

**PUBLIC ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY:
DRAFT EQUALITY IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

MAYOR OF LONDON

OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

TOTAL POLICING

PUBLIC ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY:

DRAFT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

This document sets out the draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for changes proposed in the draft Public Access and Engagement Strategy published jointly by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The full EIA for the strategy will take into account feedback received as part of the 12-week public consultation process. This draft EIA focuses on the external/community impact of the proposed changes. A separate EIA is being undertaken for internal/staff changes.

This initial draft EIA has given consideration to the range of protected characteristics, identifies the possible impacts on those groups and proposes means by which these impacts may be mitigated. It is not exhaustive and will be added to throughout and after the public consultation process. Each of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is discussed in turn.

AGE:

There is a view that older people may not wish to use the online offering, preferring the face to face offering at front counters. However, external research carried out on behalf of the MPS as part of the new Met website has highlighted that older people are embracing technology, especially social media. This has gone against the traditional view of the older people not being technology aware/proficient. Of a further poll of a total of 1,500 respondents, 91% of those aged 65 to 75 years said that they would use online services.

A snapshot of recent data taken from the use of our online services has highlighted that, of crimes reported by those aged 60 years and above, 5% were reported online, with 7% for 55-59 year olds. This uptake compares favourably with a similar proportion of online reporting for younger people which varies between 5% and 7% (data for 1-7 June 2017).

Another consideration is that once a front counter is closed those people in the community who perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may feel more anxious.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to

date:

- Where a Front counter has been closed an emergency telephone will be installed outside, that would allow a member of the public to directly contact Met police command and control should they require assistance and if necessary an officer could be deployed to attend.
- We are increasing the number of Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on the needs of local communities / local people.
- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as 101 and 999, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to age to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore the opportunity to report online means that people can report crimes from the comfort of their own home, work or other location rather than busy front counters which are generally not pleasant places to wait to report crimes.

DISABILITY:

We have a duty to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to ensure our services are accessible to disabled people. We want all front counters to be accessible, to reduce queuing/waiting times, provide clear instructions to visitors and be staffed by an appropriately trained workforce who have received existing training in managing these issues and training will be further reviewed and updated accordingly. Deaf and hard of hearing people may also need accessibility options in front counters. Deaf and disabled people who may perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may be affected by the changes

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- Online reporting will offer a more convenient and efficient form of reporting allowing those deaf and less mobile people to report a crime from the comfort of their own home. The future ambition of online live chat will provide further support for those using online reporting.
- Front counters will continue to be maintained to a suitable standard, meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and providing accessible options. They will provide information to the community about what services are available from

the front counter and promote any alternatives that may be more convenient. In addition, promotional material advertising other policing services and access channels will be displayed at the front counter.

- The key elements of the proposed face-to-face service commitment include an assurance that all front counters will be readily accessible by public transport and that each of the front counter locations will be compliant with the Equality Act. We are trialling the use of digital technology in front counters that will assist in the provision of accessible services.
- The remaining front counters will retain a privacy room for use in the reporting of Hate crime and incidents of a sensitive nature.
- There has also been an increase in Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on need.
- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as text conversation 18001 and in an emergency 18000, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to disability, or other issues, to still request an officer to attend if required, evidence has indicated that digital 101 is also the preferred option for Deaf and disabled users. Furthermore some deaf or disabled people may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort of their own home, work or other location than a sterile, busy front counter. Interpreting services will continue to be available at Front Counters including translation to British Sign Language.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT:

It is not believed that the proposed changes will impact on Gender Reassignment specifically. However, we are mindful that people within the trans community may be victims of hate crime. Victims of hate crime, or other sensitive crime types, may value the privacy offered by a front counter. The remaining front counters will retain a privacy room for use in the reporting of Hate crime and incidents of a sensitive nature.

Once a front counter is closed those people in the community who perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may feel more anxious.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as 101 or 999, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore someone from the trans community may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort and privacy of their own home, work or other location than busy front counters which are generally not pleasant places to wait to report crimes.
- There has also been an increase in Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on need.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY:

There is a potential impact for this group with regard to mobility and travel to a front counter. With the proposed list of retained front counters, 97 percent of the public across London will be able to reach a front counter within 45 minutes.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- Where a Front counter has been closed an emergency telephone will be installed outside, that would allow a member of the public to directly contact Met police command and control should they require assistance and if necessary an officer could be deployed to attend.
- We are increasing the number of Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on the needs of local communities / local people.
- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as 101 and 999, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to age to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore some older people may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort of their own home, work or other location than busy front counters which are generally not pleasant places to wait to report crimes.

RACE:

Front counters remain a symbolic police presence in communities and any change to front counter service provision could be contentious as local communities consider the facility to be an integral part of their community.

