

Policing in England and Wales takes place with the consent of the public, all of the public. This is not something that can be taken for granted. The public must have confidence in the police service if their consent is to be sustained.

The concept of diversity by the very nature of the word embraces and values all aspects of difference. As such Fair and equitable treatment, by police officers and police staff, of every member of the community, irrespective of any aspect of diversity, is essential if public support is to be maintained.

Furthermore, if the police service is to attract the workforce it requires in the future, this concept of respect for all aspects of diversity must extend to the impartial treatment of colleagues. We can easily notice nowadays how diverse the Eastbourne community is becoming. So In Eastbourne we constantly strive to ensure a very strong, even unbreakable, link between us police and members of the community. We have to take diversity out into our communities by treating all members of the community with dignity and respect, the police will enable itself to gain a greater understanding and create a strong yet trustworthy presence.

The co-operation of members of any community can greatly help in the reduction of crime. It also helps to reduce tensions between the police and the public to create a more relaxed, yet effective, atmosphere. We recognise that people have different needs when accessing our services because of their particular background or circumstance. There may also be different groups of people who face particular barriers in taking up services e.g. some Muslim women, Gypsies and Travellers and members of our disabled community.

We have to have an understanding how to tackle these barriers and provide a policing service that is accessible to everyone. So we need to gain the trust of these communities so we can learn from them. The police service has been changing. We now understand that we need to learn from our diverse community that we need to offer different ways of engagement and for this to happen we need all your help

Neighbourhood Officers, both Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers have regular contact with local communities. They are the grass root contact with many minority and marginalised groups and speak to local people on a daily basis to hear their problems and concerns. They are also usually the first point of contact with community leaders who provide feedback from often overlooked groups. But we need to make sure our service is constantly adapting, as our Town changes with more people, from many backgrounds with differing needs.

In Eastbourne we have set up a scheme of Diversity officers because we take pride in providing everyone in with a policing service that is right for you. As we want Eastbourne to be one of the safest towns in the Sussex we will play our part in building a town built on fairness and respect where people are confident in all aspects of their diversity, so that you know you will be protected and treated fairly by the law. We want it to be a place where everyone trusts the police to do a good job of fighting crime and treating people fairly. We want to go beyond our legal responsibilities and produce a scheme that should apply the same high standards to everything that we do.

We hope it will assist to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- make sure everyone has the same opportunities;
- promote good relations between people from different groups;
- encourage people to get involved in public life; and
- promote positive attitudes towards others.

We believe an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

Sgt Fiona Munro
Neighbourhood Policing Team North Eastbourne

