

Understanding and monitoring tension and conflict in local communities

Training module: setting up a tension monitoring system

Population change, racial and religious issues, feuds and gang activity, intensified police operations or a specific local event can all trigger fears and potential unrest, disorder or criminal activity.

When we analyse recent community disturbances and conflicts, we can see that underlying causes or warning signs were identifiable, often building up long before igniting into an incident. Other incidents may occur suddenly, as a result of local, national or international events, not foreseen at the local level, but requiring a rapid and sensitive response.

So what's new?

iCoCo has developed a training module to help local authorities, police and other partners work together to build a shared method of monitoring community tension. It supports an approach that predicts and prevents disturbances while effectively tackling conflict where it arises.

The training module is based on a comprehensive and practical **Guide for local authorities, police service and partner agencies** using research and best practice from around the country. Already delivered to all 32 London boroughs, it is now available to local authorities, police authorities and other partners across England.

What is community tension?

Community tension is a state of community dynamics which may lead to disorder or threaten the peace and stability of communities.

Why monitor community tension?

- To keep a check on the 'temperature' in communities even when tensions are generally perceived as low
- To support public bodies to implement legal duties with regard to the safety and well-being of communities and to promote good race relations
- To prevent the serious impact of criminal activity, damage to property, injury and loss of life
- To promote good community relations and well-being so the whole community can live in peace and feel safe
- To understand potential conflict and minimise the risk of disorder, violence or crime
- To enable effective problem solving and appropriate responses to prevent and tackle an incident
- To recognise that disorder on any significant scale will severely damage an area's reputation and may impact on investment in jobs, housing and employment

About the Guide

The Guide was commissioned to develop a more effective approach to understanding community dynamics and anticipating and addressing community tensions.

There are three principles at the heart of our approach:

- **Communities themselves** are best placed to identify their own priorities and problems and determine their own solutions
- Partners should identify potential and emerging tensions, to enable an '**early and upstream**' response rather than reacting once tensions have become manifest
- **Capturing and pooling information** available to partners, whose staff have face-to-face contact with the community, can support a predictive and preventative approach

It aims to prepare partners to work with communities to address tension and manage situations in collaborative, sensitive and effective ways.

*'I think this is a **first-rate guide to community tension monitoring, which covers all the important ground in the field**, and does so succinctly, uses helpful examples and illustrations, presumes little in the way of prior knowledge, and is readily adaptable to local circumstances and needs. The tone here of the 'No Surprises' approach to community tension monitoring, according to which rumour and misinformation is as important as fact, is spot on'*

Andy Hull, Oversight & Review Officer, Metropolitan Police Association

About the Training Module

Who should attend?

- A local authority senior officer responsible for leading community safety issues, such as an Assistant Chief Executive or Head of Community Safety
- Officers from Community Safety, Education, Housing, Community Development, Youth Service, Community Cohesion
- Police officers, including the Chief Inspector responsible for Borough liaison and the officer who completes the Tension Assessment return
- Key officers from Local Strategic Partnerships and relevant voluntary agencies

We recommend a minimum group of ten per session but can accommodate up to 40.

How will the training be delivered?

- Based on practical exercises and real case studies
- Practice of specific techniques, methods and tools
- Relevant to total beginners and the more experienced
- All participants receive a copy of the 60 page Guide to back up their training
- Supportive and friendly environment

We can provide training for two or three neighbouring authorities, a good way to explore cross boundary issues.

Find out more

For more information about iCoCo and to view the pilot Guide on Understanding and Monitoring Community Tension and Conflict in Local Communities, visit

www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk

To discuss or book training for your authority contact us at:

024 7679 5757

cohesion@coventry.ac.uk

About iCoCo

The Institute of Community Cohesion was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race, diversity and multiculturalism. Our work focuses on building positive and harmonious community relations. iCoCo represents a unique partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, combining the experience and expertise of four universities with practitioners from a range of diverse backgrounds and professions.

iCoCo is a not for profit partnership, which aims to build capacity at all levels and in all local and national agencies to promote community cohesion.

iCoCo

Institute of Community Cohesion

