



An Evaluation of the 4th Independent Advisory Group Conference



June 2004

1. Report Summary

Since 2000 there have been four Independent Advisory Group Conference's. Crime Concern won the tender to evaluate the 4th Conference that was organised by Leicestershire Constabulary. This conference was held at the Hanover International Hotel in Hinckley, Leicestershire.

The evaluation comprised a number of parts:

- Judging how far the objectives set for this conference had been met
- An assessment was made of the way that the lessons of the previous conference had been used based on the views of the previous conference's delegates
- An evaluation - by Crime Concern staff – of the quality of the pre conference organisation based on the learning of the previous conference organisers (West Yorkshire Constabulary)
- An analysis – based on the views of all the delegates to this conference – of the value of this conference in its entirety. Due to the method of collecting this data, it is possible to decide whether there were particular parts of the audience – i.e. Voluntary Sector Members of the IAG, Police Officers or Police Authority Members – that found it more useful than others
- Additional comments about the organisation of the conference by the Crime Concern staff team who attended the event

Generally speaking, the quality of the planning for the 4th IAG Conference was good. There was demonstrable evidence that the lessons from the planning of the previous conference had been learnt. Also, lessons from previous conference delegate feedback were used to inform this conferences planning.

The conference delegates felt that the event was useful and did leave them more likely to attend a future conference. The Crime Concern Trust staff that attended the conference thought that the conference was productive, well organised and had a good focus on most of the relevant issues.

Taken as a whole, the conference was thought to be well organised by Leicestershire Constabulary. However some of the delegates expressed a concern that the conference had too strong a focus on race related issues and that other diversity issues did not receive sufficient attention.

2. Introduction

For a number of years, the Independent Advisory Groups have held a national conference to enable members to network, share good practice and discuss the future enhancement of the panels. The Independent Advisory Groups offer advice to police Services to help them enhance their services to particular communities of interest – for example, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities (LGBT), people from the black and minority ethnic communities and disabled people. Consequently, a national conference that brings these representatives with members of Police Services and serving police officers from a large number of police Services is always going to find it difficult to meet everyone's needs.

For the 4th IAG Conference – organised by Leicestershire Constabulary– the Government Office for the East Midlands provided funding to enable the conference to be independently evaluated. A formal tendering process was carried out and Crime Concern were successful in their application to evaluate the conference.

It was agreed that the evaluation would be based on the areas outlined in the “invitation to tender document”. (However, one of the key areas for the development of this conference is the learning from the previous conference)

3. Learning from the previous conference

3.1 Learning the views of the delegates

The previous conference was evaluated by means of a paper questionnaire, which was distributed to delegates. The response rate for this was 22%, which was seen as inadequate. Consequently, the decision was taken to use the “keypad voting” system to run the delegate voting to increase the response rate. This resulted in a response rate of 91% for the pre-conference questionnaire and 67% for the post conference questionnaire. This is a massive improvement with an average of 218 delegates (79%) contributing to the conference evaluation. This high level of response demonstrates to Leicestershire Constabulary the feedback is representative of attendee’s views and will add legitimacy to any recommendations arising from this evaluation.

