

### **Increasing confidence through engagement**

Increased confidence in the criminal justice service (CJS) with more people playing an active part in creating safer communities is a key aim of the Community Engagement Project – which is being coordinated and supported in the capital by the London Criminal Justice Board (CJB). The project has been made possible with funding from Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS).

London CJB is working with London's criminal justice agencies and courts to develop a programme of community engagement which will be sustainable in the long term and involves all of the main criminal justice agencies.

The project aims to support CJS agencies to carry out coordinated, local community engagement activity which responds to the needs and interests of the communities they serve.

In particular the project will explore the use of existing police engagement channels, such as safer neighbourhood panels, as routes for coordinated CJS engagement. It will also encourage strong links with benches and local authorities.

Mapping and analysis of community engagement by the CJS agencies across London was undertaken before the project began in earnest, with Westminster acting as an 'early adopter' of the approach.

The project was kick-started when thousands of young people attended around 20 multi-agency engagement events for Inside Justice Week in October, which were staged by courts and Local Criminal Justice Groups

(LCJGs). Events included mock trials, presentations and art projects involving local schools, with a focus on the safety of young people.

Resources developed by the London CJB to support this initial phase of engagement included provision of a 'schools toolkit' which included template materials to approach schools, opening and closing scripts for presenting to young people, sample questions and answers, background briefings on crime, a template press release and guidance on publicity.

During the remainder of the financial year, the project is set to:

- provide an additional £2,000 of funding to the courts to work with other CJS agencies and undertake engagement work (further information is being sent to DJCs)
- gauge the impact of coordinated community engagement (particularly through policing channels) on public confidence in the CJS – through the analysis of feedback forms from events
- develop new resources for the 'schools' toolkit' and enhance existing ones following collation of feedback forms received from LCJGs and courts
- develop a training package for use by all CJS staff from the different agencies – to ensure a coordinated approach to community engagement activities, with consistent messages for the public. The package will be developed in consultation with the London CJB training committee and tested with staff groups
- develop long term, sustainable plans for community engagement based on the findings of the project.

A short-life working group under the auspices of the London CJB Executive Group with representatives from the Courts and the different agencies involved is being set up to ensure project objectives are met and to identify wider opportunities related to community engagement.

Kevin Pogson, Director for London Region, Her Majesty's Courts Service, said: "Stronger participation from the communities we serve is absolutely crucial if we are to increase their confidence in the criminal justice service. Through locally led community activities and involving a wide range of

agencies – we have a chance to raise their confidence and build safer, stronger communities.”

David Scott, London Probation Chief Officer and London CJB lead on community engagement, said: “All our local communities need to feel that the criminal justice service understands their priorities and reflects this in the way it responds to crime locally. Effective community engagement by criminal justice agencies can help achieve this and enables local people to play a genuine part in setting the priorities of the criminal justice service.”

**Further information:**

- [More information on Inside Justice Week 2008](#)
- [More Community Engagement information for practitioners](#)

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