



# Home Of

Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

## Tilley Awards 2007

### Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. **By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.** Please complete the following form in full, **within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB.** Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should **be e-mailed to [tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)**

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 27th April 2007**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811. Any queries regarding publicity of the awards should be directed to Chaz Akoshile on 0207 035 1589.

#### Section 1: Details of application

Title of the project: Operation Sign

Name of force/agency/CDRP/**CSP**: Lancashire Police

Name of one contact person with position and/or rank (this should be one of the authors):

Paula Robertson Police Constable 524, Community Beat Manager

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St Anne's  
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**If known please state in which Government Office area you are located e.g. Government Office North West, Government Office London etc:** Government North West

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Acting Deputy Chief Constable Mr Adrian Mc Allister**

Name of organisation, position and/or rank of endorsing senior representatives(s): **Acting Deputy Chief Constable – HQ Corporate Services Directorate**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s): **LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY POLICE HEADQUARTERS, PO BOX 77, HUTTON, PRESTON, LANCS PR4 5SB**

**Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):** ✓

## **Section 2: Summary of application**

*In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project (see guidance for more information).*

It was apparent that Deaf people who were victims and witnesses of crime rarely came forward and reported such incidents to the Police because of the communication barriers they faced. The problem was identified by Deaf people themselves who highlighted the lack of provisions in place for them. Without the same access to Policing services as hearing people, they felt vulnerable and isolated. A significant concern to them was issues surrounding communication, and difficulties in contacting the Police.

There are approximately 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. There are an estimated 123,000 deafened people in the UK, 70,000 of which use British Sign Language as their first or preferred language. BSL is the most widely used method of signed communication in the UK.

It was important that the needs of the Deaf Community were addressed, the focal aims being to improve communication and service provision.

I researched existing provisions within the Constabulary and found there was little if anything in place. I searched through incident logs and found that some Deaf people were treated less effectively because of their deafness and in some cases incident logs had been delayed for unnecessary lengths whilst interpreters were organised.

I responded to the problem by building up a strong network of support, both within the organisation and externally with Deaf organisations. The following interventions were implemented and were designed to improve communication access between Deaf people and the Police:

- **PACT (Police and Community meetings for Deaf People)**
- **Deaf Awareness training for Police Officers and Staff**
- **A British Sign Language Link Officer Scheme**
- **Reassurance DVD for detainees who are Deaf**
- **Development of the Lancashire Police Website to incorporate British Sign Language**

I evaluated success of this initiative based on feedback received from the Deaf Community and the success of the British Sign Language Link Officer Scheme. Deaf people now have increased confidence in reporting crime and other issues to the Police, particularly through local PACT meetings. They are less likely to be repeat victims by leaving crime unreported. The main outcome of the project has shown improved communication and a better service provision, in turn forging strong working relationships between the Police and the Deaf Community.

## **Section 3: Description of project**

*Describe the project in no more than 4000 words (see guidance for more information in particular Section 7 - judging criteria).*

It was apparent that victims and witness who were Deaf rarely reported crime and other community issues to the Police, because of the communication barrier they faced. They were an isolated and vulnerable group who were often repeat victims as they left crime unreported. They were a disadvantaged group who did not have the same access to services as the hearing community. Throughout my involvement with the Deaf Community it was they themselves who identified the following problems to me:

- **Deaf people rarely reported crime and other issues because of communication barriers**
- **Deaf people were unable to access PACT (Police and Community meetings)**
- **There was no corporate information available in British Sign Language**
- **Deaf Awareness amongst staff was limited and few officers were trained in the use of BSL**
- **There was no simple way for Deaf people to contact the Police.**

I researched this further and looked into existing provisions and found that there was very little if anything in place for them. I searched through incident logs and found that in some cases Deaf people were treated less effectively by the Police because of their Deafness. Inappropriate terminology was used on incident logs such as 'Deaf and Dumb' and some incident logs were delayed unnecessarily whilst interpreters were organised. In one particular case an offender avoided a fixed penalty notice for public order, as Police could not communicate with him.

I took into account the issues raised and set about improving service provision for the Deaf community. Operation Sign was introduced by myself in 2005 and the focal aim of this project was to improve communication and service provision for the Deaf Community.

