

Accountable and responsive policing in upholding the rule of law

Why responsiveness to the public is an essential benchmark of good policing practice.



Content

- Main principles for the Norwegian police
- What responsiveness to the public may include
- How the police may work
- How we can tell that we have success in policing in regard to the public



Main principles for the Norwegian Police

- The police shall reflect the ideals of society
- The police shall have a civilian profile
- The police shall be integrated
- The police shall be decentralised and function in interaction with the public
- The police officer should be a generalist



Main principles

- There must be a broad recruitment to the police
- The Norwegian police has monopoly on the legal use of physical force
- The police shall prioritize among its tasks and mainly focus on preventive strategies and measures
- The police shall be subject to effective control by the society



What responsiveness to the public can include

- Response to public needs
- Knowledge based policing
- Focus on everyday problems
- Public`s confidence in the police
- Cooperation



Responsiveness

- Communication with the public
- Protect victims
- Predictable policing
- Accountability



We need knowlegde about

- Overall picture of challenges
- Specific crimes
- Public sense of insecurity
- Victims
- Public wishes and needs
- How to approach different groups



- How can we know that our policing is carried out in a way that is appreciated by the public?



Success in policing

- Police responds to public needs
- Communication
- How the public are treated by the police
- Police availability
- Reduce crime and increase sense of security
- Confidence in the police



WARSZAWA 11.5.06 - OSCE

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Ladys and gentlemen, colleagues and partners. I have been asked to give an introduction about "Why responsiveness to the public is an essential benchmark of good policing practice".

I understand the word responsiveness to contain the way the police professionally work to respond to public needs.

In my speech I will give you a picture of what this them can include and what is important for the Norwegian police.

This includes:

Slide nr. 2 – Content

- Main principles for the Norwegian police
- What responsiveness to the public may include
- How the police may work, and
- How we can tell that we have success in policing in regard to the public

Introduction.

In Norway we use the term Police Service and not Police Force. This is to underline that the main objective for the police is to protect and serve the public. We consider the public to be our most important partners - we need them and they need us.

This also has been underlined by Sir Robert Peel in the beginning of the 19 century – he is known as the architect of modern policing in England –, he said in principle nr. 7:

“Police is the public and the public is the police”.

His opinion was that the police and the citizens have common worries, interests and goals.

This principle implies (as I see it) close cooperation and interaction between the public and the police to create and maintain safe communities.

Now I will give you a quick view of main principles for the Norwegian Police based on International standards.

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Principles for the Norwegian Police:

The police shall reflect the ideals of society and have a civilian profile

The police service, its training and daily work is founded on democratic and humanistic ideals. Civilian profile is the opposite of a military profile, connected to the way in which the police behave in the widest sense of the term.

The police shall be integrated

All functions of the police are collected in one and the same organisation. The opposite is a police organisation based on specialised police services of various kinds.

The police shall be decentralised and function in interaction with the public

The police shall be present and an integrated part of the local community. In serving a small district the police officer has to be an "all-rounder". But it is important to find a balance between the generalist and his support - the specialist.

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There must be a broad recruitment to the police.

Democracy is served if the police have a diverse social background and represent cross section of the population.

The Norwegian police have monopoly on the legal use of physical force - and are unarmed on ordinary duty.

The police shall prioritize among its tasks and mainly focus on preventive strategies and measures.

One main objective of the police is to reduce crime and increase the sense of security.

The strategy for reaching this goal is to involve all police employees in overall crime prevention work.

The police shall be subject to effective control by the society.
The police are placed under political, social and formal control.

The best guarantee against abuse of authority and against mismanagement lies in the control exerted by the police within their own organisation based on standards of professional ethics and high professional morals.

In the following I will give you a picture of what responsiveness to the public may be:

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What responsiveness to the public can include

- First - the police capability and willingness to respond to public needs, as for example emergency responses. We know that there is a close connection between this and the sense of security
- The police must plan and carry out Knowledge based responses – methods, and strategies – to prevent and reduce crime and increase the sense of security. We know that there is a close connection between reduced crime and public sense of security.
- There must be a Balance between the focus on serious organized crime and talking every day problems in the local community, that is to the concern of the inhabitants. We know there is a close relation between this and public satisfaction with the police.
- When it comes to Confidence – public assessment of the police will be influenced by our ability to be emphatic, establish confidence and our capability to keep our promises.

When the police meet the public it should be in a positive way. This includes that the police shall not discriminate any groups in society and not use unnecessary force

Each and every police officer must be professional – by the book – in his or her policing.

