

Lancashire Constabulary

OPERATION DIVERSE

Crime & Disorder Reduction Category

PC 1658 Julian Andrews
Community Safety
Central Division
Lawson Street
Preston
PR1 RRJ
Tel: 01772 209110
Fax: 01772 209146
E-mail: Julian.Andrews@lancashire.Uolice.uk

Endorsed By: Deputy Chief Constable Paul Stephenson

Summary

Operation Diverse

Promoting safety across cultures at a time of tension

Community Safety Department- Central Division

The Oldham Burnley and Bradford riots of summer 2001, followed by the World Trade Centre Attack last September presented an unprecedented policing challenge to those involved in the effective policing of Multi-cultural communities. The riots had shown that there were still tensions in mixed communities and the in the wake of the New York attack, the world's press were all too eager to present Islam, and Muslims as a potentially dangerous force. In addition local intelligence and incident reporting clearly indicated a great deal of local interest in the activities and behaviour of local Muslims.

As Ramadan and Eid Approached, the profile of Islam was likely to be raised at a local level amongst a sensitised community. In fact it was recognised that the Eid celebratory activities in themselves might be seen as inflammatory and create a backlash amongst members of other communities who were not aware of their religious significance.

The problem of these cultural differences and misunderstandings being misinterpreted and becoming large-scale community problems with associated disorder was identified as a clear possibility. Locally this problem could have been exacerbated by the fact that EID is a time when some young Muslim men celebrated their Religious and Cultural heritage with a good deal of exuberance. Often, in the past, young Muslims have hired cars and taken their celebrations to the County's streets, waving their national banners, sounding horns and generally drawing attention to their celebrations. Associated with this were inevitable instances of bad driving, speeding and small instances of disorder, often in close proximity to Mosques. Well-established partnerships at the mosques revealed similar shared concerns.

The offenders and victims were essentially the same target group, simply members of the population who may misunderstand the motives of the other.

The target group lay on both sides of a cultural divide, so partners were engaged that would help to bridge the gap. As Ramadan approached a response was identified which could be used to carry forward our message of celebrating in a safe and thoughtful manner. During the previous Christmas season a poster and leaflet campaign on the theme of a "Time of Celebration" was produced in association with the Preston Road Policing Unit. The leaflets were provided to local car hire companies, and contained a Drink/Drive message, as well as a message on driver behaviour and conflict avoidance as an issue for ALL drivers at this time of year. This previously successful initiative formed the template for a similar campaign (minus the drink drive message).

The recently established local Imams Forum was used to ask local Prayer leaders to also provide input into the poster content and design. As a result texts from the Qu'ran and Hadith which promoted messages of peace and goodwill were incorporated. These were then presented in Arabic with an English translation on a poster, prepared by the Community Safety department, which also carried a seasonal message from the Divisional Police Commander.

The Poster and its contents were released via local media to ensure that a message of harmony and shared responsibility was given to the community at large. All resources were local and only minimal printing costs were incurred.

There are no comparative figures pre April 2001 from which quantitative analysis can be drawn. The figures that are available present a favourable report, based around issues that directly relate to Muslims and Islam. A qualitative survey amongst the local Muslim community reveals that the poster made a positive impact, with the relevance/effectiveness of its message being recognised.

Operation Diverse

An initiative to ensure the Continuing Safety of the Muslim Community in Preston.

In July 2001, Bradford, Oldham and Burnley experienced the largest riots seen in the UK for a decade. The reasons for this breakdown are complex and the subject of ongoing debate, but academics and social commentators appeared to hold a common view that a lack of integration of minority ethnic groups had caused deep frustrations in these communities as a whole. This combined with the sinister motives of the more active elements of white Nationalist organisations, fuelled a fire that had been smouldering for many years.

Nationally the community - monitoring mechanisms of the police swung into overdrive to abate the threat of grand-scale disorder. In Preston, Lancashire- dialogue, twice daily liaison visits to prominent locations, and well founded relationships with **key** community figures meant that no disorder ensued, but nothing was taken for granted. As the summer drew to a close we began to breathe easier.

On 11th September, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre heightened world tensions at every level. Immediately the attack was linked to Muslim extremists and the nature of the event itself was so extreme that for the ordinary person, the divide between fact and fiction was literally imperceptible. The mainstream press printed material that presented the minutiae of Islam in a distorted fashion against a background of fear. Islam and Muslims were being sensationally portrayed as a dangerous force living within our communities.