In order to tackle these issues effectively I needed appropriate involvement from other agencies and I set up partnership with the following organisations:

- **The British Deaf Association**
- **Blackpool Fylde & Wyre Deaf Association**
- **West Lancashire Deaf Association**
- **Deafway**
- **Barrier Breaker Communication**

My aim was to implement the following provisions:

- **A British Sign Language Link Officer Scheme**
- **Training for Link Officers**
- **Deaf Awareness for Police Officers and support staff**
- **Development of the Lancashire Police Website**
- **Reassurance DVD for detainees**
- **PACT meetings**

I have broken these down into the following sub headings:

### **British Sign Language Link Officer Scheme**

The focal aim of this project was to improve communication for Deaf people. Deaf people were attending Police stations and struggling to make themselves understood. Officers and staff often resorted to written means of communication, which may be frustrating for Deaf people whose first language is BSL and may have difficulty in understanding written English.

To address this problem I developed a British Sign Language Link Officer Scheme. I contacted Officers and staff throughout the county who had signing skills and with their agreement set up the scheme. The role of Link Officers is to help with communication and they can be contacted by pre-arranged appointment. They are not however an emergency point of contact. The scheme currently consists of 10 Link Officers and has proved to be a great success. I then contacted the IT technician in corporate development who set up a British Sign Language Link on the Lancashire Police website. On this link there is a list of Link Officers with their contact details, which include e-mail addresses and fax numbers. In order for the link officers to be used effectively I set up a Scratch Pad in Western Communications room that holds details of all divisional link Officers. Should the link officer for one particular area not be on duty, then other link Officers can be called to assist.

Deaf people communicate in a very visual language and I wanted to advertise that officers had signing skills. Following a successful bid for funding I approached the British Deaf Association and discussed with them my idea. They had recently developed a new logo that came in the form of a window sticker and they welcomed the idea of turning this into a badge for Link Officers to wear. Following a successful bid for LANPAC funding (Lancashire Partnership Against Crime) I approached Lancashire Embroidery services who turned the window sticker into a cloth badge which is now worn on Link Officers uniforms. (see photo 1)

I also used the BSL logo in Police stations, displayed at enquiry desks, advertising the Link Officer for that area. (See photo 2)

The Link Officer scheme has proved to be very effective and far more contact is now made than ever before. There has been an increased confidence in Deaf people coming forward and working with the Police. A good example of this is a Deaf volunteer, recently recruited in Western Division.

### **British Sign Language training for Link Officers**

I felt it was important that BSL link Officers were provided with regular training to keep their skills refreshed. We were all at different levels, with some more advanced than others. After consultation with the Diversity Unit at Head Quarters, they funded a monthly training programme for Link Officers. The course runs over 1 year and is provided by Deaf tutors. Link Officers undergo regular examinations and the aim of the course is for all officers to achieve a level 2 CACDP qualification in BSL, which is nationally recognised. (Certificate in advancement of communication with Deaf people)

### **Deaf Awareness training for Police Officers' and Support Staff**

In order for my interventions to be effective I felt that it was important that Police Officers and staff were equipped with Deaf awareness training. I worked in partnership with Deaf way in Preston who provided five sessions of training. Over 200 officers and staff were trained and the course content covered the following:

- **Causes of Deafness**
- **How to treat a Deaf person**
- **Handcuffing Deaf people**

- **Taboos surrounding Deafness**

- **Lip reading exercise**

The courses were well attended and received positive feedback.

### **Development of Lancashire Police Website**

English is not generally the first language of a Deaf person and it is assumed that if they cannot hear they can read and write English, but this is not always the case. 9 million people in the UK are Deaf and hard of hearing. 123,000 are deafened and approximately 70,000 use British Sign Language as their first or preferred Language. The structure and grammatical features of a sentence in BSL differs greatly from that used in the English language.

In view of this I decided to develop a BSL link on the Lancashire Police Website. The aim of this was to provide Deaf people with Information on the Constabularies aims and ambitions and to give them a better understanding of the services we provide.

The most challenging part of developing the website was writing a script, having it translated into BSL and filming the production of it. The filming took two full days of takes and retakes and was an exhaustive procedure. It was important to ensure that the information being relayed was clear and unambiguous, particularly where legislation and Police powers were mentioned.

