

Working with the Police and Partners

This was the fifth third sector annual conference since the Police and Crime commissioner (PCC) came into office in 2012, with a theme to discuss how the third sector and West Yorkshire Police (WYP) could work better together in the context of the delivery of the outcomes of the Police and Crime Plan 2016-21.

This event brought together a wide range of over 130 colleagues from across the sector and allowed them an opportunity to hear from the PCC about the Police and Crime Plan and the ongoing Needs Assessment. Delegates then heard from the Chief Constable's (CC) about her vision for policing with the aim that the sector could contribute to a truly inclusive approach by working together to get better outcomes for victims and communities.

Working in groups, attendees were asked to discuss realistic scenarios which were developed specifically for the conference that the Police deal with in their day to day work, with an aim to understand how to enable better working relationships and how the sector could help both to prevent problems and address them when they happened. The scenarios centred on domestic abuse, hate crime, mental health, re-offending and human trafficking but all had additional cross cutting themes. Overall 76% enjoyed the event and said they would come to future events.

Working Together

Dee Collins, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police spoke about the unprecedented rate of change in the diversity of our communities and the rapidly changing landscape of crime which is being reported to Police and partners. There is an increased level of demand being placed upon the Police and our partner agencies; a demand which requires increasingly complex investigations to address and a threefold increase in the number of people being reported missing. It was a complex landscape of threat, risk and vulnerability in combination with on-going government austerity measures producing an exceptionally difficult path to forge with partners.

She spoke about the refreshed Neighbourhood Policing offer and the need to manage it through collaboration. WYP were also developing and building on existing work with partners, both statutory and non-statutory, to continue to better identify and prevent extremism and to tackle organised crime. WYP really value Third Sector colleagues and have been working successfully with sector organisations which help our NPT's work more effectively in our communities, she gave examples of some of this work.

Angela Everson, Chief Executive Officer of the WomenCentre and PCC Third Sector Advisory Group Member, gave a presentation to highlight examples of positive Third Sector Working relationships with the Police:

- **Bradford** – Victim Support had been supporting an antisocial behaviour victim for over 2 years following incidents of criminal damage, assaults and harassment
- **Calderdale** – Work has been undertaken by the WomenCentre on a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Hub
- **Kirklees** - WYP worked alongside year 11 students with Yorkshire Children's Centre and Brian Jackson College to create an inclusion school to KS4 with young people with social, emotional and behavioural issues
- **Leeds** – Joint work with WYP and national Ugly Mugs Scheme (Basis Yorkshire) resulting in a huge increase in the number of sex working women reporting crime and supplying personal details. Delegates watched a video about the project. <https://www.kinsfund.org.uk/audio-video/2017-gsk-impact-awards-basis-yorkshire>
- **Wakefield** – A PCSO from WYP had been working with Spectrum Community Health CIC following an increase in rough sleeping and ASB.

Panel Question & Answer Session:

Colleagues on the panel answered key questions from the audience which included discussion on DBS checks, WYP Recruitment/Positive Action and funding challenges

In response to the DBS question the CC explained that the police would look at each request on an individual basis to assess the level of disclosure, she spoke in particular about the need for offenders past history to be looked at on a case by case basis and added it was important to recognise the value of past offenders working in areas where they could inform and deter future offenders, she asked colleagues at the conference to ask individuals not to be deterred by the checks and would encourage them to volunteer and apply with WYP.

The CC explained that WYP had seen a degree of success with the positive action campaign but spoke about the need to do more across all the diversity strands not just BME recruitment, for example there had been an increase in BME male recruitment but still more to do to attract BME women. She also added that the force had seen success when it came to recruitment of officers from the LGBTQ+ communities. She spoke further about the work undertaken to look at disability, on a case by case basis to see if individuals could be accommodated. She spoke about gender issues and the need to recruit more women.

In terms of working with the sector the CC agreed that it was a real challenge for WYP colleagues to know who to turn to, She accepted that colleagues within WYP often moved to different roles which whilst was necessary due to operational requirements or personal development made contact more difficult to continue these valuable relationships, given the numbers of individuals, groups and organisations across the sector. She invited colleagues with any ideas to get in contact. With regards to WYP volunteering in the sector, she was aware that many officers and staff did this in their own time and supported groups and individuals as part of their job.

In terms of funding there were significant challenges ahead. Resources rightly had been invested in areas such as safeguarding and the pressures on all WYP colleagues were set to continue. She spoke about the need for reinvestment in Neighbourhood Policing and the need to get this right for communities.

The PCC spoke about the funding challenges for WYP, he explained he was meeting with West Yorkshire MPs to brief them on the current situation and the potential impact of the funding formula. He did not want to go into detail but explained its application impacted negatively when applied to West Yorkshire compared to other Police Force areas. He added that West Yorkshire had the second lowest police part of the council tax but that the increase which residents said they would be prepared to pay had allowed for the recruitment of 600 officers in 2017 and 500 officers in 2017, with a net increase of around 500. He was currently looking at 2018 budget.

He went on to speak about positive action stating that he and the CC had been working hard to almost double the current level of BME recruitment, although he accepted these were small strides. Speaking about the sector the PCC spoke about West Yorkshire colleagues support for the sector both as part of their day job and in a voluntary capacity. Some additional questions were submitted to be answered outside of the conference.

Scenario Feedback

A number of groups were given an opportunity to offer feedback from their discussions. All delegates were then given an opportunity to add comments. The main issues raised were as follows:

- Outside of the statutory provision there was a great deal of support which could be given from charities and third sector organisations. There was a need for WYP to work hard supported by both statutory and third sector to build trust and confidence as many involved in the scenario's discussed have had terrible experiences with the police in their country of origin.
- There was a great deal of advice and support that the sector could provide to prevent situations arising. There needed to be a recognition that some services were at risk because of funding. There was a need for partnerships with the sector to be "seen and valued".. WYP needed to know who to contact and needed to be able to work at speed to better support victims.
- Local Authorities should do more to support the sector and help them work more closely with the police
- If WYP colleagues had an app which they could access on their mobile devices then a wealth of contacts and information can be accessed which could greatly assist when working with those with mental health issues.
- The sector could support those who lacked confidence in the police working with them to encourage reporting. There was an acceptance that confidentiality was often a barrier and that sometimes this needed to be discussed. Help could be given without compromising confidentiality.

Next Steps: From these valuable discussions, some key points to feed into future work:

- Develop an app for WYP colleagues to assist in both knowledge about the sector provision but practical contacts etc.
- Consider co-location and joint surgeries.
- Share job adverts.
- Design appropriate aftercare for victims and offenders.
- Work with more social care students.
- Use the current Safe Places app to signpost.
- There were a huge range of organisations working closely with WYP colleagues; this could and should be recognised with good practice being shared within WYP.
- Third sector should be factored in to work underway to support neighbourhood policing.
- That the sector could play a key role in working with WYP and victims to increase confidence in policing.
- That opportunities where WYP and the sector working together provided valuable learning for all.
- Recognise that Third Sector should be 1st sector and that they are part of front line services.