

Step three: Use the Experienced, Evidenced, Potential (EEP) system

This step will introduce the Experienced, Evidenced and Potential framework to record, collate and assess Community Tension. This was conceptualised and developed by the late Detective Constable Ron Woodland for the Metropolitan Police and the National Community Tension Team and has been adopted by most UK police services.

Wider understanding and use of this framework will assist a broader spread of local authorities, educational establishments, voluntary bodies and other partners to contribute to building a more comprehensive picture of community dynamics and lead to better responses.

Understanding and using the EEP system

Experienced

- How communities feel
- What communities think is happening to them
- Rumour or perception is as relevant as factual information

Evidenced

- What has happened or is happening

Potential

- What might happen or has the potential to happen
- Predicted or planned activity by the police
- Other forthcoming events

The **'Experienced'** element is of great importance. Knowing how communities feel, the 'word on the street', any rumours or stories circulating around or how people are reacting to local, national or international events is crucial to managing an appropriate response. Formal groups such as Independent Advisory Groups, Police Community Consultative Groups, Neighbourhood Forums and Tenants and Residents Associations are good sources of information, but equally important are informal conversations and contacts with as many different people in the community as possible. It is necessary to hear from young people and women, from new arrivals and members of the established community, from faith communities and community groups. This presupposes new and higher levels of continuous engagement with communities to make sure that partners really do have their finger on the pulse, are alive to current rumours, minor disagreements and so on.

'Evidenced' information is predominantly collected and recorded by the police on the Crime Report Information System (CRIS) and the Criminal Intelligence data system (CRIMINT). Other evidence which is not recorded as crime - such as Schools' Racist Incidents Reports, verbal abuse of staff of public or private sector organisations - should be added to police evidence.

‘Potential’ tensions may be linked to a known event - a demonstration or march, a significant anniversary, planned police activity, or gleaned from community conversations. Anticipation of potential tension should not be limited to short term events. Forward thinking of developments in an area - such as major regeneration programmes, housing redevelopments, anticipated new arrivals, changes to transport systems, closure of facilities – and an assessment of the potential community impact will enable partners to plan to mitigate risks to community well-being.

Measuring the level of tension

For each aspect of the assessment – Experienced, Evidenced, and Potential – a description of the level of tension is required and measurement summarised in Section 4:

- 1 Imminent
- 2 High
- 3 Moderate (high)
- 4 Moderate (low)
- 5 Above Normal
- 6 Normal

Descriptions of these levels for each aspect are contained in the Template in Appendix 2A (PG 80)

The Tension Assessment Summary includes an indicator as to whether tension is

- Falling
- Static
- Raised

Using the system

Utilising the three elements enables far greater analysis of the true tension position.

For example, a significant difference between experienced and evidenced tensions might indicate the need for reassurance (where experienced is much higher than evidenced) or research where the opposite is true.

The allocation of numbers within each category will always be a matter of local judgement. Different areas will have different levels of tolerance to tension and different experiences of what is ‘normal’. However, the inclusion of evidence-based criteria, wherever possible, should enable more consistent and robust assessment.

It must be acknowledged that any system must operate within the local environment and that what is high tension locally may not be viewed the same in another area.

The three way assessment must be completed for every community identified as being vulnerable on the Tension Summary Table (See Appendix 2, Section 4).

As familiarity with the assessment framework develops, each community can be assessed using a simple three-figure number, where the first figure is 'experienced', the second is 'evidenced' and the third is 'potential'.

In addition, the figures can be highlighted in colours (red for risen, amber for static, green for decreased and blue for a new assessment) to show how each element of the assessment has developed since the last assessment.

Through regular use of this model, in an inter-agency setting, the group will increase their understanding of the importance of small pieces of information contributing to the overall picture.