UNDERSTANDING, ENGAGING AND DEMONSTRATING THE DIFFERENCE TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2019 - 2021
INTRODUCTION

It is a strategic priority for Northumbria Police to ‘increase opportunities for contacting, listening and engaging with communities in order to increase confidence’.

This engagement strategy will build on a strong foundation of how we currently engage people both internally and externally within the force. So whether you work for Northumbria Police or are a member of the public, this strategy will provide clear purpose on what we mean by effective engagement and the impact we hope to achieve to demonstrate.

This approach will provide a strategic direction to how we deliver engagement activity. It will shape how, when, where and who we will engage with based on our understanding of target audiences and local communities. This will help direct our engagement priorities for our organisation.

Our strategy supports the Police and Crime priorities. Through increased understanding of our communities and wider engagement with the public in the areas where we need to target the most; we will be able to demonstrate the impact on public trust and confidence.
WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY?

Modern day policing is changing. The complex nature of emerging crimes and the continuous increasing demand in challenging financial times means we need to change the way we work to provide the best service to our communities with the resources we have. This means delivering effective engagement both internally and externally.

• Effective engagement internally with our people ensures that they are informed, engaged and our key messages are embedded across the force.

• Effective engagement with the public enhances our relationship with the public. Whether it is via social media, face to face, telephone, online interactions or through survey feedback, effective engagement ensures there is public confidence in policing. This helps the public to feel that we are doing our job legitimately. If the public do not feel this, they are less likely to support what we do. Our key messages to communities will be consistent and our understanding of their needs will be greater.

This strategy will reflect on how engagement, neighbourhoods and public insight teams within Northumbria Police need to work together to increase our understanding of the issues impacting on our local communities. We will target engagement activity based on a strong evidence base so we can make a difference.

This strategy will enable us to deliver our priority of identifying those most vulnerable within our communities. It will support the prevention of crime through effective engagement and collaboration with communities and partners at a local and national level.
Recent public insight shows trust and confidence in Northumbria Police is very high and the Force is a leader in this area nationally. However, we no longer have the resources to be everything to everyone.

Our priority is to protect the vulnerable and our strategy needs to focus on this. At the same time we must ensure that wider audiences receive our key messages.

This strategy has been developed through a working group with representation from Community Engagement, Public Insight, Neighbourhood Policing and Community and Engagement teams.

Extensive consultation has helped shape and influence this strategy.

What our strategy will achieve

- Our people are engaged and informed.
- Problem solving in communities that suffer the greatest harm.
- Build public trust and confidence.
- Collaboration with local communities and external partners.
- Increased opportunities for the public to engage with us.
- Evidence based engagement where activity is targeted to audiences who need it the most.

Our objectives are:

- To have a greater understanding of the local communities that we serve.
- To provide engagement that brings us closer to our people and the public through a range of mechanisms.
- To demonstrate the difference community engagement makes to our local communities.
To have a greater understanding of the local communities that we serve.

Public and data insight is essential if we are to better understand the needs of local communities. It will help us ensure we target engagement in the areas where there is an impact of crime, where there is vulnerability and where we can build trust and confidence. Our aim is to provide evidence based engagement, recognised for working with communities at the right time and for the right reasons. Doing so will have a greater impact on the areas where we need to increase trust and confidence.

**WHAT WE WANT:**

To understand our local communities through rich data and knowledge from our officers to help make better decisions about which communities are our key priority and how, when and where we talk to them.

**WHAT WE WILL DO:**

- Implement an engagement mapping tool that will enable us to understand our long term engagement priority areas.
- Use officer knowledge and partner insight to develop our understanding of gaps in our engagement activity.
- Use officer knowledge to develop a process for identifying areas that require immediate response engagement, for example, as a result of a high profile crime or community tension.
- Identify the key external partners within local communities to develop collaboration opportunities.
- Provide training to officers and staff to allow them to use tools and data to better understand their local communities.
OBJECTIVE TWO

To provide engagement that brings us closer to our people and the public through a range of mechanisms.

There is now a much greater emphasis on opportunities for more accessible and inclusive interactions with a particular focus on engaging with a wider audience. We need to explore new channels to increase our reach and understand our target audiences to ensure our channels are appropriate for both internal and external.

WHAT WE WANT:
A range of engagement methods that are tailored to specific audiences to maximise reach and understanding of our key messages.

WHAT WE WILL DO:
- Review our current face to face engagement methods to ensure they are delivering value.
- Develop a channel plan that will outline how we will communicate with different audience segments.
- Introduce new innovative mechanisms for community engagement making best use of emerging digital opportunities, such as podcasts, Alexa, digital streaming and gamification, allowing us to connect better with young people in particular.
- Introduce a digital version of the community survey in order to broaden representation.
- Ensure our internal messaging is aligned with external messages.
- Research new innovative ways to engage with young people, connect with local schools to deliver our key messaging.
To demonstrate the difference community engagement makes to our local communities.

We know that we deliver great community engagement opportunities and this is seen as good practice from HMICFRS. We want to take this one step further to ensure consistency and to be able to measure, where we can, the difference this is making to local communities. For example: are they more aware of a particular issue in their area? Are they more confident to report a crime? Have they used our online services because our engagement has driven awareness of the facility?

**WHAT WE WANT:**

A police force that can quantify and demonstrate the difference community engagement makes to local communities. Our force will lead the way and be able to showcase our outstanding work that truly makes a difference and stakeholders will be informed of the impact of this work.

**WHAT WE WILL DO:**

- Develop a single method for capturing our neighbourhood teams’ engagement activity
- Develop an evaluation process to understand the impact of our face to face and events-based engagement
- Ensure our external campaigns have associated metrics to understand the campaign’s impact on public confidence, including use of surveys
- Regularly review analytics on the use of our online reporting tools to see if there’s a link to public confidence increases
- Explore opportunities for capturing return on investment from our engagement activity.
DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Effective engagement is fundamental in maintaining and increasing public confidence. The strategy will be delivered by a number of teams to ensure its success. This will include:

- Neighbourhood Policing
- Community Engagement
- Public Insight
- Communications and Engagement

This strategy will be delivered through an action plan that will be managed by a small working group with representatives from the above teams. This will enable the action plan to be fluid and to respond to emerging communities or crime trends where engagement is essential.

The future of this strategy is exciting. We will understand our internal audiences and communities to target our engagement, new techniques will maximise our reach and we will develop mechanisms to measure the impact of the engagement to evidence a real return on investment for the work we do.

The Head of Communications and Engagement will have overall responsibility for overseeing the Engagement Strategy to ensure we achieve our goals and it will be governed through the Prevention and Deterrence Board.