

Public insight team to improve understanding of victim experience

Northumbria Police's public insight team survey users, victims, and residents to inform force decision-making and enhance services.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Community engagement Neighbourhood crime Operational policing
Organisation	Northumbria Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Northumbria Police
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Region	North East
Partners	Police Local authority

Key details

Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	April 2017
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Communities General public Victims

Aim

The aim of the public insight team is to understand the experiences of users and victims by collecting survey data to identify opportunities for improvement to the force's services.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the public insight team are to:

- improve force insight – by using the information collected to inform decision-making and enhancing available services
- improve the monitoring of trends – by using business leads and the governance board to create actions to address any issues or concerning trends
- improving performance tracking – by supporting team leads in performance management

Description

The public insight team consists of nine police staff roles, including a manager, three analysts, one contact unit supervisor, and four consultation interviewers.

The team implemented force area-wide surveys for police service users and victims of crime. The team utilises consultation methods including telephone, online, and SMS messaging, to ensure individuals have the opportunity to provide their feedback.

The team conduct surveys with the following victim groups:

- volume crime
- hate crime
- anti-social behaviour
- domestic abuse
- stalking and rape

For telephone surveys, users and victims are invited to participate through random sampling, while SMS messages are sent to all eligible individuals. The target audience usually determines the consultation method, the level of detail required, and what is deemed as the appropriate form of contact. For example, the team will only contact victims of domestic abuse, stalking and rape by telephone, to optimise their privacy and safety.

SMS messaging and telephone surveys

The questions asked during the telephone and SMS surveys vary. During the telephone surveys, users are asked about their whole experience of service. Alternatively, SMS message surveys can be sent to victims at different points throughout the investigation, to enable the investigating department to obtain feedback in real-time. Surveys are currently used to gather feedback on the force's 101-telephone service, response policing teams, telephone investigation unit, and crime investigation teams. The cost associated with sending the SMS messages is funded by the force.

Residents from across the force area are also invited to participate in the safer communities telephone survey. The survey asks residents about their perceptions of their local areas, safety, and the services available.

Analysing and sharing the survey data

The analysts collect and share the data to the force through Qlik Sense Power BI dashboards on Microsoft Excel. They also support other teams by providing in depth analysis on topics of interest or where changes have been observed.

The data and feedback are used to inform the force's decision-making, identify opportunities for improvement, and monitor user satisfaction where changes have been implemented.

Overall impact

In the last 12 months:

- over 3,500 telephone surveys have been conducted with victims about their experiences with Northumbria Police
- over 4,000 SMS messaging surveys have been completed by service users and victims about their experiences with individual police departments. Supervisors and team leaders have used this feedback to improve the performance management of their teams
- over 3,000 residents have completed the safer communities survey

The data has been shared with departments to inform decision-making and to update existing practices. For example, the force's communication department introduced 'SECCALLs' in March 2024, to ensure all victims will receive a call back if there is a delay in the police response.

Learning

- early engagement with users and victims is essential to encourage the sharing of feedback that can be implemented within force
- by sharing data in real time, this ensures that departments and teams can make the necessary changes to improve services
- it is key to ensure that the data shared is accessible and easy to understand, to help inform the force's decision-making and actions
- by using Qilk Sense Power BI, this enabled the Northumbria Police to maximise data collection, use, and impact across all areas of the force
- by using a variety of survey methods, the force was able to extend its reach of activity and optimise data collection

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