- Cooperation –
To solve challenges in society the police must cooperate with other authorities and organizations. For example official departments, the public in general and minority groups.

In many instances, other parties may have better skills and capabilities for solving the tasks more effectively than the police.

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- Communication –
The best way to communicate is to be where the public is – local communities, in the streets, in meetings and so forth. New electronic solutions also open new possibilities to communicate swiftly and well with the public – we can carry out surveys, give information about crime, how the police will tackle local challenges etc.
- Protect victims –
It is important that the police identify and seek to protect victims – that could be individuals, groups or places that are exposed to crime, or are in risk to be offended - especially prevent repeat victimization
- Predictable policing –
Our policing must be predictable. Therefore the police must work in close interaction with the public. It must be clear what the public can expect from the police and the police must work according to their statement of service. This will contribute to confidence from the public.
- Accountability –
Last but not least. Police accountability is very important. This must be seen in relation to methods used to solve problems – this means correct ethical and moral policing. The public must have trust in that the police are professional according to law and guidelines.

The public also must know that the police will show responsibility to their need for help.

If the police act beyond law and guidelines, we have in Norway especially two institutions to deal with matters like that:

First we have the Parliamentary Commissioner. Tasks in connection to this function are for example general control of administration – hereby use of police arrests and questions about employees.

Secondly we have an independent unit for police matters – this unit carries out investigations against police officers that – for example have been reported for use of violence or used gun on duty.

In other countries they solve this by using “Unit of Internal Affairs”.

How the police may work

The police can't prevent or reduce crime alone. The police can't increase or maintain the sense of security among the public by working alone. The Police must work together with other departments – such as the local municipality authorities, groups of public members etc.

The police must also be capable to change in step with rapid, and sometimes complex alterations in society. We must be dynamic in relation to challenges at present time and in the future.

But – In Norway the recent years - there have been complaints from local municipality authorities that the police are not good enough when it comes to:

- availability in local communities
- information to the public
- cooperation with local municipality authorities
- reducing crime – and clearance of crime

We take this seriously and have taken actions to do a better job.

First of all we work hard to change the way the police work. The most comprehensive change is implementation of Problem Oriented policing. In our understanding this includes several of the principles in Community policing and intelligence led policing.

In the national Police Directorate we use the term Knowledge based policing. We think this gives the best picture of how we perform our policing. I know this also has been discussed in other countries.

In general I think the police need knowledge about:

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- Overall picture of the challenges, threats and risks in the community
- Specific crimes, high crime areas and criminals
- Where and when the public feel a sense of insecurity
- Victims – repeat victimization
- What wishes and needs do the general public, municipal authorities and other relevant parties have in respect of the areas of focus?
- How the police shall approach and communicate with different groups in society, for example ethnic minorities

To achieve knowledge about this, the police need to work systematically and produce strategic and operative analysis as basis for responses. The information must be gathered from all kind of sources – police sources and community sources, and put together to give the police and our partners best possible knowledge.

An important element in connection to this is:

Strategic planning in local communities

Local police authorities and municipal authorities must focus on the development of common strategies and measures to address local challenges.

The overall strategic analysis – which is prepared by the police and partners – will be an important starting point and basis for discussions to make priorities, develop common strategies, frame solutions for cooperation, and clarify responsibility and roles.

Partners must be invited to give inputs to the police's own activity plan

From The National Police Directorate there is a demand that cooperation with external partners shall be documented in overall- and specific activity plans for policing.

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How can we know that our policing are carried out in a way that is appreciated by the public?

This is a difficult question.

My suggestion is that the police has succeed if there is a high score on public satisfaction about:

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- How long it takes the police to respond on call for help
- The way the police are dealing with problems the public are worried about in every day life

- The communication between public and the police – This includes how the police give information – both through electronic solutions, media and in direct interaction with the public
- How the public generally are treated by the police
- How victims of crime is treated by the police
- Police availability in the local community
- In which way the police and partners has been able to prevent and reduce crime
- In which way the police and partners has succeeded to increase the sense of security
- Public confidence in the police

We have now decided to carry out annual public surveys so that the population in each police district can give response on how satisfied they are with local policing.

We must always have in mind how the police can do a better job to reduce crime and maintain or increase the sense of security in our communities. We must also continuously focus on how we in the best possible way can interact with the public – or simply said – do a better job for our customers.

Thank you for your attention.