

Engaging with our communities and partners through Innovation Hubs (IHs)

Creating a space to engage and problem solve with stakeholders and community representatives.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Prevention Organisational
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Child sexual exploitation and abuse Community engagement Diversity and inclusion Drugs and alcohol Neighbourhood crime Operational policing Violence against women and girls Violence (other) Vulnerability and safeguarding
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Key details

Partners	Police Business and commerce Community safety partnership Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Education Government department Health services Local authority Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2021
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Children and young people Communities Families General public Victims

Aim

Innovation Hubs (IHs) are about reaching out and engaging with communities and partners to ensure work is shaped by what our communities tell us is important. They also show that the police are listening.

IHs create an opportunity for thinking and connecting rather than relying on one-way communication. Feedback from our communities told us they often feel that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) go to them in times of crisis, but rarely involve them in meaningful problem sharing

and problem solving. This presents them with no opportunity but to accept changes affecting them without any involvement.

Bringing together a diverse group of participants reduces the reliance on off-the-shelf products and solutions. Communities and partners have in-depth knowledge and lived experience of local sentiment and challenges. They understand the community in which they live, work or operate.

Intended outcome

Engaging in this way promotes:

- procedural justice, thus generating legitimacy
- joint problem solving through a wide range of partners sharing lived experiences
- qualitative and quantitative data about a problem, identifying solutions and then a joint agreement on which will be implemented or tested
- relationship building through joint problem-solving

Description

This initiative was introduced to the MPS in 2020.

The IH is a group of diverse stakeholders who come together to solve an issue which has been identified. This issue has been identified either at the local, force-wide or national level. Key stakeholders include local authorities, police statutory bodies, business owners, private industry, charities, third sector and additional stakeholders.

IHs can be used for any issue or problem. In the MPS they have been used for topics such as:

- violence against women and girls
- challenges in schools
- challenges in the night-time economy.

IHs have also been used to inform the [race action plan](#) to identify ways in which black communities can get more involved in police governance structures.

In March 2021 the central east basic command unit (BCU) delivered the first IH over three days on the 9, 16 and 23 March 2021. The west area BCU followed in the summer. The central east BCU

subsequently went on to deliver numerous other IHs at the beginning of December 2021.

At an IH, participants are grouped into tables of approximately 8-10 (depending on numbers). Each table has a note taker and a facilitator (these roles could be done by a police officer/staff, or member of the community). The role of the facilitator is crucial, they are there to keep the conversation going and to ensure people stay on track. The note taker is used to capture content that will feed into the evaluation product following the event.

The sessions

Three sessions typically take place across one day. The venue can be somewhere like local council premises or a police station. Organisers need to consider the impact that location choice may have on attendees. The event theme and questions should be decided prior to the event.

Sessions followed a suggested format.

- Opening: decide which participant will open the IH and act as the master of ceremony.
- Session 1: stakeholders share knowledge of the issue. This includes lived experiences along with qualitative and quantitative data. Each table discusses the focal question of 'what has got us to this point?' A representative from each table presents their discussion to the whole group.
- Session 2: solutions are put forward by stakeholders on how the problem or issue could be addressed. The tables discuss possible solutions and ideas. This is where the innovations are introduced. A representative from each table presents discussion to the whole group.
- Session 3: stakeholders agree on their top solutions to pilot and test, to see whether or not the solutions address the problem. The tables decide on the top three solutions and ideas considering what is realistic and achievable. This promotes a joint problem-solving solution. A representative from each table presents the discussion to the whole group. Attendees agree the three things they will take away from the sessions.
- Close: decide which participant will close.

Delivery

Since the initiative's implementation over 40 IHs have now been delivered by the MPS. 24 were delivered as part of the new commissioner's 100 day plan. IHs are now mandated across the MPS and each BCU will run 1 IH per annum to address violence. Each BCU will consider whether that IH should be violence against women and girls (VAWG) focused.

Depending on the venue, the average cost for holding an IH is £5,000. This includes food, drinks and vouchers for attendees.

Evaluation

The MPS does a survey evaluation before and after each IH event with the survey being given to participants.

Example of an IH evaluation

A trust and confidence themed IH event took place on 25 February 2022 at New Scotland Yard.

