

Public Order Command & Protest Liaison Teams (PLTs): Course Outline.

Learning objectives:

- To understand the scientific, legal and policy rationale for the use of liaison officers during crowd events.
- To understand the operational benefits and challenges of utilising liaison officers as a tactical option in the pre, during and post event stages of a public order policing operation.
- To understand how to develop approaches to strategy, planning and command and control that enables liaison officers to deliver effective outcomes.
- To understand how liaison officers relate to and work alongside other tactical options.

Learning Outcomes

- Improved planning processes to ensure that engagement, mediation and dispute resolution are maintained as a primary tactic from the outset to the conclusion of public order operations.
- Improved leadership and decision-making that empowers and enables commanders to utilize protest liaison teams as a tactic and avoid activities that undermine PLT capacity to deliver effective outcomes.
- Improved capacity of commanders to deliver effective and efficient public order operations that:
 - Deliver information led tactically graded profiles which are proportionate.
 - Can appropriately and effectively balance competing human rights demands in dynamic and challenging circumstances.
 - Reduce the likelihood of conflict during crowd events and increase efficiency in the use of MPS resources.
 - Assist in protecting the MPS from negative reputational outcomes.

Timetable

09.30 – 10.30: *The scientific, legal and policy rationale for the use of protest liaison tactics during public order operations.*

The session will be lecture based and aims to clarify the: a) research and theory underpinning the HMIC / ACPO led updates to the NPIA training packages on crowd dynamics and psychology; b) relationship between crowd psychology and police strategy and tactics; c) legal justifications for the use of PLTs that flow from the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act (1998). The session will relate this science, policy and law to relevant sections of the ACPO manual of guidance on 'Keeping the Peace' with an emphasis upon key terms such as facilitation, self policing, proportionality, police legitimacy, graded tactical approach, dialogue and communication.

10.30 – 10.45: Q&A

10.45 – 11.00: Coffee.

11.00 – 12.00: Case studies in the use of protest liaison teams.

This session will be a lecture and Q&A session focused on the historical development of Protest Liaison Teams (PLTs) and their prior deployments in England and Wales (and where possible in the Metropolitan Police Service jurisdiction). The focus will be on using examples of operational deployment to understand the skills and competencies of PLT officers and how these relate to their roles in: a) pre-event planning and operational deployment; b) creating on-going relationships of trust and confidence between police and protesters; c) realizing strategic aims operationally. The case studies will also be used to draw out the key challenges faced by commanders who utilize PLTs. These include: a) command and control; b) deployment in risk environments; c) maximizing problem solving and conflict resolution; d) balancing PLT capability against and in relationship to other resources such as FIT's, EGT & PSUs.

12.00 – 12.45: Lunch

12.45 – 3.30: Scenario based workshops.

The afternoon will be taken up with a series of syndicate exercises. It is planned to create syndicates of mixed command bands and skill sets to permit dynamic decision-making around interjects. Syndicates will appoint and rotate leaders as the scenarios are developed. Each syndicate will conclude each exercise by sharing and developing their thoughts in a plenary discussion with each other syndicate that will be facilitated and summarized by the trainers. The scenario-based exercises will be used to explore:

- The relationships between commanders, planners and liaison officers (PLT) during the initial planning phases of an operation;
- How PLTs can build capacity for mediation and conflict resolution pre event;
- How the use of PLTs assist in ensuring a human rights based approach and minimize the level and use of force by the MPS;
- How command and control structures can successfully integrate both PLT activity and Public Order tactical deployment;
- The understanding among commanders of how to create a positive environment for the successful deployment of PLT officers;
- The issues for commanders deploying both PLT, FIT, EGT and PSU officers side by side in complex and dynamic environments.