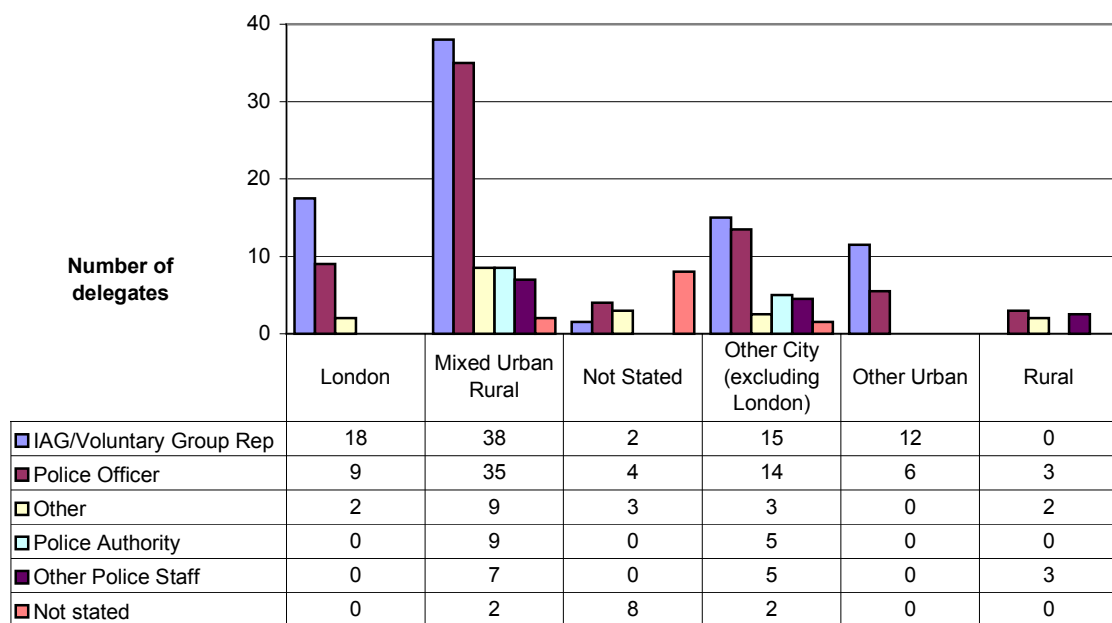
The ‘keypad voting’ system enabled delegates to respond to questions based on a number of pre-determined answers. To ensure that delegates had the opportunity to raise additional issues, not covered in detail by the keypad voting, a feedback card was included in the conference pack. Feedback cards were completed by 37 delegates, 13%, covering a range of issues. Responses received from the feedback cards are included throughout this report.

3.1.1 Delegate profile

A total of 276 delegates attended the two-day conference. An average of 39% of delegates were representing IAG’s or voluntary groups. Figure 1 shows the summary of delegates by organisation, and geographical area, calculated as an average over the two days.

Figure 1

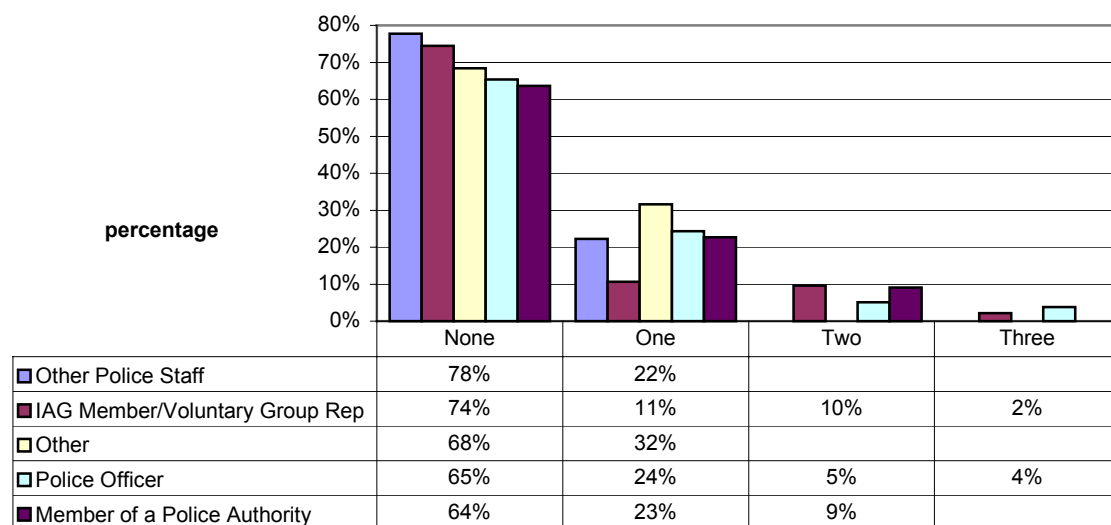
Delegate profile - average from day 1 and day 2 attendance



Almost three quarters (71%) of delegates had not attended a previous IAG conference. Figure 2 shows attendance at previous conferences by organisation.

Figure 2

Delegate profile - average from day 1 and day 2 attendance



The first and second IAG conferences were held in London and the third in Leeds. Delegates from London were most likely to have attended a previous conference (53%), whilst only 15% of representatives from towns and 17% representing rural areas had previously attended an IAG conference.

