

More confident staff, more engaged residents:

A summary report on LBHF LET Engagement Project for PAC 21.03.21

Executive Summary

- Over an 8 month period we worked with LBHF Law Enforcement Team to trial different approaches to more impactful community engagement
- We shadowed the team to learn about their role and co-designed initiatives with them. Two key initiatives were trialled during this period - bespoke community engagement training and community engagement events
- Officers who participated in both parts of the training reported significantly better outcomes than those who did not - e.g. confidence engaging with public , sense of safety
- Residents who attended the events had more positive perceptions of the service and were more willing to engage with the officers in future
- These events facilitated in person reporting of issues and supported the upward trend of online reporting also

Who we are and what we do

Neighbourly Lab is a non-profit research and evidence organisation focused on promoting social connection. Our project '**The Essential Mix**', kindly funded by the National Lottery Bringing People Together Fund, seeks to promote more frequent and more positive interactions between essential workers and the residents they serve, by **running trials to identify what actually works to promote greater engagement.**

As part of this project, we partnered with the LBHF Law Enforcement Team to understand and optimise their interaction with residents. From speaking with and shadowing the officers, we understood the delicate balance of managing the enforcement side of their role with wanting to support all members of the community and be seen as a sign of support in the community. Our trial sought to help them to have **more informal, yet meaningful engagement with residents to promote greater relationships and trust amongst residents.**

Our overall objective:

To encourage more positive and more frequent interactions between LET and residents

What we wanted to achieve and what we trialled:

To help officers to **feel confident and empowered** to engage more informally with residents to build trust

Create opportunities for LET to engage with residents in ways that are **informal, positive and wide reaching**

Community Engagement Training that built skills, challenged perceptions and encouraged more informal engagement

Community Engagement Events in Parks and Faith Spaces across the borough throughout the summer

Our work with the LET was made up of 4 key phases:

1

Understanding the Context:

- We spent weeks observing and chatting with the LET in their role/on the beat to better understand the ins, outs and challenges of their role, their current engagement with residents and where barriers to engagement exist
- We also conducted interviews with nearly 80 residents across the borough to understand current awareness, perceptions and engagement

2

Co-designing community engagement initiatives with the officers:

- We workshopped with officers to identify which ideas/interventions might be most valuable in engaging with the local community
- Worked with Snr LET team to develop training that aligned with team need
- Planned community events in partnership with Snr LET to easily engage with residents

3

Community Engagement Training

With each of the officer teams, we undertook 2 x ½ day training sessions. The programme that was tailored to the experiences and challenges of the everyday role for these officers.:

- Unpacking biases and perceptions
- Skills development: active listening and open questioning
- Starting conversations effectively
- Sharing power with residents
- Peer to peer learning and role play

4

Community Engagement Events

- Providing opportunities for officers to practice this more informal engagement in the community.
- The objective was to try and reach a wide variety of different residents, using two different engagement methods - one off engagement in parks (3 x different parks) and repeated engagement at a faith space (2 x repeat visits to a mosque) to explore the difference in the engagement approaches
- The events involved the officers introducing the service, collecting intel, handing out free items - food, drink, stickers, badges - face painting, games for kids etc

Our trial demonstrated the positive impact of effective engagement and argues the value of doing more to engage the community:

Training

Officers who completed both parts of the community engagement **training reported significantly better outcomes** than those who did not:



Comfort engaging with residents



Comfort sharing with colleagues



Sense of safety in their role overall

Source: Post-trial survey, n=17 both trainings vs n=11 no/one training

Events



Residents reported that based on their experience at the community events:

75% would be likely to **chat with the LET on the street**

77% would be likely to **report an issue to the LET**

74% would be likely to **encourage their neighbour to contact the LET**

Residents who attended the events felt **more comfortable approaching the LET** than residents who didn't, and considered the service **more valuable also**.

Officers completed over **66 feedback forms** from residents at the events detailing issues in their local area

The Imam at the local mosque reported contacting the LET for support 3x between the two engagement events at the mosque.
Building stronger ties with key members of the local Muslim community



Source: Resident interviews at events (ss=77) + post-trial resident interviews (ss=53)

And there was positive feedback from both officers and residents across the trial:



I think the biggest surprise for me was realising that I actually can talk to kids. This was never something I thought I'd be good at before but **it was easy in the end**

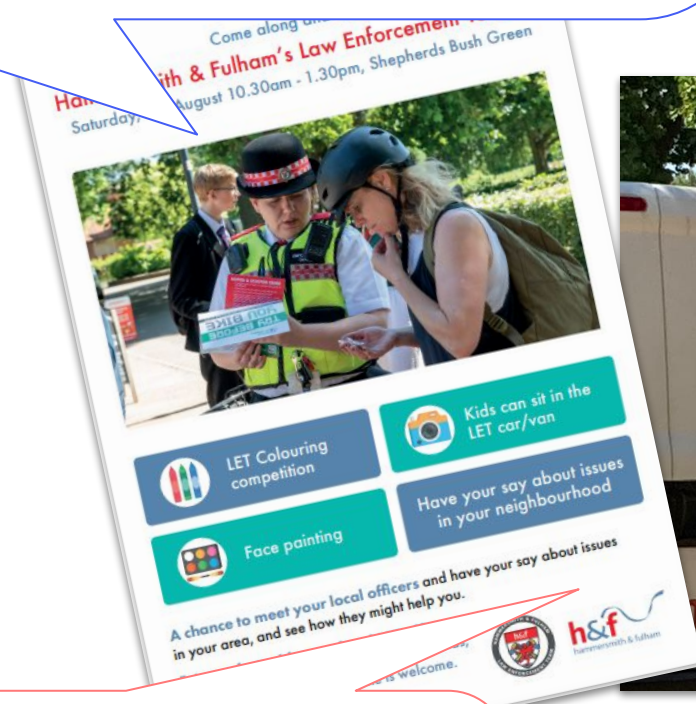
LET Officer

A couple of weeks ago **I put this into practice and as result the Council received a very complimentary email** from a resident and when I look back on it, I know this good practice I implemented was from the training with yourselves, so thank you.

LET Officer

This is a **great way for them to get to know the community**. They should have been at more events this summer - the kids loved the dress up and all the stickers, face painting and all that

Resident



Seeing this in the park makes **you know someone is taking care**

Resident

I live on an estate down the road and they **helped out with a guy who was sleeping in the stairs**. Always drunk and scaring kids. I feel sorry for the man but he needed to move on and they came to help sort it out.

Resident



I was trying to do the '3 points of contact' when we walked around the park. I won't lie, **it was strange at first but once you warm up to it, it's good**. People respond positively rather than being suspicious

LET Officer