



Lancashire Police Authority

ACE

Accessible, Communications for Everyone

Findings from our Disability Consultation

Issue 1 - February 2007

Evaluation

At the end of the event we asked you to give us feedback on the day itself.

- In respect of rating the overall facilities, 78% said it was excellent/good with 22% saying fair.
- Overall assistance at the event was rated as 88% excellent/good, with 9% saying fair and 3% saying poor.
- The overall format of the event was seen as excellent /good by 76%, fair by 21% with 3% stating poor.
- When asked if the event allowed participants to successfully give views and opinions openly - 88% said they had contributed a lot/or contributed, with 12% saying no.
- When asked if they would be willing to participate in another event in 12 months time to review the action plan and consider the next year's plan, 94% said yes with 4% saying no.

Conclusion

We would like to express our thanks to you all for coming along to our consultation event and expressing your views and opinions openly. The disability equality action plan has now been completed and a copy has already been sent to you.

We look forward to developing an ongoing partnership with you, local organisations and support groups as we roll out the Action Plan.

Artwork

Thanks to everyone who 'got creative' at the event. The silk paintings look fantastic and are currently proudly displayed at the Authority's office.



How to contact us

If you would like a large print version then contact:
Naomi.Walker@lpa.lancscc.gov.uk
01772 531214

A big thank you!

Firstly, thank you for taking part in our first ever disability consultation event. It would be impossible to prepare a scheme without consulting with disabled people so we undertook a range of consultation activity which included:

1. A half day public consultation event in Preston
2. Postal Questionnaires sent to disabled residents who had registered an interest in taking part in consultation
3. Online survey on our website
4. Collecting the views of 680 disabled people from Lancashire via surveying

This newsletter gives you feedback from our half day event which attracted 49 attendees with 23 organisations represented. In addition several individuals and organisations who could not attend expressed an interest in receiving feedback from this event and in viewing our draft scheme.

Communications and information...Getting the message across

Communication with you is a vital part of our work so your views on our delivery were important. We wanted to know how best to make information about policing, performance and finances available to people with different disabilities.

To help us do this, we asked you about which publications you had seen and which you would like access to.

Everyone had seen the budget leaflet but few had seen our other publications such as Newsbeat, Local Policing Summary or Annual Report. No one had seen a committee paper! However everyone wanted access to our publications and expected that they would be available on our website.

When we asked about the current design of our publications, your core messages were about the language used, the font size and the overall style of the publication itself.

You asked that in the future publications should be:

- Accessible on our website
- Easy to understand with simple language
- Printed on yellow paper in large print
- Have easy to read executive summaries
- Available in alternative formats (although you did feel strongly that due to the high costs, alternative formats should be on a request basis only)

Thinking about future information sharing and communication, we asked the group to identify any priorities. The workshop identified 3 main priorities for the Authority:

- Encourage greater involvement
- Have better liaison with disabled groups to share information
- Make the website more accessible with a better search engine

When asked which one the Authority should focus on in the next 12 months, 'better liaison with disabled groups to share information' came top with 46%, 'greater involvement' was second - 33% and 'a more accessible website' was third - 21%.



Getting the message across... what now?

Having looked at your responses, we plan to strengthen our relationship with Lancashire's disabled organisations to make information more accessible and informative. We will focus our efforts in the following areas:

- Creation of a bespoke newsletter
- Development of a new accessible website, including the presentation of documents in plain English and the inclusion of short summaries of lengthy publications
- Increased marketing about our activities

Consultation and public meetings, how best to involve you

We wanted to find out how best to involve disabled people in our meetings and wider consultation activity. To help do this we asked you about how effective our current activities are and your suggestions for improvement. You told us that talking to you face to face is the most effective way to gain your views. You also indicated that using focus groups and talking to representative groups was a good way to consult with people.

Face to face Reasons given	Focus groups Reasons given	Representative groups Reasons given
Works both ways and people learn how to respond and deal	Good for digging deeper into issues	They have expert knowledge and are aware of local issues
It can happen at a very local level	More comfortable environment	They can often collect views on behalf of other organisations
Provides more feedback opportunities	Can be tailored to specific disabilities	They should be part of a wider inclusive consultation process
Encourages transparency- listen to concerns, act on them then feed back.	Good for topic lead work	Encourages transparency - listen to concerns, act on them then feed back.