Leicestershire Constabulary have done well to increase the number of 'new' delegates and also to increase IAG and geographical representation. The contents of the conference programme, reduced conference cost, the central location and easy motorway access of Leicestershire may have been contributory factors in increasing attendance from these groups.

3.2 What issues did the previous conference delegates raise?

3.2.1 Providing a question and answer session

The delegates to the 2003 conference indicated that a question and answer session would be helpful. This was duly provided, although the delegates at the 2004 conference did not rate it highly with only 1% of delegates feeling that it was the most useful part of the conference. However, given that 71% of delegates to this conference had not attended a previous IAG conference, the needs and wishes of this cohort of delegates may be different to those of the previous conference.

3.2.2 Organising the timetable for the conference

Delegates to the 2003 conference also requested that the day begin earlier to accommodate workshops. Workshops were not provided in the 2004 conference but the second day did begin promptly at 9 a.m.

3.2.3 Ensuring that the hotel accommodation is accessible

There was some disquiet about the inaccessibility of some parts of the hotel accommodation in 2003. Leicestershire police carried out an accessibility audit for the hotel accommodation in 2004 and accessible routes were highlighted. There was also a sign language interpreter present throughout the conference sessions – though not for question time in the evening.

3.2.4 Has the conference met delegates expectations?

In the delegate feedback from 2003, 20% of delegates did not have their expectations met by the conference. In 2004 this figure had fallen to 15% with a much higher response rate.

For 50% of delegates the 4th IAG conference completely met or exceeded their expectations. In 35% of cases the expectations of delegates were partly met.¹

When asked what one-thing delegates were hoping to take away from the conference, compared to the one thing they did take away the results were as follows;

Figure 3

The one-thing delegates hoped to take away/took away from the IAG conference

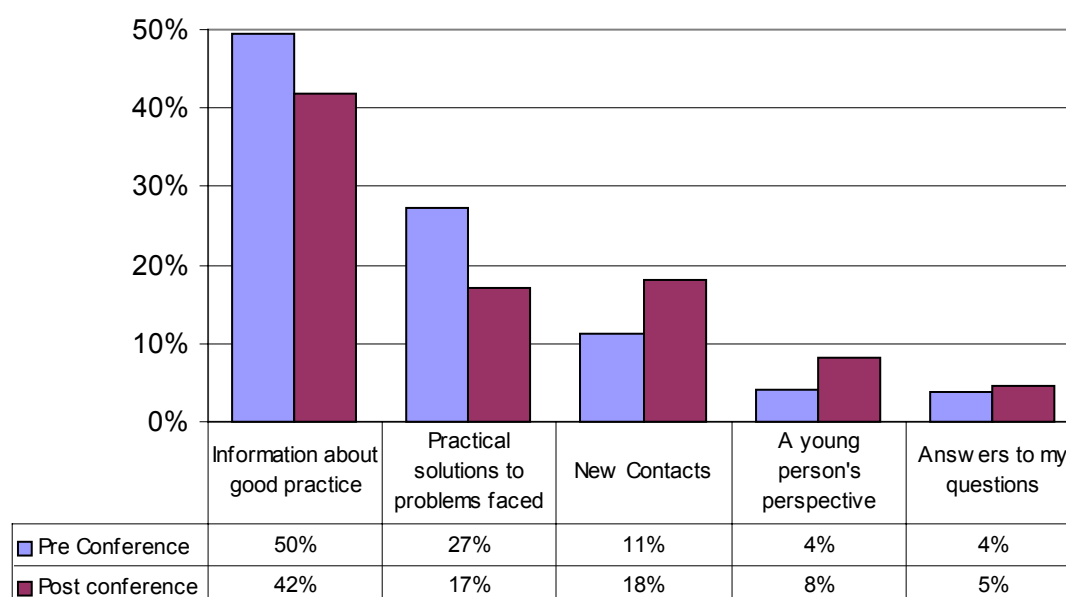


Figure 3 indicates that whilst delegate's expectations were generally met, they sometimes took away different things then they hoped from the conferences.