The following question was put to participants at the IH: people from black communities are under-represented in the MPS's governance structures such as scrutiny panels and Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and this needs to change. What component parts are missing that are failing to attract black people into our governance structures?

There were 6 points of evaluation:

1. What is your current level of trust in the MPS? Using a [Likert scale](#), a pre and post evaluation found that the trust and confidence measurements above 7/10 increased from 19% of attendees to 34% of attendees.
2. Please rate your current awareness of the MPS's external governance structures such as ward panels, Independent Advisory Groups and stop and search Community Monitoring Groups. Using a Likert scale, a pre and post evaluation found that the awareness measurements above 7/10 increased from 29% of attendees to 54% of attendees.
3. Pre Event Question - Before today, have you had the opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions with the MPS?
Post Event Question - Have you had the opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions? Using a Likert scale, a pre and post evaluation found that the opportunity to be heard measurements above 7/10 increased from 44% of attendees to 85% of attendees.
4. How likely are you to consider becoming part of one of the MPS's external governance structures? Using a Likert scale, a pre and post evaluation found that the likelihood measurements above 7/10 increased from 52% of attendees to 62% of attendees.

5. How likely are you to come to an event like this again? Using the Likert scale as an indication of whether a participant would attend an IH again, the valuation found that the likelihood measurements above 7/10 applied to 33% of attendees.
6. How likely are you to recommend attendance at an IH to others in your community, organisation or friends? Using the Likert scale as an indication of whether a participant would recommend attendance at an IH to others, the valuation found that the likelihood measurements above 7/10 applied to 70% of attendees

A formal evaluation is currently being done by University of Portsmouth. A selection of focus groups and surveys will be used for this evaluation.

Overall impact

The overall impact of the initiative is that:

- survey results revealed there has been an increase in trust and confidence and the feeling of being listened to by the police
- IHs have presented an opportunity to network

Learning

Considerations

- Decide and secure a suitable venue. A police building could be used, however consideration needs to be taken on the impact this may have on attendees.
- Consider potential participants from respective communities and create a defined invite list.
- Have flip charts and pens on each table. The facilitator can use these to capture content from the various discussions.
- Keep track of expenditure.
- Have an event plan to consider how the day will be delivered.
- Conduct a health and safety risk assessment to ensure the event is run safely and potential risks are minimised.
- Write up an evaluation following the event. This is considered key to the success of holding an IH.

- Consider how to report back to the IH attendees with the 'You said, we did' approach. Also consider how to share the evaluation and progress with attendees. This is also considered key to the success of holding an IH.
- Compensate attendees for their time with the use of incentives such as vouchers.
- Consider who facilitates delegates on arrival and table discussions.
- Content with a focus on the theme and discussions of each session.
- The presence of media to promote and advertise the sessions.
- Scheduled coffee and lunch break.

Learning

- The 3 sessions typically take place in a day but could be adapted depending on the complexity of the issue being discussed or the demographic of the people taking part. For example, if this was in a school it would be more appropriate to limit the time period to perhaps 2 or 3 hours. It could be delivered over weeks. The time spent going through the structure can be varied according to community need and complexity of the problem.
- One of the challenges has been getting officers to understand the value of the initiative. BCUs who have adopted IHs have taken on a mentoring relationship with other BCUs to allow them to realise the benefits and to share best practice to ensure it is implemented MPS wide.
- There may be funding challenges when forces try to find appropriate venues to host IHs. This can be overcome through partnership work for instance hosting in council premises.

Please find IH templates and guidance documents below. These are intended for use as a guide only. You must ensure the products you create are bespoke for your respective event.

- Pre event form: <https://library.college.police.uk/docs/Practice-bank/Pre-event-form-Evaluation-template-2024.docx>
- Post event form: <https://library.college.police.uk/docs/Practice-bank/Post-event-form-Evaluation-template-2024.docx>

- Presentation template: <https://library.college.police.uk/docs/Practice-bank/Presentation-template-IHs-2024.pptx>
- Planning spreadsheet: <https://library.college.police.uk/docs/Practice-bank/IH-planning-spreadsheet-2024.xlsx>

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Tags

Violence against women and girls Community engagement Diversity and inclusion