We know that from previous data (Jan 2015 to Dec 2016) a greater proportion of black and minority ethnic (BAME) victims reported crime to a front counter compared with the victimisation rate: 47.6% of victims who reported crime at a front counter were BAME; whereas 40.9% of victims of all reported were BAME. 16% of BAME victims of serious sexual offences reported at a front counter compared to 13% of white victims.

With people for whom English is an additional language, or who have little or no English, there are consequences for front counter service provision in terms of the ability to communicate in languages that reflect London's diverse communities and in interpreting arrangements.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- Interpreting services will continue to be available at Front Counters that are maintained. Interpretation services will also continue to be available through other channels 999/101.
- The online offering will be able to support BAME alongside the traditional methods of reporting which will in place such as 101 which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to mobility issues to still request an officer to attend if required.
- There has also been an increase in DWOs to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. The proposed replacement for give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on need.
- Traditional methods of reporting which will in place such as 101 which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore some people may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort of their own home, work or other location than a sterile, busy front counter.

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

It is not believed that the proposed changes will impact on Religion or belief specifically. However, we are mindful that people of differing religions and beliefs may be victims of hate crime. Although victims of hate crime have a range of options for reporting available to them, including third party reporting methods, some may value the privacy offered by a front counter. The remaining front counters will retain a privacy room for use in the reporting of Hate crime and incidents of a sensitive nature.

Once a front counter is closed, those people in the community who perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may feel more anxious.

Front counters remain a symbolic police presence in local neighbourhoods and any change to front counter service provision could be contentious as local communities consider the facility to be an integral part of their community. Once a front counter is closed or opening hours are reduced those people in the community who perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may feel more anxious.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- Where a Front counter has been closed an emergency telephone will be installed outside, that would allow a member of the public to directly contact Met police command and control should they require assistance and if necessary an officer could be deployed to attend.
- We are increasing the number of Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on the needs of local communities / local people.
- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as 101 and 999, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to age to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore some older people may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort of their own home, work or other location than busy front counters which are generally not pleasant places to wait to report crimes.

SEX:

The May 2017 footfall survey shows 45% of people attending a front counter were female, 50% male and 5% sex unknown / not recorded.

We know that females are disproportional victims of certain crimes, specifically domestic abuse (DA) and serious sexual offences, compared with males. Between January 2015 and December 2016 DA represented 16.8% of all crimes reported to the Met. Of this, 7.7% of all DAs were reported via a front counter. In the same period 15.3% of rapes were reported via a front counter.

Once a front counter is closed or opening hours are reduced those people in the community who perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may feel more anxious. This is particularly true of vulnerable victims and those who are victims of these offences.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- While victims of serious crimes should, and do, contact the police by telephone, allowing them to receive a service much more convenient and responsive to their individual needs, we want the remaining front counters to be welcoming and pleasant environments for visitors. The remaining front counters will retain a privacy room for use in the reporting of Hate crime and incidents of a sensitive nature.
- Where a Front counter has been closed an 'emergency telephone' will be installed outside that would allow a member of the public to directly contact Met police command and control should they require assistance and if necessary an officer could be deployed to attend.
- We are increasing the number of Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on the needs of local communities / local people.
- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as 101 and 999, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to age to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore some older people may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort of their own home, work or other location than busy front counters which are generally not pleasant places to wait to report crimes.

- Other support services are also available for victims of rape and sexual offences, and the Mayor and MPS are continuing to support specific services for those victims of crime who need a specialist place for them to be looked after. The Mayor has made a commitment in his new Police and Crime Plan to sustain funding for the three London Sexual Assault Referral Centres (also known as the Havens) and the four London Rape Crisis Centres.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

It is not believed that the proposed changes will impact on sexual orientation specifically. However, we are mindful that people within the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB+) community may be victims of hate crime. Although victims of hate crime have a range of options for reporting available to them, including third party reporting methods, some may value the privacy offered by a front counter. The remaining front counters will retain a privacy room for use in the reporting of Hate crime and incidents of a sensitive nature.

Once a front counter is closed, or opening hours are reduced, those people in the community who perceive the front counter as a place to go to be safe may feel more anxious.

The following will help to mitigate against the issues that have been identified to date:

- Where a Front counter has been closed an emergency telephone will be installed outside, that would allow a member of the public to directly contact Met police command and control should they require assistance and if necessary an officer could be deployed to attend.
- We are increasing the number of Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) to two per ward allowing for greater face to face contact. DWOs will carry out community contact sessions which will give a more flexible approach to face-to-face contact. This means we will have an increased number of locations where people can engage with the police, and DWOs will have the flexibility to make these sessions specifically tailored to each area based on the needs of local communities / local people.
- Traditional methods of reporting will remain in place, such as 101 and 999, which will still allow for those who are unable to attend a front counter due to age to still request an officer to attend if required. Furthermore some older people may feel more comfortable reporting certain issues from the comfort of their own home, work or other location than busy front counters which are generally not pleasant places to wait to report crimes.

MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP:

We do not consider that there are any impacts on married people or those in civil partnerships.