Other suggestions given for improving consultation were to undertake more interagency consultation – joining with other partners to gain information and to go to places like supermarkets to meet the public.

Barriers to involvement

When we asked about barriers, the majority of you had experienced difficulties related to the formatting and accessibility of written information prior to public meetings, the accessibility of the venue and the support available at the meeting. In addition the majority of you had problems with the actual times of our meetings and you want to see meetings held either later in the morning or early afternoon.

Publicising meetings

When we talked about the best way to publicise our meetings we had a range of views. Most of you agreed with our current approaches (the use of letters/poster to organisations, letter to people on our database and posters in shops and supermarkets) and saw these as the best way to undertake publicity. Surprisingly, the least popular was the use of a talking newsletter although those with a slight impairment found this the most useful along with using local radio publicity. Looking at some of your comments in more detail:

Letter/poster to representative organisations	Letter to people on database	Posters in shops/supermarkets
More chance of disabled people knowing about it if organisation sends out the information (as it uses relevant formats-talking newspapers for example)	A database was seen as a good way to keep people up to date with what is going on but people need to be aware that it exists!	Local posters were seen to help reinforce the message that the meeting will be held in that specific area
Can help support with requesting additional needs- e.g. signer	Can be sent in alternative formats as per specific need	Greater recognition for who the Authority is – branding!
There was recognition that better use could be made of community newsletters, and talking newsletters to increase awareness of events.	Can be used to target other information about meetings, events and consultation opportunities	More people will see it...place in doctors' surgeries as well. Seeing regular posters helps place it in your mind...it may be 2 years before you come but you know about it.

We will focus our efforts in the following areas:

- Posters that are easier to read
- Emails about events
- More publicity about outcomes from meetings

What happens next?

It was clear that you wanted us to make amendments to how we currently undertake consultation and advertise our meetings.

To help do this we are going to:

- Explore with the Constabulary and other partnership organisations options for joint consultation events, how we can be better at sharing information and tapping into existing forums to enable the collection of views.
- Get information out about forthcoming events through the creation of a bespoke newsletter to organisations
- Increase information that is contained on our website
- Create new posters in a variety of formats



Police Authority website

We want to have a website that is accessible to all visitors. When asked you told us that you wanted the site to have:

- BSL DVD versions available as a matter of course
- An accurate search engine and speech feedback facility
- Links to other websites to register views
- Enlargement facility to alter colour, font, pitch and symbols against headings and paragraphs
- Email facility beneath each Police Authority Community (PAC) and meeting date/venue information

Information that you wanted to see on there, which is not currently available included:

- Website advertising alternative formats on request
- A summary of each publication's content on the website
- Outcomes from PAC meetings on the website
- Making the site more localised to use in respect of geographical information
- Access to Committee and agenda papers

Where do we go from here?

The workshop identified 7 main priorities for the Authority:

- Create established links with voluntary sector
- Look to scale down publications - plain English
- Create a distinct identity away from Constabulary
- Disability training for officers and staff
- Increased face to face consultation
- Attend disability information days with partners e.g. having an Authority stand
- Review accessibility at police stations

When asked as to which single priority we should focus on in the next 12 months, 'putting training in place for officers and staff in respect of disability' came top with 55% of the vote. 'Increased face-to-face consultation', 'creating a distinct identity' and 'improving links with the voluntary sector' came second with each gaining 12% of the overall vote.

Public engagement: what is it all about?

We wanted to identify what 'Engagement' was when related to finding out your views, getting information out to you; barriers that you experience and the support you expect to receive.



What is good engagement?

"Mutual respect", "open dialogue", "feedback" and "being open and clear about managing expectation" were core themes. You talked about value, validity and openness being the core foundation for engagement. Examples of bad engagement were quoted in relation to no feedback being undertaken after consultation, promises made during consultation that could not be delivered and undertaking consulting as a 'tick box' exercise.

