POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE
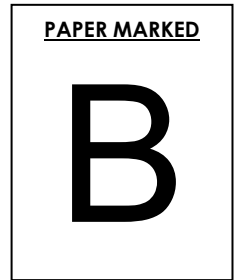
Report of	**OFFICE OF CHIEF CONSTABLE**
Subject	**REVERSE MENTORING PILOT SCHEME**
Date	**FRIDAY 18 JUNE 2021 – 2:00 p.m.**
Author	**DETECTIVE INSPECTOR JAMES WHITE**

Purpose of Report

1.   The purpose of the report is to outline how a reverse mentoring pilot scheme has been delivered to support Leicestershire Police in becoming a more inclusive organisation. The report will also outline the findings following an interim review after 6 months of operation and the intended next steps.

Recommendations

2.   The Committee is recommended to discuss the contents of the report and consider the ethical dilemmas posed.

Ethical Dilemmas

3.   The Committee is asked to consider the following:

- Does the Committee feel that reverse mentoring is an appropriate concept and method to be utilised in seeking to make Leicestershire Police more inclusive?

- What should be done to ensure that mentors feel empowered given that this model reverses the traditional mentoring relationship which is ordinarily based on an imbalance of power and influence?

- Would it be appropriate for Leicestershire Police to make participation in any reverse mentoring scheme compulsory for those aspiring to be senior leaders as part of their continuous professional development?

Background

4.   Reverse mentoring pairs a person who is more junior in rank/grade to act as a mentor to an individual who is more senior in rank/grade; the opposite of the usual mentoring dynamic. Reverse Mentoring aims to support senior leaders to create a more inclusive and diverse working environment by engaging with officers and staff to discuss and debate key areas of diversity and inclusion, confront accepted cultural behaviours, and encourage reflection / action on personal and organisational biases.

5.   A significant focus for the Race, Religion and Belief Strategy Group, chaired by DCC Nixon, has been the delivery of the recommendations from the Neutral Assessment which was commissioned by the Chief Constable and conducted independently in 2020 by the NPCC Race, Religion and Belief Lead for Internal Confidence. It was anticipated that the scheme would assist in delivering against a number of those recommendations.

6.   It was also felt that the scheme would support the Race, Religion and Belief Strategy Group in delivering against its terms of reference, namely:

  • Continually challenging ourselves to ensure we are providing a professional environment which promotes the understanding of race, religion and belief issues.

  • Identifying, exposing and reducing bias which disadvantages diversity and inclusion with regards to race, religion and belief.

  • Actively considering the internal confidence of Black, Asian and minority ethnic group officers and staff in all regards and work to support the Force Strategic Fairness and Equalities Board in addressing concerns and progressing ideas.

Body of report

Leicestershire Police Reverse Mentoring Pilot Scheme

7.   In developing a scheme for Leicestershire, research at national level was undertaken to identify evaluated schemes to allow learning from both the public and private sector to be incorporated into a proposal. Schemes being run by the Metropolitan Police, Civil Service and IBM were examined.

8.   In July 2020, a proposal was presented to the Race, Religion and Belief Strategy Group seeking feedback and asking for the support of key stakeholders including senior leaders from across the organisation, representatives of the support networks, staff associations and Independent Advisory Groups. This included stakeholders in the early decision making and shaping of the scheme with a view to creating a shared understanding of implementation. The group endorsed the proposal and provided the subsequent governance for the pilot scheme.

9.   It was proposed that the scheme would run as a 6 month pilot. The scheme would assign individuals at Constable, Sergeant and Police Staff equivalent grades as mentors to those of Chief Inspector rank and above including those Police Staff equivalent grades. This was to be a dedicated, personal

mentoring relationship, built on mutual trust and confidentiality. It was not intended to be a coaching relationship tackling specific personal behaviours, but a mentoring environment focusing on general cultural behaviours and attitudes. Best practice from the Civil Service scheme was to be specific about the area of diversity and inclusion where understanding and learning was being sought. It was agreed that the pilot would feature mentors from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background as a priority area of focus for the purposes of the pilot.

10.   It was outlined that an evaluation would take place at the 6 month point to involve gathering the views and thoughts of participants. This would also capture best practice and learning from the process which might support a further roll out or similar schemes. In order to assist the evaluation, the following expected organisational outcomes were identified:

- Exchange skills, knowledge and understanding of each other's roles.

- Support the creation of an inclusive work environment where people's differences are respected and valued.

- To understand the cultural and behavioural norms at the differing levels across the organisation.

- To create meaningful and honest conversations between the most senior leaders within Leicestershire Police with the wider workforce.

11.   Expressions of interest were requested via the Race, Religion and Belief Support Networks which identified 24 individuals who wished to undertake the role of mentor. This comprised of 17 police officers and 7 members of police staff. Requests were made for Directorate Heads to identify mentees and also some targeted approaches were made where it was felt that the scheme could influence priority areas of work. This resulted in 24 mentees being identified, comprising of 16 police officers and 8 members of police staff. Representation from across the organisation was good with all Directorates represented. Each mentor and mentee completed a profile which included their objectives for taking part in the scheme; the pairs were then matched based on their desired outcomes.