Community monitoring was again at the fore of our policing activity. In Preston there were daily reviews at Force level and the most minor incidents were treated as potentially major ones, and the enormity of the incident was such that the perception Islam amongst the mainstream public had irrevocably changed.

In Preston the reporting of racist incidents between September and December, involving the term "Islam" or "Muslim" increased by 850% on the previous year

according to police incident records, but it is recognised that such incidents were likely to have gone largely unreported previously. In addition there were many local incidents relating to substances received in the post following the postal distribution of Anthrax in the US. All were contributing to the widespread phenomenon known as Islamaphobia.

In Preston, Community Tension Indicators were as low as could be expected but the lessons of the summer were still fresh in our minds and we knew nothing was to be taken for granted. As autumn approached, so did a new challenge. Ramadan, Eid and the raised profile of Islam in a sensitised community.

Historically, only anecdotal evidence had existed as to the effect of Ramadan and Eid on the Community. Certainly before the implementation of the Force racist incident reporting policy in April 2001, there was merely a guideline in place to cover the reporting of racist incidents, and the classification of them as such had been largely down to the discretion of the reporting *officer*. As a result there was no "Like for like" comparison to be drawn. Such evidence as did exist largely related in the main to young Muslim men celebrating Eid exuberantly; often hiring and driving cars carelessly and to the distress of local residents. The waving of flags and banners from the vehicles by Pakistani Muslims is commonplace. We anticipated a potentially serious misinterpretation of these celebrations by the public at large, particularly when aspects such as the sensitivities of Muslims to the Holiness of Eid, and the celebration of their Cultural and religious identities were added to the equation. The Minorities Team at Preston Police Station thus identified the core issue as one of public perception, a wholly subjective matter which did not necessarily lend itself to quantitative measurement. A Force objective was that of public reassurance and the team endeavoured to find a method which would provide such reassurance to all sides of the community in an impartial and impactful way.

Any radically new ideas at such a sensitive time might have proved risky. We considered a community awareness surgery to encourage local people to learn the facts about Islam. However, it was felt that saturated press reporting (however inaccurate) had given the public as much information as could be absorbed, and presumed a willingness to learn. Reciprocally, how would local Muslims re-assure us

of their motivations, why should they have to when Islam had co-existed peacefully in the community for many years? Blame could not, should not be laid at any domestic doorstep, such a surgery might well have been seen as over-defensive of Muslim doctrine and was dismissed as inappropriate. However, it was recognised that ownership of the problem was shared with the Muslim Community and the decision was taken to engage them as partners through ten local Mosques. This inclusive approach catered for the issue of Muslim sectarianism, which exist to a degree in the large Muslim population of the City. The specific objectives would be to:-

- 1) Reassure the non-Muslim population about the reasons and motivation behind Eid Celebrations_
- 2) Reduce or eliminate incidents relating to "Islam" or "Muslims" in the period of Ramadan and Eid
- 3) Promote awareness the positives of Islam in the Community by highlighting shared cultural and social values.

The objectives were discussed and agreed with local Imam's and Mosque committees. It was decided to extract relevant texts from the Holy Quran and Hadith, which could be displayed in English and Arabic on a poster in each of the local Mosques. The texts would emphasise respect for humanity and the requirements for all Muslim to avoid harming others. This would be accompanied by a message from the divisional Police Commander which echoed those philosophies, going on to emphasise the acceptance of Islam as a "Force for good" in the community, and carrying good wishes for the celebration. There was an identified need to target the initiative to Muslim youth, with a view to specifically targeting driver behaviour.

A natural opportunity existed in the timing of the Eid celebrations and its proximity to Christmas. The Road Policing Unit assisted with funding in the production of a leaflet, which emphasised the importance of civil driver behaviour at a time of celebration. The leaflet was designed to be appropriate across all groups. The leaflet was produced locally and copied at minimal cost before being distributed across every local hire-car outlet, for release with each hire.

The design and production of the poster presented some specific difficulties particularly in relation to translation to a common Arabic text, and obtaining software

to transfer the text into Microsoft word. This was eventually achieved in consultation with Imams who proposed appropriate input. The relevant text was later inserted as a graphic extracted from the "The Alim" a multimedia learning aid commonly used by Muslim scholars. On completion of the poster, the contributing Imams approved its' accuracy.

At launch, each Mosque had a copy of the poster ready to display. Particular emphasis was placed on each poster having been signed by its contributors including the Police, thus signifying recognition and partnership in the community.

