

Making You Heard – an IT feedback mechanism

Implementing a system to enabling staff to provide feedback on issues and concerns.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Ethics and values Leadership, development and learning Organisation including workforce
Organisation	Dorset Police
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Region	South East
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2024
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Workforce

Aim

Making You Heard aims to:

- provide an open forum for staff to voice their opinions on policies and processes
- create a safe working environment
- demonstrate the force's willingness to listen and clearly communicate with staff
- encourage an inclusive environment and high performance
- support the force diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) strategy and the new [Code of Ethics](#) for policing

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to:

- improve staff morale and wellbeing
- improve force policies and processes
- encourage cultural change

Description

Internal survey results highlighted a reluctance by staff in Dorset Police to provide the force with feedback. Therefore, the force sought a mechanism to:

- encourage effective problem solving
- promote diversity of thought

Focus groups

A series of focus groups were delivered at continued professional development (CPD) events to understand more about the survey results. The focus groups were led by the business improvement and development team and attendees included staff who had raised concerns in the survey. These focus groups supported the idea of setting up an IT system to provide a feedback mechanism for police staff. This initiative has become known as Making You Heard.

Making You Heard works by officers and staff sending feedback to the force through a simple form hosted on Microsoft Forms. This is accessed through the force Microsoft SharePoint. The form was created internally by the business improvement and development team at no cost. It was subject to focus group, force executive and trade union sign off before it was finalised.

The form enables staff to highlight issues and concerns they perceive to have been ignored or remain unresolved. It provides a transparent and accessible process to voice issues without fear of reprisal or being blocked by management.

Two staff in the force legitimacy team action the submissions as an add on to their day-to-day roles. The legitimacy team aim to process each form in a two-week turnaround period.

Feedback handling

To ensure staff are happy with the handling of their feedback, anyone who submits a form can choose whether to send the feedback anonymously or as a named employee. If a name is provided, the legitimacy team are able to directly respond to the submitter with an update on their feedback. Staff are also able to select whether they are happy for their line manager to review the feedback, or whether they just wish it to be reviewed by the legitimacy team.

Importantly, the form clearly outlines the remit and scope of making you heard. The form signposts staff to other areas and departments such as the Police Federation and wellbeing resources to help ensure staff receive support through the most appropriate channels.

Example

As an example of feedback submitted, a request was submitted for more information about a planned operation. The query included some challenges to the overtime arrangements and intelligence-based aspects of the operation. The submission was fully responded to by a commander. Other submissions have resulted in communications being distributed to teams and traction being gained with issues previously unresolved but raised several times.

Communications

Making You Heard has been promoted through various mechanisms to encourage engagement. These have included senior leadership communications, through chief constable weekly updates and through providing a QR code to access the form at CPD events. Additionally, the form is

permanently tagged on the front page of the force SharePoint.

Making you heard supports the force's DEI strategy. It provides the opportunity for the force to demonstrate its willingness to listen and clearly communicate with its staff. Although making you heard is still in early days of implementation, the force plans to monitor high level feedback themes to understand where key organisational barriers lie.

Overall impact

While Making You Heard is in early days of implementation, the force has already had staff get in contact to highlight issues and concerns. Whereas before, they would potentially be an unheard voice in the organisation. In its first two months since launch in October 2024, Making You Heard has received 20 submitted pieces of feedback.

Psychological safety is a key driver of team performance. It is therefore anticipated that the diversity of thought and creativity encouraged by making you heard will ultimately result in improved team performance.

[His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#) (HMICFRS) highlighted Making You Heard as good practice in their official debrief to the force after a PEEL inspection.

Learning

- The success of Making You Heard has been supported by an appetite for change in Dorset Police. For example, there has been a push for driving forward psychological safety at assistant chief constable level. This senior level buy-in and support has helped with the promotion and embedding of making you heard in Dorset Police.
- When setting up forms using Microsoft Forms, it is important to consider who you want to be viewing and responding to submissions from the outset. Whoever sets up the form will automatically receive notifications for any new responses going forward.
- Dorset police has not been able to set up a platform to share the progress and results of making you heard with staff. This is due to the small size of the force and concerns around staff being unintentionally identifiable from the topics raised. However, larger organisations may wish to consider creating such a platform so staff can see what feedback has come in and what actions are being taken. Dorset Police are considering using their organisation learning newsletter to provide anonymised and high-level updates about changes made due to making you heard.

- It is crucial to signpost staff to other forms of support. This helps ensure the welfare needs of staff are met and avoids people providing sensitive or personal information to the legitimacy team which would be better supported by an alternative mechanism.
- Organisations looking to embed a similar feature to making you heard will need to consider how best to resource the product. In Dorset, two members of staff have been able to take on the additional work due to the small size of the force and manageable number of submissions received. Organisations will also need to consider strategies and processes for dealing with more complex pieces of feedback. Additionally, anyone working on the project will need to be in a position to identify appropriate stakeholders to take feedback forward.

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Tags

Wellbeing Diversity and inclusion