In the final evaluative questionnaire, delegates to the 2003 conference were asked for their views about potential improvements to future conferences. There were a number of suggestions:

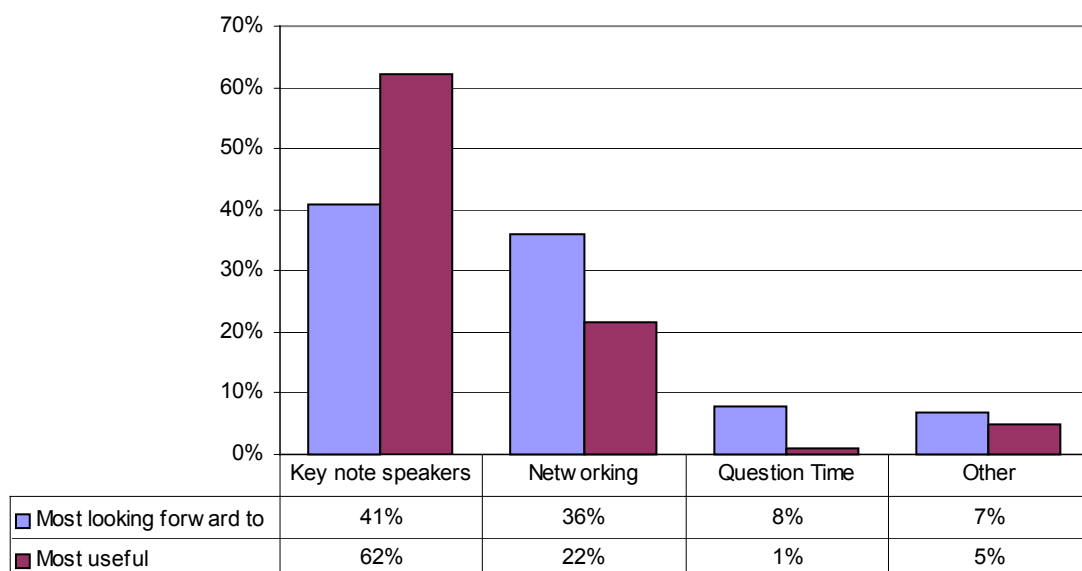
¹ Further information relating to delegate expectations by organisation and geographical area is available in appendix 1 and 2.

3.2.5 There is a need for more representative speakers

It is difficult to quantify whether the speakers at the 2004 conference were “representative” and if so representative of what? Certainly some of the speakers from the voluntary sector had direct experience of working at the interface of police / BME communities. Also, a Chief Constable spoke to give a police perspective on the operations of an IAG and there was a speaker who gave a perspective from a Police Authority. Generally there was a high degree of satisfaction with the speakers. Whilst 41% of respondents in the pre-conference questionnaire cited the key note speakers as the part of the conference they were most looking forward to, in the post conference questionnaire well over half (62%) of respondents indicated that the key note speakers were the most useful part of the conference. Figure 4 shows the top four aspects of the conference that delegates were most looking forward to and found most useful.

Figure 4

Parts of the conference that delegates were most looking forward to compared with the parts of the conference found most useful



The main topics covered by the keynote speakers were as follows;

- Matt Baggot – Changes to policing and the role of IAGs
- Trevor Phillips – The role of IAGs following the McPherson Report
- The Right Reverend Tim Stevens – The role of faith in community cohesion
- Sharon Luke-Pantry – The role of the Police Authority in the development of IAGs
- Cressida Dick (TRIDENT) – Tackling Gun crime, the police perspective
- Cheryl Sealey (TRIDENT) – Tackling Gun Crime at a grass roots level
- The Reverend Derek Webley – The role of IAGs in critical incident management
- Yasmin Alibhai-Brown – Cultural complexities and sensitivities
- Hamza Vayani - Summary of the role and activities of Youth Voice

Around half (51%) of the 186 delegates who voted on day two did not state a preferred speaker. Those delegates who did vote chose Reverend Derek Webley as their preferred conference speaker, followed by Cheryl Sealey and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown. Figure 5 display delegates top three preferred speakers, weighted in order of preference.