Barriers

You saw barriers related to written communications (not being clear and easy to understand), meeting times and venues, capturing people's interest and concern and as to whether your views could be expressed clearly and listened to in a public forum. You wanted more support for these issues.

Your ideas included the need to widen out the current formal consultation processes to include more informal approaches such as road shows, providing fun interactive events and increasing publicity perhaps using communication tools such as postcards and leaflets and considering the provision of free transport to our meetings.

In respect of written information and whether we should maintain, improve or change our current methods to improve engagement; once again using clear language, relevant aesthetics in our marketing material and production of information in a range of formats was seen as essential.



Promoting positive and welcoming opportunities in respect of our communications

When we asked about promoting positive attitudes, you suggested improved marketing and ensuring the availability of accessible formats on the website.

Employment with the Authority and representation in our publications

Discussion regarding employment with the Authority centred on some key themes. You wanted to see increased engagement with young disabled people and the use of disabled mentors. You felt that the current membership and committee structure of the Authority needed to represent disability –there was a real keenness to have visible stakeholders.

In respect of jobs the message was clear - do not assume what a disabled person can or can't do. At the end of the recruitment process the right person should have the job for the right reasons

When we discussed publications, there was a sense that photos and images used should be just that... photos. They should not focus on the disability –e.g. the wheelchair, why not just focus on the face instead?

In addition publications should represent the community overall and that means showing a cross-section of the community make up. There will be times when a photo, picture or symbol is set with a disability context and is relevant to the publication. In that situation it should be used but in a positive way not a pitiful, stereotypical way.



Where do we go from here?

Thinking about future engagement, we asked the group to identify any priorities. The group identified 4 priorities which were-

- Action plan and feedback-creation of a group to hold the Authority to account
- Use of existing groups
- Use of existing information - don't replicate
- Disabled representation on the Authority committees and forums

When asked as to which single priority we should focus on in the next 12 months, 43% of you wanted the Authority to increase disabled representation on the Authority committees and forums.

Ongoing advice and involvement

We did not see this event as a one off piece of consultation. Once the disability scheme has been written we still need to maintain a regular dialogue. In addition we wanted to find out if you were interested in our vacancies and how you would seek out information about job opportunities.

Police Authority vacancies

When asked about vacancies you would be interested in finding out about, the most popular ones were independent custody visitors and independent members with 25% of the vote each.

In respect of where you would look to find information, your responses mirrored our current advertisement practices (national/local newspapers, websites) with the exception of sending advertisements to local disabled support groups, the use of Remploy and other job brokers and the Yahoo directory.

You identified the following steps which may support disabled applicants.

Actions needed	Why?
Positive for Disabled	It shows a respectful and understanding employer – invest in people!
Application packs – use simple language	Assist understanding
Large print	Access
Glossary of terminology in application pack	Access
Application pack on website as well as hard copy.	Helps widen out access to vacancy information
Keep database of disability representatives/groups in area.	Shows positive action to reach out to disabled applicants

Training

We asked you to think about the type of training that you felt was important in respect of Authority members and staff and where priorities should lie.

You said it was important that everyone had training on mental health issues as it was felt that there was little understanding of this disability.

In addition, you felt that the police needed to be more sensitive and understanding about disability in general and have more interaction with people with disabilities increasing opportunities for positive engagement. This could be as simple as looking at how contact can be made more accessible, having more interaction with organisations or officers learning a relevant skill such as sign language.

Further involvement

When we asked about options for ongoing consultation in respect of impact assessment the most popular options were telephone/email contact, face-to-face contact and holding specific meetings with disabled groups.

The idea of creating a separate group to monitor progress against the scheme was also discussed with the majority of you indicating that if a new group was to be established that it should be a joint group looking at both the Authority and Constabulary schemes and it should meet every 4 months.



Where do we go from here?



The group identified 2 key priorities-

- Establishment of a forum for ongoing involvement and
- Disability training for officers, staff and members.

All participants were asked which single one they thought the Authority should concentrate on in the next 12 months.

Disability awareness training was the most popular with 70% of the vote.