

Building effective relationships with police

The local police officer that had the university as part of 'their beat' (patrol area) has recently been promoted to Sergeant and as such has moved on and will no longer be the contact on campus. The new officer that has responsibility for the university is looking to quickly establish a good working relationship but is relatively new to the job, and having never attended university admits that she doesn't understand some of the organisational structure, or how best to work in cooperation with the university.

Factors to consider

- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have produced guidance of how officers may best engage with the higher education sector in relation to Prevent.
- It may be worth introducing the new officer to different heads of departments to get an overview
- Some institutions have a dedicated higher liaison officer which may be in part funded by the university. If you do not have this dedicated officer, you may need to make contact with your local community officer.
- The lead for Prevent from the police may not necessarily be the same officer to deal with other crimes on campus which can sometimes lead to confusion or distrust. Effective engagement with police is always about trying to build up and maintain trust
- Prevent higher education and further education regional coordinators are in post to help assist with engagement throughout all sections. The coordinators can provide a good source of information and advice of how to go about establishing better links.
- Links may wished to be facilitated and fostered not merely when it is necessary to have police on campus, but for other reasons that help build cohesion
- Campus security may already have established links with the local police, so it may be worthwhile looking for help from them.
- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have produced guidance of how officers may best engage with the higher education sector in relation to Prevent.

University reflections

Regular contact with police was expressed by nearly all respondents to the UUK survey, 2010.

One institution pays for the office for use by the local officer as they see the benefits to him being there on campus. This way he can help deal with any crime, and also answer students questions in relation to crimes.

"We have a good relationship with our Prevent lead from the local police. He's helped us on a number of matters and I personally have fostered a good relationship with the individual officer and also the university with the police service as a whole. This has led to him having regular meetings with groups seen to be most at risk, and being welcomed on campus as the initial reporting point for any crimes. He helps with safeguarding students and is used to report hate crimes, thefts, anything of interest. He helped with information regarding an on- going case with a female student – he

knew how to get the right information which helped reassure the student. Having someone known and trusted on campus helps both sides". Head of student support

"We have jointly organised an event at Police HQ on extremism. We have our own Community Monitoring Group which includes Police representation". Respondent – Universities UK members survey, 2010

"The local community officer will shortly be provided with a room on campus so that better communication with staff and students can take place. Terrorism Prevention Officer is a member of a working group on the University that meets periodically to review risk of terrorist activities". Respondent – Universities UK members survey, 2010