Figure 5
Delegate's top three speakers

Delegate organisations	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3
IAG/ Voluntary Group Representative	Reverend Derek Webley	Yasmin Alibhai-Brown	Cheryl Sealey
Police Officer	Reverend Derek Webley	Yasmin Alibhai-Brown/ Cheryl Sealey	
Other Police Staff	Cheryl Sealey	Reverend Derek Webley	Hamza Vayani
Police Authority	Reverend Derek Webley	Yasmin Alibhai-Brown	Matt Baggot/ Hamza Vayani/ Rt. Reverend Tim Stevens
Other	Yasmin Alibhai-Brown/ Hamza Vayani	Cheryl Sealey/ Reverend Derek Webley	
Not Stated	Hamza Vayani	Cheryl Sealey/ Reverend Derek Webley/ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown	

Over half (54%) of the responses from the feedback cards related to concerns about the limited areas of diversity covered at the conference. 38% suggested issues relating to LGBT communities should have been covered, and 19% would have liked to have seen more issues relating to disabled communities.

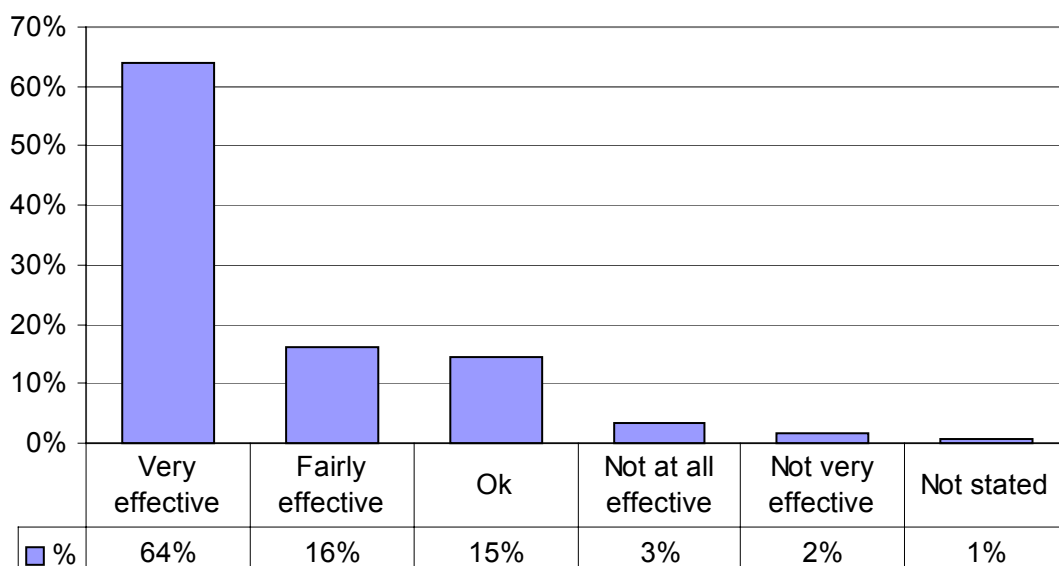
3.2.6 There should be more involvement from delegates.

For the 2004 conference, a decision was taken that it was too difficult to move over 250 delegates around the hotel into break out rooms. Consequently workshops were not organised. Instead a considerable investment was made in handsets, which enabled delegates to “vote” on issues and thus communicate with speakers. Despite being encouraged to use the keypad voting as part of their presentation, none of the keynote speakers took this opportunity and unfortunately communication was only one way. The handsets were used during the evening question time but delegates did not rate this event particularly highly.

However, AFTAthought – the theatre company brought in to illustrate points from the speakers’ presentations – were very highly rated with 80% of delegates rating them as very or fairly effective in illustrating key points from the conference (see figure 6). They did not facilitate a dialogue between keynote speakers and delegates but were very effective at illustrating the “human face” of some of the points that the speakers were making. Future conferences could also consider alternative methods of communicating with delegates apart from speeches.

Figure 6

Effectiveness of AFTAthought in helping to illustrate the key points from the presentations.



Around a quarter (24%) of feedback cards complimented AFTAthought as ‘brilliant’ and ‘thought provoking’.

3.2.7 Comment was made that there was too much time given over to entertainment in the previous conference.

In 2004 there was less entertainment provided – with live music during the evening drinks and evening meal. Delegates did not rate this highly with half of the delegates thinking that the brass band and string quartet were either irritating (10%) or a waste of money (40%). It may now be appropriate to stop having entertainment at the IAG conferences.

