

# Leicestershire Police and Communities Together (LPACT)

Community events held to proactively engage with local black communities.

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## Key details

<b>Does it work?</b>	Untested – new or innovative
<b>Focus</b>	Organisational
<b>Topic</b>	Community engagement Diversity and inclusion Ethics and values
<b>Organisation</b>	<a href="#">Leicestershire Police</a>
<b>Contact</b>	Parminder Kang
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:parminder.kang@leics.police.uk">parminder.kang@leics.police.uk</a>
<b>Region</b>	East Midlands
<b>Partners</b>	Police Community safety partnership Voluntary/not for profit organisation
<b>Stage of practice</b>	The practice is implemented.
<b>Start date</b>	July 2022

## Key details

<b>Scale of initiative</b>	Local
<b>Target group</b>	Adults Children and young people Communities General public

## Aim

To meaningfully engage with local black communities by:

- investing time into building and maintaining relationships in the long-term, and subsequently increasing trust, confidence, and satisfaction
- providing an opportunity for black communities to be heard and listen to their thoughts, feelings and experiences relating to the [Police Race Action Plan's](#) workstreams, demonstrating that the police care
- offering black communities insight, including knowledge sharing and lay observation opportunities, to demystify the police
- enabling areas of concern to be identified, appropriate action to be taken, and involvement of black communities in force decision-making
- taking a proactive rather than reactive approach to community engagement

## Intended outcome

- Improved relationships with local black communities – more and long-term conversations and contact, better rapport between black communities and the police, and increased familiarity and engagement with local officers.
- Increased understanding of policing about the areas of concern to local black communities and their thoughts, feelings and experiences relating to the Police Race Action Plan.
- Identification of black communities' areas of concern, action taken to address these, and black communities having influence over force decision-making.

- Increased opportunity for black communities to engage with lay observation opportunities and gain an understanding about policing.
- Increased trust, confidence and satisfaction of black communities towards policing.

## Description

Leicestershire Police and Communities Together (LPACT) involves community events held with local black communities, where the focus is on discussing the four workstreams within the [Police Race Action Plan](#).

## Attendees

Community members, the police, and representatives from external organisations attend the events. The unique experiences and concerns of different black communities is recognised, so each event focuses on engaging with one black community at one time. However, events are open to everyone, even when their community is not the specific focus, and people are welcome to attend multiple events.

Chief officers and representatives from a range of force departments attend to provide visible leadership and the public with direct access to police personnel.

The people who attend each event varies and on average, 60 people attend per event.

## Focus group

A focus group has been developed, comprised of around 15 community members who volunteered to have greater involvement than attending the events. Their role consists of facilitating discussions at the events and sense-checking feedback from the events. The focus group meets every couple of months at a police station.

## Location

Analysis was undertaken to establish where black communities live or can be located. Events are held every couple of months in these areas, in known places where people feel comfortable – such as at community centres or town halls. This makes the events accessible. The location of events varies to enable different communities to attend.

## Communications

Officers engage with black communities to let them know about the upcoming events and provide information about these, including information about the Police Race Action Plan. This involves networking and reaching out to people, businesses, and external organisations via cold calling, emailing people, and making personal visits to communities.

A communications strategy is being developed to support this process as it is understood that the current method is limited in terms of its reach.

## Agenda

Events are planned to run for three hours, but have previously run for up to four or five hours. They begin with food and a meet-and-greet networking session. This is followed by an officer formally introducing the event, including an overview of the agenda and introducing police personnel.

Facilitation of the events is supported using a PowerPoint presentation. This includes slides covering an introduction, the agenda, and the key questions to be discussed.

The agenda remains consistent across events. Attendees are provided with an explanation of what the four workstreams within the PRAP are. They are asked four key questions in relation to these – how can the police respect, protect, involve, and represent the black communities better?

## Discussion

A member of the local black community then facilitates the discussion around the key questions. Attendees are encouraged to speak openly and share their thoughts, feelings and lived experiences.