I worked in partnership with Barrier Breaker Communication who organised the interpreters and presentation advisors. The imaging unit at Head Quarters provided the filming facilities and edited and compiled the finished version ready for the Police website. This is a real breakthrough for the Deaf Community who can now access the following information in BSL.

- **BSL Link Officers and how to contact them**

- **PACT**

- **How to contact the Police**

- **Guidance regarding Arrest**

This link can be viewed on [www.lancashire.police.uk](http://www.lancashire.police.uk) using the appropriate link. I.e. quick time

### **Reassurance Custody DVD for Deaf detainees**

Normally when a Deaf person is arrested they are given their rights on paper. As mentioned earlier this can be very confusing, especially if English is not their first language. They are then placed in a cell, confused as to what will happen and frustrated that they cannot communicate with the Police. The aim of this DVD is to:

- **Provide reassurance for the person arrested**

- **Give them their rights in their own language**

- **Explain how they should be cared for whilst in Police custody**

- **Reassurance that an independent interpreter will be called**

I wrote the script for the custody DVD and Barrier Breaker Communication provided the interpreter and translation. Developing this DVD was a real challenge and was mentally very challenging. My knowledge of the Police and

Criminal Evidence Act was really tested as the translator needed to ensure the correct interpretation of it in BSL. The Police caution itself proved to be a real challenge as the structure of the English used was not recognised by Deaf people. If the interpreter made a small mistake or the presentation advisor wasn't happy then we had to do re takes of the filming.

The costings involved in this project were as follows:

£500 per day for interpreters fees x 3 = £1500.00

This was paid for using remaining LANPAC funding. The filming and editing of the DVD was done by the imaging unit at Head Quarters, with the corporate logos and credits attached.

This DVD will be a particularly useful aid for custody sergeants when dealing with Deaf detainees. The DVD is currently being trailed in western Division and will be rolled out countywide to all six divisions. The DVD will be continually reviewed as will the Website information. Should any Policing legislation or procedure change then the information will be changed accordingly.

### **PACT meetings**

Setting up a PACT meeting for the Deaf Community took me over 18 months to set up and careful consideration needed to be given to the following points:

- **Publicity**
- **Use and cost of interpreter**
- **Venue**
- **Frequency of meetings**
- **Ownership of identified problems**

Deciding whom to invite was difficult. Lancashire Police is made up of six different Divisions, Blackpool (A division) being one of them. Each Division is broken down into areas, which are split into defined council wards. 'A' Division is broken down into seven different areas. There are varying numbers of Deaf people living in each ward and I felt that to invite people from one area would not attract enough numbers and to invite to people across Lancashire would be difficult in considering who would take ownership of identified problems. I decided that 'A' Division Blackpool & Fylde would be a manageable size.

The next step was to arrange a qualified BSL interpreter. Barrier Breaker Communication organised this and the cost of the interpreters was £150 1-2 hours. This is the standard rate charged and includes travelling expenses. My Division picked up the bill for this including venue fees of £40.00

After consultation with various Deaf organisations I decided to hold the PACT meeting on neutral ground, as opposed to any one particular Deaf Club. The reason for this is that not all clubs and societies share common views, and may have discouraged certain other groups from attending. The chosen venue was the Salvation Army Citadel, which is located in the centre of Blackpool.

I advertised the meetings in local newspapers, Deaf Clubs and Societies, Hospitals, Doctors Surgeries and colleges, including various Deaf magazines and newsletters.

The first PACT meeting was held in June 2006 and was a tremendous success with over fifty attendees. Any problems raised were subsequently fed back to local Community Beat Managers for them to address. I let the Deaf Community decide how often they wanted future meetings and they agreed to every three months.

Here are some quotes of feedback received.

"A Police Officer knocked on my door. I panicked and my children panicked and I thought "Oh no how will we communicate, we are Deaf!" I opened the door and told the officer I was deaf by pointing to my ears, but she replied in sign language "It's ok don't worry I can sign" I invited her in and she spoke to my sons about football and they are always telling people "Wow, a police officer who can sign"

"I lost my phone and went to the local Police Station. I put it off at first and was dreading going, I hate going through all the written scenarios with the Police. I got there and I saw a sign outside saying BSL USED HERE and the name of the Officer. I enquired if he was working and he was. He saw me straight away and communication was so easy, it was fantastic. I think it is great that there are Police who can sign"