3.3 Learning from the views of the previous conference organisers – West Yorkshire Police

The organisers of the previous conference – West Yorkshire Police set out a number of recommendations for the organisers of subsequent conferences. They highlighted a number of areas for consideration: -

3.3.1 Evening entertainment

West Yorkshire Police felt that there should be a written brief for the evening entertainment. Leicestershire Police took the view that there should be some entertainment but that it should be less intrusive than previous years. Undoubtedly this was a wise decision but the acoustics of the rooms prevented many people hearing the music, and contributed to the poor rating the delegates gave the evening entertainment.

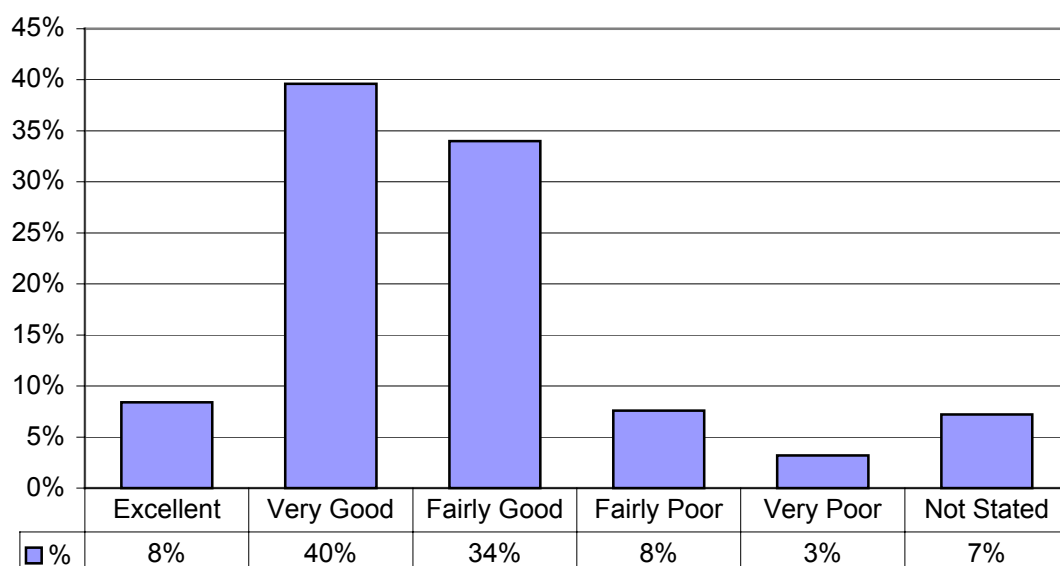
3.3.2 Project planning

West Yorkshire Police felt that – given the substantial nature of the conference – there should be a full time project manager. Leicestershire police decided not to have one person responsible for the project management but to have a multi-faceted team approach. This needed careful management to work. A detailed project plan was drawn up with responsibilities drawn up. A project board met once a month to steer the project. The project team continued to operate throughout the conference. This seems like a good approach to use as different individuals bring different skills to the project plan. However, it is quite “resource heavy” and can lead to confusion about where “the buck stops”. Generally though the project management team seems to have worked well on this occasion.

When asked about the quality of the pre-conference organisation almost half (48%) of the delegates rated it as very good or excellent.

