

Orthodox Jewish Ladies Community Event December 2004

Location	Bewick Centre, Bewick Road, Bensham
Summary	Bensham is home to one of the largest Orthodox Jewish communities in Europe, due to the international reputation of its Talmudic colleges that takes the population of the community to over 4,000 for large parts of the year. Gateshead Council and its partners have continued to find new ways of working with the Orthodox community, and an evening event held within the community for the women of the community has identified a new way of getting their views across to service providers.
Area	The Orthodox Jewish community is located mostly in Bensham, concentrated in an around Bewick Road, Whitehall Road and Alexandra Road.
Partners	Gateshead Council and Northumbria Police
Contact	David Andrew, Neighbourhood Management, Gateshead Council (0191 4332816) davidandrew@gateshead.gov.uk

Issue

The Orthodox Jewish community is closely knit, and can represent significant challenges for all service providers, especially around service planning, communication and customer feedback. Although the communication between the representative body - the Jewish Community Council - the Council and police has seen a closer working relationship develop in the last few years, there is still more that can be done to secure a greater understanding by the organisations concerned.

Action

The Community identified six key themes they wished to express opinions upon: Community Safety, Environment (street cleansing), Road Safety / Traffic, Housing, and Street Lighting. A late evening event in the Jewish community centre was held to enable Jewish women to attend, in the format of an interactive exhibition with officers hosting 5 zones to gather views and opinions in a manner that was informal yet respectful. Around 100 women attended, representing around 50% of all households within the resident community.

Outcome

The event generated extensive and detailed information to a degree never before experienced by the service providers, and will greatly help service planning and delivery in the area as a whole, not just for the Jewish community. The style of the event was well received, both in terms of the step forward in dialogue it represented but also the exhibition format, and one that can be repeated in the community. The outcomes of the event are being fed back to the Jewish Community Council for dissemination, and service responses are being developed.

Gateshead Community Strategy Challenges supported

Children & Young People	Children and young people who feel safe, are safe and stay safe
Culture	Local communities that are stronger
	More people use local cultural facilities and services
Community Safety	Continue to reduce fear of crime and increase public confidence and reassurance
	Improve responses for residents to anti-social behaviour
	Improve responses for vulnerable groups and victims of crime
Housing	Local people living in homes which they can afford and which meet their aspirations
	Local people living in good quality homes in all areas of Gateshead
	Local people feeling safe and unthreatened in their homes and neighbourhoods
Environment	A clean, attractive and sustainable environment for residents and visitors in Gateshead