Capitalising on the theme of celebration, the launch was combined with news of the inauguration of a brand new Mosque building in the town. The launch took place on the eve of Eid-El-Fitr, to emphasise recognition and acceptance of the Muslim feast. The posters remained on display over the Eid and Christmas and New Year, again emphasising the cross-cultural nature of the messages contained.

To facilitate evaluation, a questionnaire was circulated two months after the issue of the poster. This simple survey addressed five qualitative / subjective issues in relation to the effectiveness of the campaign. Additional quantitative analysis was conducted to provide 'like for like' comparisons Muslim/Islam incidents prior to and after the initiative.

The questionnaire was circulated to each of the ten Mosques allowing for a potential response base of 100 persons. The actual response was in fact 30% . All respondents were practising Muslims. The responses were favourable, particularly in respect of the presentation the visual impact of the poster. The vast majority of the respondents also responded favourably to the issues of re-assurance and police awareness of Muslim concerns.

A quantitative appraisal of the practical effect of the initiative is more difficult to establish. Certainly, there were no incidents reported during the Eid period that related directly to "Eid", "Islam" Or "Muslim". There were no vehicle related incidents within the same period.

Following Eid , the number of Incidents related to related directly to "Eid", "Islam" Or "Muslim" returned to pre September 11⁰ levels. It is likely that this return was hastened by, a tail off in negative press reporting and continued Eason work by the Community safety department, however, the questionnaire results showed clearly that the Muslim community was re-assured that we conveyed a positive re-assuring message about Islam at a time of heightened sensitivity.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Extracts from Observer/Guardian
Tuesday December 11th 2001

- Appendix 2 Copy of poster

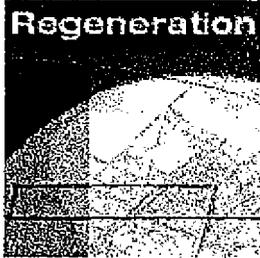
- Appendix 3 Lancashire Evening Post 13/12/01

- Appendix 4 Responses to questionnaires.

- Appendix 5 Graphed responses to questionnaire

SaeletyGuardian.co.uk Regeneration

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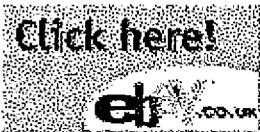


[Race equity](#) | [Regeneration](#)

Race riots sparked by 'public service failures'

Simon Parker
Tuesday December 11, 2001

Weak local political leadership, poorly thought out regeneration initiatives and inequitable access to social housing all played a part in sparking off race riots across the north of England this summer, a report released today claims.



The Home Office-backed document shows how failures in public service provision have left parts of urban Britain deeply divided along racial lines.



Based partly on visits to areas of racial flash points such as Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, the report says the government's area-based regeneration plans often reinforced the separation of racial groups living in different neighbourhoods.



Surah Al-Maidha

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

"Co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not co-operate in sin and transgression."

Surah Al-Barqarah

"And do not throw yourselves into destruction"

Surah Al-Anam

9.5 'j

"And leave (o mankind) all types of sin open and secret"

Sayings of the prophet Mohammed (SAW)

Hadith

Abdullah Bin Amar Ali Aas narrates: A person asked our Holy Prophet, which type of Islam is of most virtuous? He replied: "The one in which people are safe from the evil of your Tongue and Hands." (Meaning that you do not cause harm to others)

Hadith

"The best of people are those who benefit others"

***As** Ramadan draws to a close the celebrations of Eid begin, a very special time indeed for you and your **families**. You deserve to celebrate to the full and enjoy the company **of your family** and friends. Please stay safe and look to those who may need your help to do so. May I wish you a very happy and peaceful Eid:*

but i_; – God be with i, or .

**Chief Superintendent,
Bernard Lawson**

Iman

*Eid Mubarak * Eid Mubarak * Eid Mubarak* Eid Mubarak*

Eid Poster Evaluation Questionnaire

Name Of Mosque/Masjid **Raza Mosque - St. Paul's Rd. Preston.**

Name of person.	Q.1 The Special Message poster was visible at my Mosque and I was able to read it.					Q.2 The layout and presentation of the poster gained my attention.					Q.3 The inclusion of Arabic texts was a valuable part of the presentation of the poster.					Q.4 The poster was a useful way to promote a message between cultures.					Q.5 The poster reassured me that the police were aware of the Muslim communities' concerns following recent world events.				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sohail Naveed				✓						✓					✓										✓
Sahar Basha				✓						✓					✓										✓
Zulfiqar Ahmad				✓						✓					✓										✓
Umar Ayub				✓						✓					✓										✓
Muhammad Bapu				✓						✓					✓										✓
Muhammad Ashfaq				✓						✓					✓										✓
Sahar Naveed				✓						✓					✓										✓
Sohail Mub				✓						✓					✓										✓
Sahar Ali				✓						✓					✓										✓
Muhammad Qasim				✓						✓					✓										✓

Eid Poster Evaluation Questionnaire

MEDINA MOSQUE

26/28, Fishwick Parade Preston.