Figure 7

Rating of pre-conference organisation by delegates

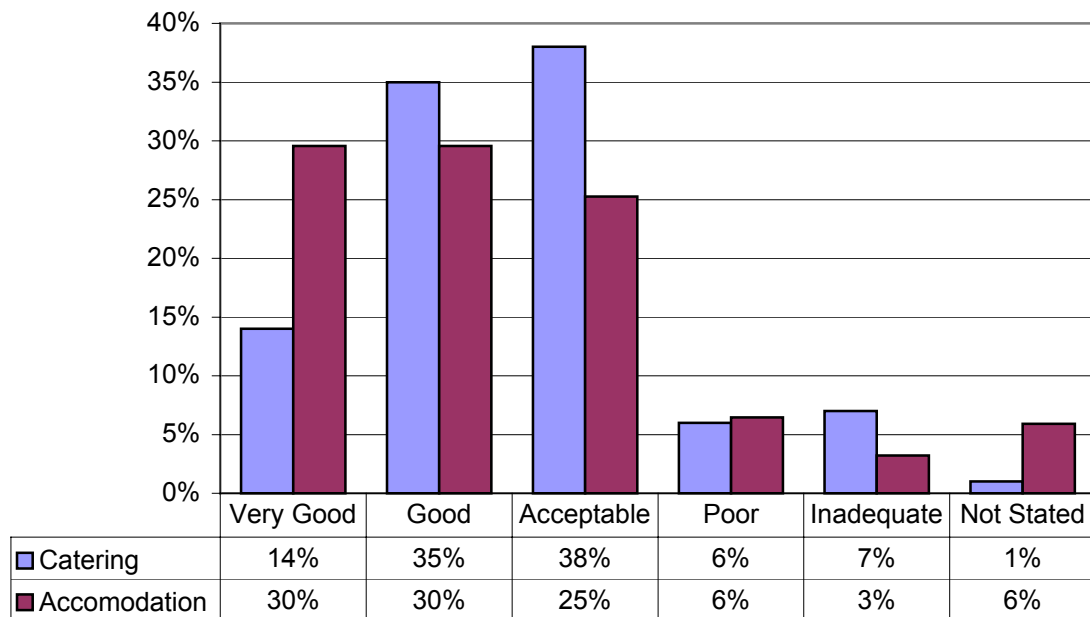


3.3.3 The quality of the hotel accommodation

Comments were made in the evaluation of the 3rd conference about the quality of the hotel and the need to ensure that delegates felt comfortable there. There was only one hotel of sufficient size in Leicestershire that could accommodate the conference so there was no choice in choosing the venue. Nevertheless as figures 7 and 8 demonstrate delegates found both the hotel and the accommodation satisfactory. On average 85% of delegates rated the catering and accommodation as acceptable with over half (53%) rating it as good or very good.

Figure 8

Delegate's rating of the catering and accommodation provided by the Hanover International Hotel

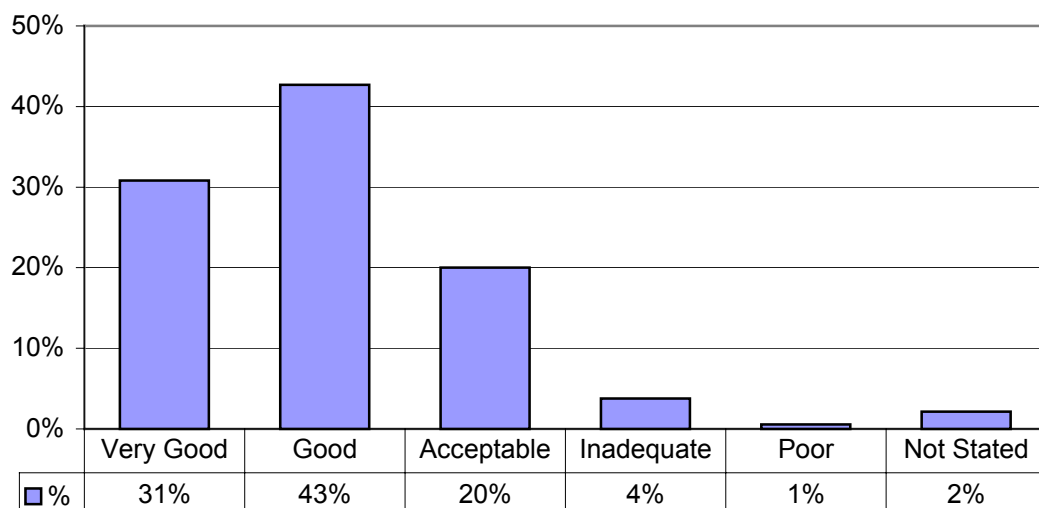


3.3.4 Contacting the organisers of the conference during the conference

West Yorkshire Police recommended that a desk be established for the duration of the conference to provide a “single point of contact for delegates”. This was set up and staffed throughout the conference. Delegates valued this single point of contact facility as they rated the on-site organisation of the conference highly as figure 9 demonstrates.

