

'I See You' programme – strengthening relationships between the Black community and Kent Police

Community engagement events for the Black community to build trust and confidence in Kent police.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Community engagement Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI)
Organisation	Kent Police
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Region	South East
Partners	Police Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of implementation	The practice is at a pilot stage.
Start date	March 2025

Key details

Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Communities Race/ethnicity Workforce

Aim

The aim of the 'I See You' programme is to uphold the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) by building trust with the Black community and ensuring that the force is anti-racist.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the 'I See You' programme are to:

- increase the Black community's trust and confidence in the use of police powers
- increase engagement with the local Black community
- enhance the force's and Black community's understanding of lived experiences and police processes
- increase the retention of Black police staff and officers

Description

The PRAP sets out changes across policing to improve outcomes for Black people who work within or interact with policing. It has the commitment of all 43 chief constables in England and Wales.

Kent Police sought to deliver the plan through a series of projects, including the 'I See You' programme.

Planning

The 'I See You' programme was developed with the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and was designed to engage with the Black community. The programme aims to cover the four workstreams of PRAP:

- workstream one – represented (internal culture and inclusivity)
- workstream two – not over-policed (use of powers)
- workstream three – involved (community engagement and relations)
- workstream four – not under-protected against victimisation

The planning process focused on local policing area (LPA) leaders and officers in the community safety unit, collaborating with local stakeholders such as the IAG chair and the co-founder of the North Kent Caribbean Network.

After development of the programme, bespoke engagement sessions were held with community leaders to schedule events.

Roles and teams

The following roles and teams were involved in the planning and implementation of the 'I See You' programme:

- local senior leadership team lead
- community safety unit
- neighbourhood policing teams
- community leaders
- community members

'I See You' events

The two-hour events are held in person to maximise engagement and participation during the interactive scenarios on the use of stop search. The event covers the following agenda:

- An introduction to PRAP and the force's commitment to the plan.
- Not under protected section – staff outline an example of a hate crime and ask the community what steps they think the police should take at each stage of the investigation. The key discussions points throughout the section focus on confidence and barriers to reporting, how to support the prosecution, and victim welfare.
- Not over-policed – this involves delivering an input of stop and search training to the community, focusing on standards and techniques. Members of the community are then invited to search officers seeking unlawful items such as knives and drugs. The purpose of this exercise is to break

down barriers between officers and the community, and encourage open communication.

- Represented – this is an open discussion around barriers to recruitment and what can be done by Kent Police, to encourage engagement and retention of Black personnel.
- Involved – by participating in the programme, the force intends to encourage conversations around policing within the community and promote membership to the IAG.

The events are delivered by an inspector, community liaison officers, and response officers who are part of the neighbourhood community team. The walk-through of the crime input is supported by a sergeant from an investigative team.

The delivery of the events can be altered to suit the style and tone of each section. This can vary by factors such as age group, background, and culture.

Promoting 'I See You'

The events have been promoted by the force to community leaders via community liaison officers and neighbourhood officers. The events are also promoted through the IAG and a conference is held locally on Kent Police's response to PRAP.

There is no cost to the development and implementation of the 'I See You' programme.

Overall impact

Officers and staff have welcomed the programme for improving their understanding of the Black community's distrust towards the police. The events have provided greater insight into the experiences of Black people, which has influenced police interactions and engagement.

There was a sense of collective mutual respect and trust built over a very short period of time through quality interaction. Observations from the force also include:

- fewer complaints
- better conflict management
- greater crime reporting and support
- improved rates of recruitment and retention

Written feedback from attendees highlighted a positive change in the relationship between the Black community and police.

The following feedback has been recorded from the events:

- *“We were very happy to interact with the staff that came... The session was an eye opener”*
- *“We thank Kent Police. We were able to go nearer to them, touch them and know that they are human beings afterwards. They were patient and friendly”*
- *“Police should continue to organise this type of training and workshop and encourage people in the community to attend”.*
- *“That was top notch. Nevertheless, it would be appreciated if more of such could happen again, again and again”*
- *“It was fun but also knowledgeable and the police were so friendly, understanding and made me feel safe”*

Learning

- The events have been essential to understanding the Black community’s experiences and how to improve relations with the police.
- The programme was intended to support the Black community, however, it has also supported the workforce’s understanding of their communities.
- It is important to have an interactive section. By conducting an example stop and search, this has helped officers to understand how being searched felt outside of a police environment.
- A challenge has been gaining an initial support from communities. While there is support, it is important to gain the support of community leaders to ensure they encourage the Black community to engage with events.
- A lack of tracking tangible outcomes has proved challenging in determining the success of the project, however feedback from officers and attendees has been very encouraging.
- It is recommended that forces identify members of the community to help implement the initiative.

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