



## **CLEVELAND POLICE**

### **Engagement with Refugee and Asylum Seeker (RAS) Community**

The force recognise that barriers exist which can generally disrupt RAS Community Engagement with police services.

#### **Some specific barriers are:**

- Prior experiences with police from country of origin.
- Misconception of the justice system, some believe reporting a crime could affect the Home Office assessment of 'leave to remain' status.
- Lack of self-esteem and confidence as a result of negative media coverage.
- Language barriers.
- Cultural Barriers – Anti-Social behaviour would not be tolerated in country of origin – and collusion/condonement of authorities is suspected.
- Isolation through non-inclusion people seeking sanctuary face numerous challenges and are not aware of services or their eligibility to access them e.g. mental health and counselling services for those who had been victims of rape /trafficking/domestic violence.

#### **Cleveland Police response to identified barriers**

- New approach to engage with the RAS community with police staff – whose selection processes involved input from community partners.
- Establishment of a new team that consists of a Community Engagement Team, consisting of a Police Sergeant, a Refugee and Asylum Seeker co-ordinator, a Community Cohesion co-ordinator, a Hate Crime Co-ordinator, two Hate Crime police staff investigators and three school liaison PCSO's.
- Creation of Refugee and Asylum seeker role, aim to engage fully with the RAS community to raise awareness of Hate Crime and avenues of reporting.
- RAS Coordinator role given to Beauty Tshuma who brings to the role life experience as a refugee and previous work skills and knowledge with a community interest organisation which engaged asylum seekers to promote social inclusion and integration.
- This is coupled with a master's degree in Social Work which enables her to provide a holistic approach focused on all areas of health and well-being e.g. health, education, issues of loss and grief and lack of social networks.
- A commitment to signposting RAS community members to other support agencies.
- Identifying Refugee led Organisations and delivering training to Community Champions.
- Designing a Hate Crime leaflet that informs of services available, which is language appropriate.



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#### **Case Study 1**

J is an asylum seeker - reported a Hate Crime - the perpetrator was a minor living next door. This abuse has been going on for 4 years, this was a multi-occupancy accommodation and clashes between the perpetrator and occupants had been reported to the police.

Beauty's visit highlighted that J had the impression that the police and Home Office are the same organisation. Through further discussions J was identified as a future Community Champion as he is a leader of the Cote d'Ivoire community in Middlesbrough. He will receive Hate Crime training in the near future.

#### **Multi agency working with partner agencies**

- All Tees Valley drop-ins
  - Arrival & Haven Medical Practices
  - British Red Cross
  - Borough Councils of all 4 districts covered by Cleveland Police
  - Foodbanks
  - G4S
  - Home Office/ Compass
  - Housing Providers – Jomast/Thirteen/Coast and Country etc.
  - Justice First
  - Methodist Asylum Project
  - Migrant Help
  - North East Coalition For Asylum & Refugee Rights
  - North of England Refugee Service
  - North East Migration Partnership
  - Open Door North East
  - Regional Refugee Forum
  - Social Services
  - Tees Valley City of Sanctuary
  - Victim Care and Advice (VCAS)
- (This list is not exhaustive)



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#### **Case Study 2 – Welcoming people to the area**

Working alongside partner agencies through established procedures.

Family in Skelton, Beauty visited alongside a representative from the Methodist Asylum Project (MAP). Family given information on the local **PCSO's** in the area and handed a leaflet with profile pictures and their job role explained.

Given information of other existing organisations that can offer support.

Family asked if they would like a visit from the PCSO's so that they can visit a introduce themselves. This is important in eliminating any misunderstanding of their presence as well as forging a link when there is need to report any issues that might arise.

#### **Future training and engagement with RAS Community**

- Further Hate Crime training for Community Champions being rolled out.
- Ongoing visits to drop in around Cleveland by Sergeant Brian McCarthy and RAS Co-ordinator Beauty to promote positive relationships and answer any questions the community has.
- Utilising the ground up approach aiming to give people a voice in order to empower and bring about positive outcomes.
- E- Bulletin that focusses on giving information to the RCO's about future training opportunities.
- Consulting with voluntary agencies on issues they face which can be addressed.
- Seeking opportunities to create a joined-up approach to welcoming and supporting members of the RAS community to feel welcomed as a part of the community, with access to all-round services for their inclusion and wellbeing, whilst they navigate the emotional and social difficulties of displacement.

*Beauty Tshuma / Sgt Brian McCarthy  
Cleveland Police  
8<sup>th</sup> June 2017*