



Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Interim Strategy 2024-25



Foreword

As Chief Constable, it is important to me to start with why and to articulate the rationale behind prioritising inclusivity within our organisation. This rationale can be distilled into two primary reasons. Firstly, there is simply a moral imperative to look out for each other to ensure that everyone feels welcome, fostering good workplace relationships with everybody.

Secondly, and just as importantly, there is real value in diversity. Fighting crime and embracing diversity are two sides of the same coin. If we don't treat all communities well there will be an absence of trust, and if there's an absence of trust people don't cooperate with the police, they don't comply with the police, they won't give statements, and they certainly don't empower the police to do a very difficult job. There will always be suspicion.

There is also a strength of evidence that shows the people who think differently from different backgrounds can provide a more sophisticated perspective on how we operate - our policies, our processes, our strategy, and our tactics. And it goes without saying that a workforce that looks out for each other is going to be a better and more productive place to work.

All of these reasons come together to make a very strong case for why we should think long and hard about how we can be as inclusive as possible.

As senior leaders within West Mercia Police, we are collaborating with our leadership teams across all organisational levels to elevate the inclusivity, responsiveness, and efficacy of our policing services. Our overarching objective is to achieve policing excellence for all of our communities.

This interim strategy is designed to strengthen our capability to deliver a policing service that is effective, trusted, fair, and equitable, protecting all communities from harm while actively engaging and consulting to understand priorities and concerns. It seeks to establish frameworks that ensure the integration of diversity, equality, and inclusion into all aspects of our decision-making, policies, and operational procedures, creating and retaining an engaged workforce that is representative of our diverse communities.

This interim strategy aligns with other diversity, equality, and inclusion initiatives such as the Police Race Action Plan and Purple Spaces Plan, showcasing our dedication to becoming an anti-racist organisation and upholding our Disability Confident Level 3 status. In 2022, we incorporated 'Inclusive' as our fifth core value, and in light of this milestone and subsequent organisational developments, we have developed this interim strategy.



Alex Murray
T/Chief Constable

OUR PEOPLE






We will develop a fair, equitable, and inclusive culture where everyone is encouraged to express themselves freely. We will enhance our ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Our goal is to harness the potential of all under-represented individuals in our organisation, facilitating their development and progression to ensure that our workforce at every level is a true reflection of the communities we serve.

Rachel Hartland-Lane, Director of Business Services.



Developing our workforce

-  We will develop all our workforce, so they have a strong awareness of how equality, diversity and inclusion supports us to achieve a positive, dynamic working culture.
-  We will develop talent processes that are fair, consistent, and transparent.
-  We will enable under-represented groups to access support to help enhance their development and retention through positive action support.

Understanding our workforce

-  We will make our organisation as transparent as possible and encourage scrutiny of our activities by staff networks, Independent Advisory Groups, and other stakeholders.
-  We will improve our understanding of the makeup of our workforce by putting systems in place to better analyse equality and understand disparities.
-  We will address under-representation and disproportionality through innovative recruitment, retention, and progression strategies.

Developing a fair and inclusive culture

-  Develop leaders who are visible and ensure our culture aligns to the vision and values of West Mercia Police. Our leaders commit to listening and providing a platform for our workforce to share their concerns.
-  We will learn from each other, fostering an inclusive environment that encourages authenticity, challenges discrimination, and promotes our goal of becoming an anti-racist organisation.
-  We will support our workforce to continually learn and develop their understanding of diversity, equality and inclusion by providing learning interventions.

OUR COMMUNITIES



We will better understand the identities, history and needs of our communities through better collection and analysis of data and information across core strands of diversity. We will develop effective engagement strategies that enable interaction with all communities, fostering strong relationships that build trust and confidence. We will ensure our values and code of ethics are embedded in all our interactions. We will increase public confidence by being fair, proportionate, transparent, and accountable.

Grant Wills, T/Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing & Operations.



Engagement and good relations

- We will equip our workforce with the skills to engage with our diverse communities utilising improved communications channels.
- We will develop bespoke engagement plans, designed with communities' reciprocal help to ensure they reflect any cultural, religious, or specific needs or concerns they have.
- We will work with our communities to shape the future of policing, understanding that a diverse voice comes from wide ranging approaches to engagement. Utilising our Independent Advisory Groups.

Understanding our communities

- We will develop data sets to enhance our understanding of our communities.
- We will develop innovative ways to better understand the experiences of our communities and be responsive to changes within communities.
- We will equip our officers and police staff with the knowledge to understand the historic relationship between our communities and policing.

Increasing confidence

- We will deal effectively with all reported hate crimes and incidents, recognising that failure to do so has a detrimental impact on the confidence of those communities.
- We will be open to scrutiny of our use of coercive powers and use the insight to help us learn and improve.
- We will ensure the code of ethics is embedded in all that we do and is pivotal in our interactions with those we come in contact with.

OUR PARTNERS






We will work with our internal and external partners to understand and tackle disparities and increase trust and confidence.




Grant Wills, T/Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing & Operations.




Understand partnership landscape

-  We will work with partners to put in place systems that enable the collection, collation and analysis of data and information to identify disparity in service delivery across the nine protected characteristics.
-  We will routinely undertake Equality Impact Assessments to identify and tackle the causes of disparities.
-  We will develop a plan to enable us to work more effectively with our partners and develop joint strategies that enable a whole systems approach towards service provision and tackling disparity.

Criminal Justice

-  We will work with our partners to develop strategies that provide effective public services in our communities, particularly for those who are vulnerable to crime and involvement with the criminal justice system.
-  We will work to understand areas of the criminal justice system that disproportionately affect our communities.
-  Where disparity exists we will explain it or reform.

Internal and external partnership

-  We will engage actively with partnership work ensuring those communities who are most at risk of harm, such as hate crime, are safeguarded, and protected.

Our equality objectives 2024-25

Our communities

Enhanced community

understanding: Through engagement and rigorous equality data analysis, we aim to deepen our understanding of community composition, identifying and addressing patterns of inequality and disparity.

Strengthened engagement: We will cultivate stronger relationships with diverse communities and sustain collaboration with Independent Advisory Groups to foster trust and inclusion.

Promoting confidence: Emphasising openness and transparency, we invite scrutiny on vital issues such as use of force, stop and search procedures, custody, hate crimes, and victim satisfaction to bolster community confidence.

Our organisation

Promoting transparency and

accountability: We commit to maximum transparency and encourage scrutiny by Staff Networks, Independent Advisory Groups, and stakeholders. We will demonstrate responsiveness to feedback and publish essential equality data.

Workforce development: Ensuring all officers and police staff possess a robust understanding of how equality, diversity, and inclusion contribute to a positive, dynamic organisational culture and an efficient police service.

Enhancing workforce understanding:

Implementing systems for thorough workforce analysis to address any under-representation or disproportionality, employing innovative recruitment, retention, and progression strategies. We will actively involve the workforce in embedding inclusive practices.

Our partners

Understanding the partnership

landscape: Through collaboration with organisations such as Criminal Justice System agencies, local authorities, NHS, and voluntary sector partners, we will analyse data to highlight disparities in service provision, prioritising the needs of victims and service users.

Addressing disparities: Working alongside partners, we will explain and, where necessary, mitigate disparities to enhance service quality.

Joint service delivery: Developing effective public service strategies in collaboration with partners, particularly for vulnerable communities at risk of crime and involvement with the criminal justice system.