerged from the data.

4.5 Main Points to be considered in Community Policing

- Face to face communication has been defined as the most important by all groups across all partner countries in this project – if face to face contact is conducted in a positive manner with local community members in the first instance, it could encourage and support the use of the Unity platform more widely.

- The high response rate from participants who highlighted the use of intermediaries in accessing and communicating with many minority groups, indicates that Unity partners should engage with intermediary organisations during technology trials and training.

- Many participants, including police officers, discussed the importance of local community police being not only visible but approachable. They discussed officer behaviours during interactions with community members with comments suggesting that the police do not always have an understanding of the issues or problems faced by certain minority groups such as LGBT members and refugees.

- A focus on the importance of the attitudes and behaviours of local community police officers by participants, inclusive of the police themselves, also highlights the significance of placing suitably qualified and engaged officers in a community role who will encourage and support community engagement.

- The provision of a regular and familiar officer in the community was also an important concept raised by participants and entails the long terms placement of a named officer in a single geographical location.

5. Conclusion

This report has shown how police, academics, minority group advocates and legal experts across the partner countries identify important minority groups and how they view current engagement and communication processes between members of these minority groups and local police. This deliverable has attempted to unpick the local nuances of current communication methods employed by police in order to provide robust data which can be used to ensure the Unity communication platform will be accessible to and functional for the many diverse groups in contemporary society.