

Public Confidence In Policing

Driver – Social

Related Drivers – Anti-Social Behaviour, Counter Terrorism, Collection and Storage of Personal Information, E-Crime / Cybercrime, Equality, Diversity & Human Rights, Fraud, Increasing Accountability, Neighbourhood Policing, Organised Crime, Victim & Witnesses, Violent Crime – Gun & Gang Violence, Violent Crime – Knife Crime, Violent Crime – Sexual Violence, Efficiency, Public Sector Productivity, Criminal Legislation, Public Order, CCTV, ID Cards, Low Copy DNA, Crime Recording, Data Mining, Information Sharing, Conservative Party Policing Reform, Drugs – Cocaine, Drugs – Cannabis, Human Trafficking, Prostitution, Youth Crime, 2012 Olympics, Race & Crime, Public Perceptions of Crime, G20 / Public Order, Stop & Search, Jean Charles de Menzes Shooting

Background

In order to produce a high quality service to communities, police forces need a good understanding of what the public want from the police and the issues that shape their perception of policing. Public confidence in the police has declined significantly in the last 25 years.¹ In 1982 90% of respondents in the British Crime Survey felt the police did a 'very or fairly good job'.² By the mid 1990s, 64% of respondents believed the police did 'a good or excellent job' with that number falling to 53% in 2007/08.³

Unlike other public sector services where satisfaction tends to increase with contact, those who have had contact with their local police are generally less satisfied than those who have had no contact at all.⁴ While there are important differences between the functions that the police and many other public services perform, much of the research suggests that the reasons for dissatisfaction with the police are frequently related to how people are treated and not the role the police perform.

The reasons for this can be related to the quality of contact, victim experience, offender experience and cultural factors to name a few. A literature review by The Policing Foundation listed the following as the key principles of satisfaction and confidence with the police:

- Satisfaction with the police is influenced by the level and quality of contact
- Ethnicity, gender, age, socio-demographic status and geographical location are important factors associated with confidence in the police
- Satisfaction with victims is shaped by police demeanour and the extent to which the police deliver on promises
- There are characteristics such as attentiveness and reliability, which the public want from the police and are important to enhance customer satisfaction.

It is important to note that although **Customer service** is an essential part of successful neighbourhood policing it is important across policing as whole. The Casey Review stated

that it was apparent during discussions with the public that they expected both neighbourhood and wider police roles as part of a seamless police service – they did not distinguish between their expectations of Neighbourhood Police Teams and broader policing in their areas.⁵ Customer service throughout the force as well as neighbourhood policing is essential to increase public confidence.

Potential Skills Needs

Customer service skills – ensure a consistent high quality service

Communication skills – to engage with the local community and communicate to all staff at all levels to create confidence in the community

Community policing skills – to discuss local priorities and encourage more people to become involved in crime reduction as well as operational policing task

Equality and diversity skills – to treat people appropriately and sensitively as well as better understand the cultural issues of the communities they serve

Relationship building skills - to engage with the community maintain public confidence

‘Soft’ skills – personal qualities and interpersonal skills necessary to effectively deal with the public

Victim and witness care skills – to treat victims and witnesses appropriately and sensitively; and keep victims informed throughout the criminal justice process.

¹ Lloyd, K., & Foster, J. (2009) *Citizen Focus and Community Engagement: A review of the literature*. London: The Policing Foundation.

² Jackson, J. & Sunshine, J. (2007) *Public Confidence in Policing: A Neo-Durkeimian Perspective*. *British Journal of Criminology* 47 Oxford: Oxford University Press pp 214-433.

³ [Home Office \(2008\) Chapter 5 Public Perceptions from 2007/08 British Crime Survey. London: Home Office.](#)

⁴ Blaug, R., Horner, L., Kenyon, A. & Lekhi, R. (2006) *Public Value, Citizen Expectation and User Commitment: A Literature Review*. London: The Work Foundation.

⁵ [Casey, Louise \(2008\) Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review by Louise Casey. London: Cabinet Office.](#)