

Equality and Bias

Bitesize training for schemes

Objectives

1. To explore the history of custody visiting and reiterate the importance of equality.
2. To examine what 'equalities' means in the context of custody visiting.
3. To examine what unconscious bias is, how it can affect our work and how to mitigate against it.

The History of Independent Custody Visiting and Equality

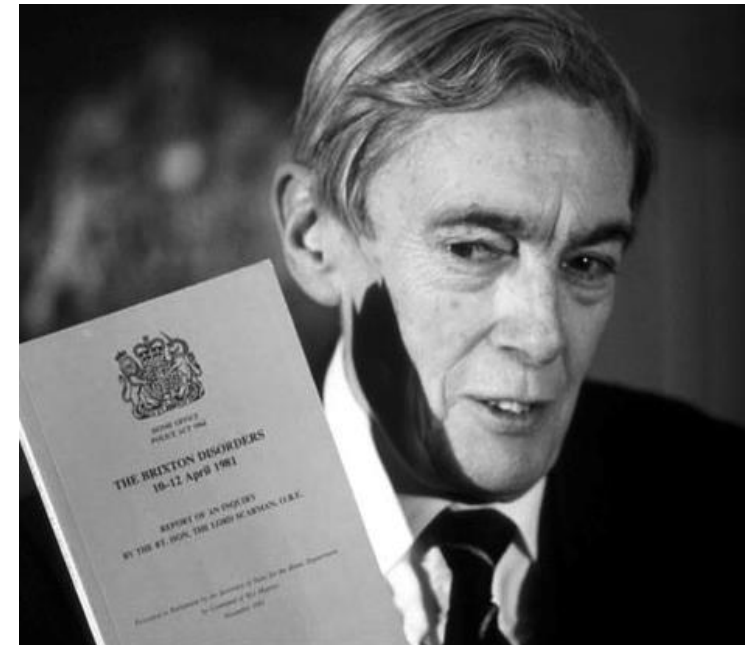
CIVIL DISORDERS 1981

- In 1981 several outbreaks of unrest occurred in major cities – Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, the West Midlands and London.
- The most significant of these disorders took place in Brixton between the 10th and 12th of April when hundreds of young people attacked property and the police.
- The cause of these disorders centered around people protesting about oppressive policing and in particular the alleged harassment of people, especially young black people, by the police – in short, these incidents were anti-police and voiced a lack of trust in the law and order authorities.
- After days of unrest, these serious incidents led to the government ordering an urgent inquiry and appointing Lord Scarman to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the events.



The History of Independent Custody Visiting and Equality

- The resulting investigation – the Scarman Report – included several recommendations about reforming the law, community relations and policing practices to help tackle the central problems which caused the civil disorders.
- The report advocated a system for members of the public from local communities to inspect the way the police detained people in their custody.
- Originally referred to as lay visiting, independent custody visiting is the system that has been developed to meet this recommendation.



Exercise

- What is equality?
- How does 'equality and bias' impact on your work as an ICV?
- What are the challenges around equality and bias when custody visiting?



The Equality Act 2010

- The Equality Act 2010 prohibits all employers, service providers and providers of education, from discriminating against, harassing or victimising individuals with protected characteristics.
- Unlawful discrimination includes failing to provide accessible facilities for people with disabilities, or treating people unfavourably because of their race.

The Equality Act 2010 – a positive duty

- All public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out day-to-day work, shaping policy, delivering services & in relation to their own employees.
- Also requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination,
 - Advance equality of opportunity, and
 - Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

What are the protected characteristics?



Exercise – how might each group be affected by the custody environment?

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

What should ICVs look for in terms of equalities? Some examples

- Age

Physical health needs, such as walking aids, able to get up and down from beds. If detainee is a child, is custody risk assessing & treating child as priority / vulnerable?

- Disability

Is the detainee able to use the facilities? Have reasonable adjustments been made where possible? If a mental health or learning difficulty, has an AA been requested?

- Gender reassignment

Has the detainee been referred to as the gender they refer to themselves as? If searched, was the search completed by someone of the same gender as they self identify?

What should ICVs look for in terms of equalities – some examples – continued

- Pregnancy and maternity –

If a breastfeeding mother, has a breast pump been provided for expressing?
Are any dependent children being looked after outside of custody?

- Religion or belief -

Has the detainee been given any religious items they might need? Are they stored correctly?

- Sex –

If female, has the detainee been offered sanitary protection, was this of the appropriate type they needed?

General equalities ethos for ICVs

- People in police custody are vulnerable as they are reliant on others for their care and some basic needs.
- Detainees have the right to be treated fairly and with respect regardless of their backgrounds and life experiences.
- If something feels wrong – report it.
- If work should be praised – report it.

Quiz

1. What report was written after the Brixton riots?
2. What did the report recommend?
3. Give a definition of equalities
4. Name 4 of the protected characteristics

Quiz - Answers

1. What report was written after the Brixton riots?

The Scarman Report

2. What did the report recommend?

A system for members of the public from local communities to inspect the way the police detained people in their custody

3. Give a definition of equality

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an **equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents**, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. Equality work recognises that historically, certain groups of people with particular characteristics e.g. race, disability, sex and sexuality, have experienced discrimination.

4. Name 4 of the protected characteristics

Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation

What is Unconscious Bias?

- We all have biases - becoming aware will help to mitigate them.
- This term is used to describe bias or prejudice that we are not aware of.
- Research shows that our brains jump to assumptions and conclusions without us even knowing it.
- Personal attitudes and beliefs are shaped by the way we have been brought up and how we perceive other people.

Two types of Unconscious Bias



Affinity bias

- We show a preference for those who appear similar to ourselves and our families.

Confirmation bias

- We find what we're looking for - the tendency to search for, favour, and recall information that confirms one's previously held beliefs. The effect is stronger for emotionally charged issues and for deeply entrenched beliefs.

Exercise

- A young boy is being driven by his father when the car crashed. They were both taken to hospital and the surgeon on call said “I can’t deal with this person, he’s my son”
 - How would you explain this?

The Halo & Horns Effect

- The “halo effect” is the concept by which a person who is judged positively on one aspect is automatically judged positively on several other aspects without much evidence.
- The “horns effect” is the concept by which a person who is judged negatively on one aspect is automatically judged negatively on several other aspects without much evidence.
- We tend to pay less attention to a person’s negative traits after discerning one or two positive traits in the first few minutes of meeting them.

Unconscious Bias - Triggers & Solutions

Bias Trigger	Solution
Denial	Self-knowledge, be aware of your biases and do not suppress them.
Worry	Relax – when you stress about your biases they are more likely to slip out or cause you to avoid people.
Rushing	Take time to make decisions about people – biases are most active when we are rushing, stressed, tired, frustrated or angry.
Subjectivity	Follow fair policies & procedures with safeguards to prevent bias, challenge yourself to check evidence for & against decisions, acknowledge that your conditioning is imbalanced, seek diverse perspectives e.g. on a decision making panel or from your ICV partner.
Media Influence	Seek stereotype-defying examples, broaden your positive/alternative media and culture input to balance out the negative
Lack of experience or connections	Learn about cultures, communities and identities from your own via networking, training, books, documentaries, films, community events and festivals, visits to local support groups, shadowing, travelling and listening to the experiences of others.

Objectives – a recap

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Any questions?