"I have been suffering harassment from my neighbours. My local Police Officer is great. He can't sign but he tries really hard to communicate with us and over time he has picked some signs from us. He is very deaf aware and treats us with respect. One day he brought a colleague with him who wore badge advertising BSL. He signed with us and this really helped the local Officer understand our problems in more depth"

"I lost my dog. She had been missing for a week. I was sick with worry. I went to my local Police Station. I tried to explain what my dog looked like. I don't know if they understood me or not but they looked in a book and shook their head at me. My friend is a Link Officer for the Police. I sent her a text picture of my dog and she contacted the local dog warden at the council. I live in Blackpool and a dog fitting that description was taken to Elswick a week ago! The officer took me there and it was my dog. If it was not for the Link Officer I would be without my dog now"

"The Police Deaf aware and learning Sign Language. This is fantastic and not before time"

The aim is for PACT meetings to be set up across all six policing Divisions and a guidance document has been devised that will advise officers in the do's and don'ts of setting up a PACT.

The above interventions are effective and sustainable. There should be no reason for change unless as mentioned above certain legislation changes, in which case the script and translation will be amended on the DVD and the Website. Financially the main interventions have been paid for through LANPAC funding. Interpreter's costs and venue fees will continue to be paid for by Division and the cost involved in the Sign Language training will be paid for by Officer's respective divisions.

The benefits of this initiative have been immense, such as:

- **Inclusion of the Deaf Community**
- **Same access to services as others**
- **Staff who are Deaf aware**
- **And most importantly an easier way for Deaf people to communicate with Police.**

I have taken great pride in seeing the fruition of this project and how it is has altered perceptions of the police and has forged strong working relationships with partners and the Deaf Community.

Lancashire Police has been instrumental in allowing me to make these changes and recognized the needs and aims of my ambition.

Paula Robertson  
Police Constable 524

#### **Section 4: Endorsement by Senior Representative**

I fully support PC Robertson's application for the Tilley award. Lancashire Constabulary has two strategic aims which this initiative addresses directly, the first is Diversity and the second is Quality of Service. Clearly before Operation Sign, we were failing abysmally in respect of our accessibility to the Deaf Community and I am sure that the majority of police contacts with the Deaf community left an impression that we had provided a poor quality of service.

PC Robertson has been bold in first of all recognizing there is an issue and then identifying that she could impact on the issue at Constabulary level from her position as a Community Beat Manager at St Annes, this is the type of 'can do' attitude which deserves real recognition.

She has used classic problem solving techniques to scan the issue and crystallize in her own mind what the exact nature of the problems are that the Deaf Community face in their contacts with the Police. I am impressed by her willingness to fully engage with the Deaf Community and their support networks during the scanning process.

Her analysis of the problem identified issues for the Deaf Community as Victims (being misunderstood by Police Officers); as offenders (Rights Issues in Custody); and with locations (No provisions for Deaf people in our Police Stations, particularly emergency contact when the stations are closed).

The level of response provided by PC Robertson is overwhelming. Her energy and drive to make a difference are inspiring. She has clearly set in place a number of sustainable schemes to address the issues Deaf People face and through her continuing contacts with the Deaf community she is able to constantly assess the impact of the changes she has introduced. In particular, the formation of a Deaf PACT makes the organization truly accessible and accountable to the Deaf Community for the first. If we are not meeting the community's needs, we have a real mechanism in place for them to tell us.

The Assessment is primarily in the form of testimonies from individual members of the Deaf Community which all provide a moving account of the problems they previously faced and the support they now receive. Further analysis, particularly in respect of a qualitative assessment of the impact of these changes is difficult, primarily due to the restricted information available regarding distinct minority communities from Force level surveys. Clearly such a piece of work is beyond a single Community Beat Manager's scope of work.

Lancashire Constabulary is very proud of the difference one of our officers has made to a minority community in need of an enhanced level of service from our force.

Chief Inspector Neil Chessell  
Geographic Policing  
Western Division  
Lancashire Constabulary  
01253 604072

### **Checklist for Applicants:**

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?

6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public?
7. Have you saved you application form as a PDF attachment and entitled your message 'Entry for Tilley Awards 2007' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please **email it to [Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Tilleyawards07@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)**. Two hard copies must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice, Support & Communications Team, 6th Floor, Peel Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.