Name Of Mosque/Masjid

Name of person.	Q.1 The Special Message poster was visible at my Mosque and I was able to read it.					Q.2 The layout and presentation of the poster gained my attention.					Q.3 The inclusion of Arabic texts was a valuable part of the presentation of the poster.					Q.4 The poster was a useful way to promote a message between cultures.					Q.5 The poster reassured me that the police were aware of the Muslim communities' concerns following recent world events.				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Abdulrahman Rashed				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Ahmed Sheth				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Irfaan Bopu				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Flyas Ahmed				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Imran Adam				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Mubarak Vali				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Sadiq Adam				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Shabbir Bopu				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Fahim Hegg				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	
Maksood Patel				✓					✓					✓						✓				✓	

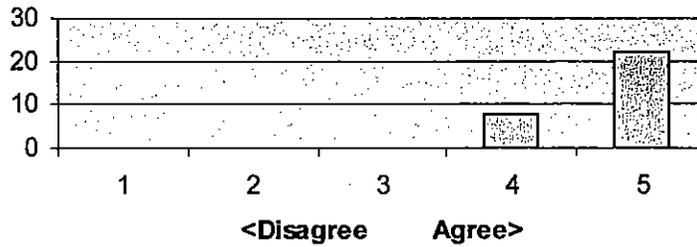
Eid Poster Evaluation Questionnaire

Name Of Mosque/Masjid E SALAAMI

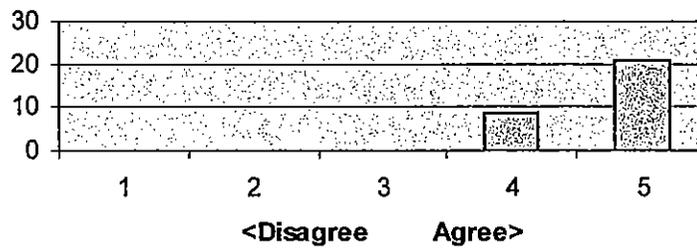
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	←	Disagree	Agree	→		←	Disagree	Agree	→		←	Disagree	Agree	→		←	Disagree	Agree	→		←	Disagree	Agree	→	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
F. ASSENZEE				✓					✓					✓					✓						✓
A. TAILOR				✓					✓					✓											✓
Z. SAYED				✓					✓					✓											✓
A. MITHA				✓					✓					✓											✓
F. MANSOOR				✓					✓					✓											✓
A. AZIZ				✓					✓					✓											✓
F. KAZI				✓					✓					✓											✓
I. BHANA				✓					✓					✓											✓
M. INAZA				✓					✓					✓											✓
T. BUX				✓					✓					✓											✓

Operation Diverse

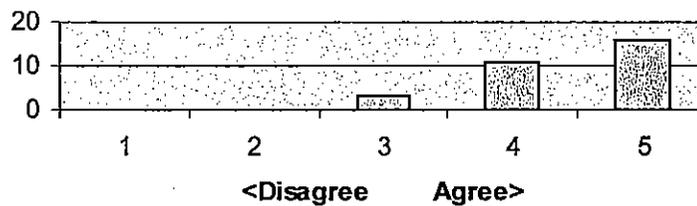
Q1. The special poster was visible in my Mosque and I was able to read it.



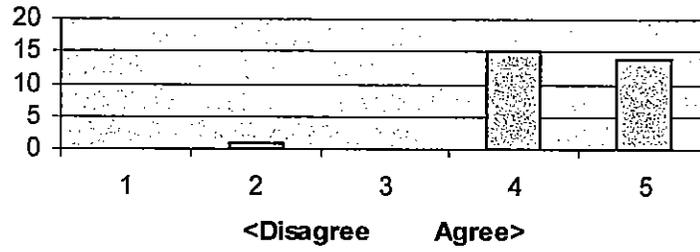
Q.2 The layout and presentation of the poster gained my attention.



Q.3 The inclusion of Arabic tasks was a valuable part of the presentation of the poster



Q.4 The poster was a useful way to promote a message between cultures.



Q.5 The poster re-assured me that the police were aware of Muslim concerns following recent world events.

