



The Equality Standard for the Police Service

Field Test Case Study – Kent Police

Background

Kent Police adopted the 'Equality Standard for Local Government' (ESLG) in 2007 as a valuable tool for mainstreaming equality and diversity throughout the force. They used an approach of local Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) across all areas to gather and consider evidence. Of a 5-level framework, they gained Level 1 in October 2008 and Level 2 in April 2009. Whilst it did drive through a number of performance improvements in delivering equality, it added bureaucracy in that the local government focus had to be 'translated' to policing.

Kent's experience in successfully adopting the 'Equality Standard for Local Government' was invaluable to the new NPIA project. They were involved and supportive from the outset of the 'Equality Standard for the Police Service', sat on the Key Working Group and committed themselves to migrating across to the new dedicated Standard. They were chosen as one of the 11 field trial forces for the period of April to the end of June 2009 to bring their very specific experience to the

trial. In effect, they would re-test their already proven system for implementing an equality standard.

Approach to implementation for the field trial

Their trial did mirror how they implemented the local government Standard.

They started by looking at the documentation provided by the NPIA and what was being requested of them as an organisation. They already had the support of their Chief Officers in progressing the new Standard and they re-activated their previous Single Point of Contact (SPOC) network for the field-testing. They had decided to include as much of the force as they could in order to test the product as widely as possible and provide a much more detailed feedback to the NPIA. This would also help them keep the SPOC network active in the period between stopping the 'Equality Standard for Local Government' and formally launching the 'Equality Standard for the Police Service'. They ensured that the

SPOCs received detailed briefing on the product and the testing that was required.

The Diversity Team was the central co-ordinator for the project and liaised closely with each SPOC to ensure they understood the product and the field-testing. The team also encouraged them to take part in the NPIA workshops for trial forces.

Regular updates on the field-testing were provided to both Chief Officers and Heads of Departments. At that stage, they did not pursue a formal marketing campaign, as they knew the final product would be different – they wanted to avoid confusing the people who already understood the work done on delivering the local government Standard.

Positives

- The product was well received by senior managers and the SPOCs, especially its relevance to policing.
- The system of implementation, with a central co-ordinating unit supporting local SPOCs, worked well. There was regular two-way communication. A few SPOCs changed roles during this period but the resilience of the implementation system coped well.
- The ongoing support of Chief Officers is vital.
- The testing highlighted a number of issues that would need to be addressed before the final product went live, notably the need for evidence capture arrangements.
- Undertaking the trial allowed Kent to pre-plan their final implementation strategy.

Negatives

- Having decided to keep main ownership with Diversity and not pass it to Performance, Diversity identified the need for a resilient IT-based evidence capture and interrogation system.
- They saw potential risks if they did not build sufficient buy-in from strategic partners. The lack of earlier clarification from HMIC on how the

Standard would be incorporated into inspections delayed internal marketing.

- They have since identified that they could have planned the necessary internal communications earlier and could be using it now to keep the initiative 'warm'.

The way forward

- As a result of the field-testing, those key to implementation are already well-versed in the product.
- They have produced a timeline on implementation, with formal 'go live' on 1 April 2010.
- They decided to produce their own evidence capture system in-house and have started work with their IT Department. It will not be ready before 'go live' so they continue for the time being with Word-based data collection.
- They are currently working on slightly customising the NPIA supporting material (not changing the units in the framework itself) to contextualise it for Kent staff.
- They have arranged briefings to senior officers, senior and middle managers, the Police Authority and Independent Advisory Groups.
- They are working with their Corporate Communications Department on both an internal and external marketing campaign for the Equality Standard.
- They have programmed in formal quarterly reviews after 'go live', especially to community partners, and an end-of-year review.
- They are also looking at arrangements to re-launch the Standard on a yearly basis, as a reminder that it is an ongoing process. This will feature lessons learned and views from internal and external partners.

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