The discussion provides an avenue for black members of the community to air their views about policing and how it affects them. It also gives an opportunity for them to provide solutions to those problems and for the police to share action already being taken.

The discussions are currently carried out as a collective, however the possibility of having breakouts for smaller discussions and subsequently coming together is being explored.

Dependent on time, all the key questions may not be covered. Topics of discussion are recorded via note taking and attendees are provided with a form whereby they can write input on the four key questions should they feel uncomfortable speaking.

Attendees are also given the option to provide their contact details to receive updates and to request to have greater involvement via participation in the focus group. The events come to a natural close as the finish time approaches. Though, it is common for people to stay after the event finishes to network, socialise, and have further discussions with other attendees.

## Debrief

After each event, a debrief is carried out with the police involved to discuss how the event went and any learning or areas for improvement which can be taken forwards.

Topics of discussion raised during the events and via the feedback forms are also analysed.

The findings are then shared with the focus group to sense-check the feedback and establish if they feel this is an accurate reflection.

Once any necessary amendments are made following the review, the feedback is shared with attendees who provided contact details to be kept informed.

## Feedback review

The feedback is then reviewed by the force, appropriate actions or change are then implemented, or honest conversations are undertaken where action cannot be taken in response to the feedback received. This may involve passing on feedback to relevant departments to be actioned or enabling the opportunity for attendees to participate in lay observation opportunities such as custody visits, to see what the police do.

Regular updates around what the police are doing are given to those who provided contact details and plans are in place for broader communication of this once the communications strategy is in place.

## Resources

Costs are associated with catering to provide attendees with food and event hire. Event hire averages at £85 and the most that has been spent on an event is £1,000.

Human resources are required to arrange the events and between five and 15 officers attend each event.

One person leads organising the event, which is mostly done via emails and calls over a period of weeks in the lead up to the event.

Roughly three people are required to assist setting up the event on the day, including setting up IT equipment, catering and the room the event is being held in.

## Evaluation

A public survey was conducted in 2022, asking all community members in Leicestershire about their confidence in the police, satisfaction toward policing, and awareness of the Police Race Action Plan. Responses were obtained via officers physically going to community groups and liaising with community leaders. Approximately 300 people took part and while the survey was open to all, the focus was to capture the views of black people. The views of black respondents were highlighted within the data, but a large proportion of respondents were white.

This survey is due to be re-run this year, with some additional questions looking to capture whether community members have attended any LPACT events. The intention will primarily be to measure any change in confidence among black communities.

Topics of discussion raised during the events and via the feedback forms are analysed, identifying areas discussed overall and those specific to certain communities. The feedback is then reviewed, and appropriate actions or change are then implemented where required.

Data is yet to be captured after recommendations from the events have been implemented. An evaluation plan is being developed on how best to measure the impact of LPACT.

## Overall impact

LPACT appears to be enabling relationships between policing and black communities to improve by providing a long-term and sustainable platform for regular conversations and contact.

Anecdotal evidence suggests rapport between the police and black communities attending the events is improving and that these individuals are becoming more familiar and are more regularly engaging with local officers involved. Through engagement with the events and analysis of areas of discussion during events, the police are gaining an understanding of black communities' areas of concern and their thoughts, feelings and experiences relating to the Police Race Action Plan.

Black communities are also becoming more involved in subsequent force actions and decision-making based on their recommendations. Attendees are engaging with lay observations, demonstrating their increased opportunity to participate in such activities. Black communities are provided with insight into policing through knowledge sharing at events.

As data is yet to be captured after recommendations from the events have been implemented, the impact on increased fairness in force process and increased trust, confidence, and satisfaction of black communities towards policing is somewhat unknown at this stage.

However, action is being taken on topic areas raised at events and feedback is being provided to community members. This is likely to have a positive impact. For example, feedback was received surrounding concerns about the police's cultural awareness and training. This feedback has been passed onto the training department who are exploring how improvements can be made to the training modules.

It is too early to comment on the overall impact of the initiative, particularly considering the time it takes to see community confidence levels change and the longstanding issues between policing and black communities.

