EQUALITY SCHEME - FUNCTION REVIEWS
IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

FUNCTION: Family Liaison Strategy


CONSULTED: (all persons present / consulted):
FLC Working Group
Inspector Nick Burston

IMPACT / POTENTIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which aspect of General Duty?*</th>
<th>Impact on which people / groups?</th>
<th>How much evidence?**</th>
<th>Staff or Public Concern? ***</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1,2,3.</td>
<td>Bereaved families following homicide or road deaths.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
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* 1 = Eliminating Discrimination  2 = Promoting Equal Opportunities  3 = Promoting good relations

** 0 = None  1 = Minimal  2 = Moderate  3 = Significant

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Details of evidence and concerns must be documented in the following report

ACTION REQUIRED: No

If Yes, Who is responsible for progressing actions?
Inspector Nick Burston

How will the actions / outcomes be monitored?
Protective Services Programme Board

Report Author: Signed Date 13th May 2008
Name Nick Burston Insp 3171
1) What is the purpose of this function?

The purpose of this function is to provide trained and appropriate support to families bereaved following homicide or death on the road. FLOs work under the strategy designated by Centrex (now NPIA) and ACPO which has been adopted in full by Essex Police and is the backbone to this policy. FLOs work under the direction of the SIO and their primary functions are to provide relevant support to families, to ensure a two way information flow between the family and investigation team. They also guide the family through the Criminal Justice Process. Each case is dealt with on a needs basis with the FLO ensuring that the processes in place are proportionate to the requirements of the family and the investigation.

What policies / procedures are relevant to this function?

- Essex Police Family Liaison Strategy
- ACPO guidance
- NPIA Murder Investigation Manual
- NPIA Road Death Investigation Manual

3) Outline the research or data you have used to assess the impact of this policy.

   o What research material or data have you used?
     Findings from Stephen Lawrence Enquiry.
     Anthony Walker murder Investigation (2005 – Liverpool)
     Feedback from families in Essex to whom FLOs have been deployed.
     Victim Support Essex
     Quarterly meetings of FLCs in Essex
     Attendance at regional FLC meetings

   o Summary of findings.

     FLOs were formally recommended following the Stephen Lawrence enquiry and the ACPO FLO strategy was finalised in 2003, following which Essex Police implemented a complimentary Family Liaison Strategy which works in parallel to the ACPO document. FLOs receive training in accordance with current guidance which incorporates a Multi-Agency approach and emphasises the need for each family to be treated as an individual case with due consideration for their specific requirements. The majority of feedback from families within Essex is extremely positive about their
Family Liaison contact. However, it is not current practice to actively seek feedback from families about their engagement with the FLO.

The local and regional meetings indicate that there are still some issues around FLOs taking on an emotional and practical support role which is outside their remit. This reduces their independence and can blur the lines of professional engagement. However, for the most part, it appears that FLOs are being tasked appropriately by the SIOs, with the requirements included in the SIO Policy document.

There are issues raised regularly in respect of welfare support for FLOs. Currently there is a requirement for all FLOs to attend a meeting with a welfare officer on a 6 monthly basis. However, this is frequently not complied with and few records are kept of their attendance or reasons for non-attendance. This leaves Essex Police vulnerable should any FLO suffer mental illness or other health issue related to this role.

Currently we have 221 officers trained as FLOs, of which 38% are female and 2% are minority ethnic officers.

- **Outline what you propose to do as a result of the research or data.**

ACPO have commissioned a revised FLO strategy which is in the final stages of being prepared by NPIA. When this is issued, current policy will be revised in line with the new document.

All trainees have the remit of the role firmly explained and this is reinforced during the course. SIOs must be made aware of the FLO remit and ensure that their FLCs are pro-actively supervising and monitoring the FLO contact. The SIO must ensure that the FLO does not attend team briefings and is only made aware of information relevant to their contact with the family. This will prevent contamination, intended or otherwise, of the role and liaison.

A new welfare strategy is being considered for all specialist roles such as Family Liaison which will require a change in management of FLOs but still provide support where necessary. This is due to be further considered in Summer 2008.

4) **Outline how you have consulted externally or internally to assess the impact of this policy.**

   - **Who have you consulted and how was the consultation carried out?**
     No formal consultation in relation to this policy. When it is revised it will be subject to consultation with external community groups.

   - **Summary of responses.**
     N/A

   - **Outline what you propose to do as a result of the consultation.**
     N/A.

5) **How does this policy / function impact on age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, carers or reduced hours workers?**

   Due to the nature of the role all FLOs are volunteers who continue to perform their normal police role but are available and trained to act within this specific function.
February 2007

Although some FLOs are flexible or reduced hours workers, and this is encouraged, many find that the demands of the role cannot be balanced against their other commitments. During the early stages of an investigation there will be a need for the FLO to spend many hours with the family completing relevant information gathering tasks. In addition to this they will be required to brief and debrief following each contact. The role will be dependant on the requirements of the family, the SIO and complexity of the investigation. This cannot be mitigated against as the family require consistency and knowledge of their circumstances without them needing to repeat the same information to new staff every few hours.

Volunteers from minority backgrounds are encouraged to come forward to take on the role, but will only be taken on if they meet the standards required and can commit to the rigours of a deployment.

Where an investigation involves people form minority communities, the SIO and FLO will seek guidance from experts both from within and outside the organisation. This enables appropriate support to be offered taking into consideration their cultural and religious needs. For example, linking with a local Imam when the deceased’s body was not going to be released within the time frame stipulated by tradition.

6) Does the data or consultation indicate that the policy has a different / adverse impact on particular groups of people e.g. in respect of race, disability, gender?
   The policy does not identify any adverse impact, rather it should support minority groups as it considers the specific needs of the bereaved family within the constraints of the investigation.
   If so, which groups are affected?
   N/A
   o Is the different impact an adverse one for those groups – i.e. does it put those groups at a disadvantage?
   N/A

7) Is there evidence that the use of this policy:
   o Is discriminatory or perceived to be discriminatory?
     No
   o Is damaging good relations or failing to promote good relations?
     No

8) If so, what is the evidence for this?
   N/A

9) If the use of the policy adversely affects people from certain groups, can it be justified because of the overall objectives? Explain in full.
   (Direct discrimination is not, in law, capable of being justified; only indirect discrimination may be justifiable).

10) What changes, if any, have you made to the policy as a result of the review?
    None at this time.
11) State how the on-going effects of this policy will be monitored, by whom and when?

The Director of Specialist Investigations will own this policy and will direct the head of PPU and Vulnerable Victims Co-ordinator to monitor and amend as required.