12.   The scheme launched in September 2020 following two briefing sessions held virtually to ensure that all participants understood the purpose of the scheme, how it was proposed the scheme would work and the expectations placed on them in respect of being a mentor or mentee. Whilst mentors would use their own personal and professional experiences to guide discussions, those undertaking the role were invited to training sessions delivered by the Leadership and Management Development Team on mentoring skills and personal effectiveness to support them in their role.

Evaluation

13.   During April 2021, all scheme participants were sent a link to a questionnaire to capture their experiences. All responses were completed anonymously and only indicated their role in the scheme as either a mentor or mentee. A total of 21 responses were received representing a 43% return rate. The key themes

from the evaluation can be split into three areas; process and expectations, time expectations, and quality of conversations and impact.

14. Process and expectations - the vast majority of participants enjoyed the scheme and would recommend it to colleagues. Participants were clear on the purpose of the scheme and the briefings received were suitable. It was noted that Mentees needed to be clear about their objectives when taking part in the scheme and obviously want to participate. The resulting action following discussions or activity to be undertaken needed to be reported back in order to close the loop. Some participants wanted to be provided with a structure about when to meet and how to construct the meeting whereas some enjoyed the flexibility to dictate discussions.

15. Time expectations - the majority of participants met between 1 and 4 times over the 6 months and it is recognised that COVID impacted on the ability to meet in person and may have affected the quality of discussions. Participants would have welcomed protected time within which to meet due to shift patterns and other work demands.

16. Quality of conversations and impact – positively 86% of participants felt they were able to have meaningful and honest conversations. Participants were able to share knowledge and gain a better understanding of each other's role and personal experience. The impact of the scheme on diversity and inclusion is more difficult to assess; the majority of participants were undecided about whether they would change their behaviour or their work as a result of the mentoring relationship. However, participants did report having positive conversations, gaining greater understanding and provided examples of behaviour change or new activity which had taken place. It was noted that the scheme would have influence but must be seen as part of a wider body of work to achieve cultural change.

17. Participants were asked to describe what was of benefit to them from participation in the scheme. The key benefits can be summarised as gaining different perspectives, greater cultural understanding, gaining knowledge of different faiths, breaking down barriers, building trust and seeking to influence change. The open and honest conversations are reported to have helped people examine unconscious bias or where good intentions have resulted in unintended consequences. Below are some direct quotes from participants:

"The mentoring programme provided an opportunity for me to gain knowledge regarding different faiths and culture and their views of working for the organisation and what we can do as managers to ensure all colleagues feel included."

"It is a great way for those from underrepresented groups to influence the thinking and knowledge of senior leaders, build trust and be in a position to ask questions within a one to one setting. It gives that direction of inclusivity and belonging as well as an insight into our communities."

"The initiative helps to break down barriers in a traditional rank and file organisation and helps to create cultural awareness amongst the senior leadership. It also helps senior leaders to have a greater understanding of the ground reality and challenges which lower ranking officers and staff from diverse backgrounds might face. It would help for the organisation to build on the success of the pilot scheme and roll this out more force wide."

18. Participants were asked to provide examples of the things they had learned and whether there was any best practice they would like sharing. The key themes can be split into three distinct areas; recruitment and selection, workforce development and increasing understanding, and leadership. The below quotes from participants provide some examples:

"Awareness within recruitment and media campaigns as we have historically reflected areas of policing that we feel are attractive but this to some cultures can have the opposite effect - I have raised this within the pipeline work."

"Bitesize inputs to senior leaders and managers from the associations regarding faith, religion and culture. I have already arranged this as part of the CAID SIO meeting."

"More direct communication between senior managers can help with new ideas being implemented."

<u>Next Steps</u>

19. The results of the evaluation were shared at a meeting of the Race, Religion and Belief Strategy Group held on Thursday 27 May 2021. The group was asked to consider options and next steps based on the evaluation of the 6-month pilot scheme. The options presented were:

   a) Continue with the pilot scheme for those who wish to do so, acknowledging the impact/disruption of COVID, and re-evaluate after a further period

   b) Acknowledge the learning from the pilot scheme and discuss what options exist or development is required to roll out more widely as part of an offer through the Team Leicestershire Academy

   c) Ensure the learning/best practice from the pilot scheme is shared appropriately and discontinue

20. The group felt that the evaluation was largely positive and the concept of reverse mentoring was sound. It was noted that reverse mentoring could be a useful tool to address differing needs in respect of continuous professional development and also where organisational need was identified. The group endorsed the pilot scheme continuing whilst further discussion is undertaken to explore how the reverse mentoring concept can be aligned with existing mentoring/coaching offers within the Leadership Faculty of the Team Leicestershire Academy.

Implications

Financial: None

Legal: The Equality Act 2010 requires Leicestershire Police to comply with the public sector equality duty

Equality Impact Assessment: to be developed

Risks and Impact: None

Link to Police and Crime Plan: awaiting new Police and Crime Plan

List of Appendices

None

Person to Contact

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