This initiative is in the early stages and through the journey learning continues to be sought and gained, and an evaluation strategy is due to be developed to measure impact more robustly. While only anecdotal feedback on impact can be given so far, the findings appear to be positive.

## Learning

### Mechanisms that make the initiative successful

- It is important to be proactive to engage with communities to gain the interest of people wanting to attend. This requires actively going out to communities in person to build relationships, and understanding it takes time to do this.

- Event locations need to be accessible – held at the heart of where different black communities live or are located and feel comfortable. Varied locations of events are required to enable different people to attend.
- The unique experiences of different black communities and different age groups require recognition – one size does not fit all. Therefore, each event has a specific focus on one community at one time and in some cases different age groups, though all remain welcome to attend.
- It has been found that attendees can go off topic due to the hurt they feel and that they also want to be able to speak about this. Time needs to be invested into building relationships and understanding communities' experiences. While the focus of the agenda is the four key questions, the events are also about sharing stories, giving people a voice to speak freely and be heard.
- Having a focus group is essential for sense-checking feedback collated from events. It is important to ensure the interpretation is correct rather than assuming, so that a full understanding of topics raised by communities is gained. This has offered full transparency and helped to both give the black community a voice in how the police move forwards and to give any recommendations legitimacy in the community. It is of little value saying what the police think the issues are and the associated solutions if that does not match what the black communities are reporting.
- Chief constable and police attendance is important to show the force's investment in the initiative and to provide direct access to the police. A balance is required to ensure events do not become too 'police heavy'.

## Challenges requiring consideration

- Current recruitment methods for attendees of the events do not reach a huge number of people. Therefore, a communications strategy is being developed to enable a greater reach.
- Events tend to overrun due to the passion demonstrated by attendees, which is important to be conscious of regarding timings. Sometimes not all the key questions are covered due to this.
- Some members of the public voiced concerns that they thought the officers involved may get backlash from their colleagues for supporting black communities.
- Discussions are currently carried out as a collective and some people are very vocal while others do not speak. A form is used to overcoming this by providing attendees with the opportunity to have input on the key questions in an alternative format if they feel uncomfortable speaking. The possibility of having breakouts for smaller discussion and subsequently coming together is being



explored.

- Data is not currently captured around who attends. Possibility of capturing data such as the number of attendees, their ethnicity, age, and where they live is being explored to enable more specific identification of who discusses what areas during events.
- Discussions can get heated or fixated on one topic at times, which requires careful management. To assist with this, the event is organised collaboratively and the discussion is specifically facilitated by community members.
- As the events are open, the details of all attendees are not known. However, attendees are given the opportunity to provide their contact details to keep in touch and be kept up to date with what the police are doing. The planned communications strategy will further assist with keeping in touch with communities on a larger scale and with those who do not opt in to provide their details.
- Conversations are being had around whether members of the focus group should be paid. Following consultation with the group, it was decided that their participation would continue a voluntary basis, though this is likely to require local consideration.
- Establishing impact of community engagement is a challenge as it is difficult to measure, so it is important to think about how evidence can be gathered, ideally before implementing the initiative. An evaluation strategy is being developed to help evidence the impact of LPACT. It is understood that re-running the survey conducted in 2022 will not include the same respondents as last time, making it difficult to directly measure change. However, providing the sample size is sufficient, it is hoped that the survey will capture a good representation of how the black community feel, enabling confidence to be somewhat monitored over time. Furthermore, the planned survey will take into consideration whether respondents have attended an LPACT event, allowing comparison to be made in terms of confidence between respondents who have and have not attended an event.
- Some people do not want to attend events. Likewise, some people do not want to engage with the associated surveys. Therefore, their opinion is not captured.
- A large proportion of respondents from the 2022 public survey were white and the number of respondents overall was relatively small. This limits insights into the responses of specific ethnicities and the ability to generalise the findings beyond those who responded.

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## Tags

Community engagement   Diversity and inclusion