Figure 9

The rating of on-site organisation by conference delegates



3.3.5 Organising the keynote speakers at the conference

In the evaluation report to the 3rd IAG conference mention was made of the fact that it would be useful to get the keynote speakers to the conference early. In most cases this proved to have happened in the 4th IAG conference but on two occasions speakers were late so meaning that slight adjustments had to be made to the programme for the conference.

3.3.6 Setting the aims and objectives of the conference at an early stage.

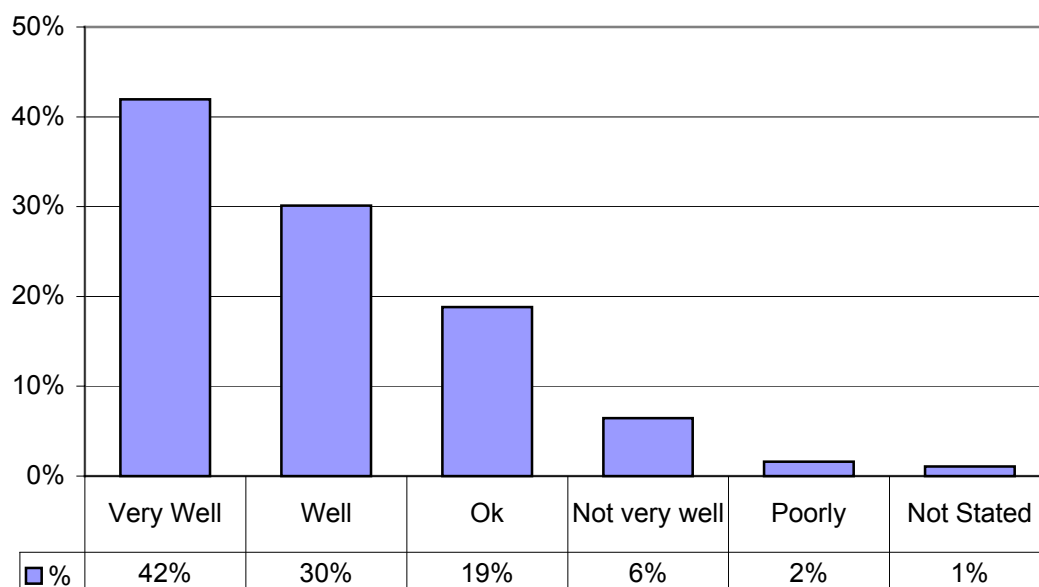
The aims and objectives for the conference were set at an early stage. Section 4 evaluates whether these aims and objectives were met.

3.3.7 Keep the keynote speakers to time

At the previous conference, time keeping was undoubtedly an issue. For the 4th IAG conference, Linda Bellos, chaired the conference and provided a sympathetic yet firm attitude to time keeping. The delegates undoubtedly appreciated this as they rated the chairing of the conference highly as figure 10 demonstrates.

Figure 10

Delegates opinion of how well the conference was chaired



3.3.8 Providing a prompt registration service

There was a single point of contact for delegates at the conference that provided – initially – the registration service and then the conference “helpdesk”. There were some queues at the initial registration. This seemed to be caused by people having to queue twice – once for their delegates pack and once more for their room key. Despite the conference organisers trying to arrange for rooms to be available at the point of registration, some rooms were not available which meant that luggage had to be stored until the rooms could be occupied. If possible it may be helpful in future conferences to have delegate hotel rooms available at the point of registration.

3.3.9 Constructing the IAG delegate pack early in the process

In the evaluation of the previous conference, West Yorkshire Police indicated that the contents of the conference pack should be agreed at an early stage in the process. Minutes of the planning meeting indicated that a dummy pack was discussed over two months prior to the conference.

3.3.10 The conference should be financially underwritten

The Leicestershire Police Authority underwrote the conference as suggested.

4. Did the conference meet its objectives?

The 4th IAG conference had five broad objectives. Whilst the objectives for the conference were not as specific or measurable as they might have been, the conference did on the whole appear to meet the objectives set. Below are the five objectives and how their success has been measured for the purpose of this evaluation.

4.1 Outline the challenges for IAGs,

The pre-conference questionnaire asked delegates what they thought the most important aspects of the 4th IAG conference were. The top four facets were;

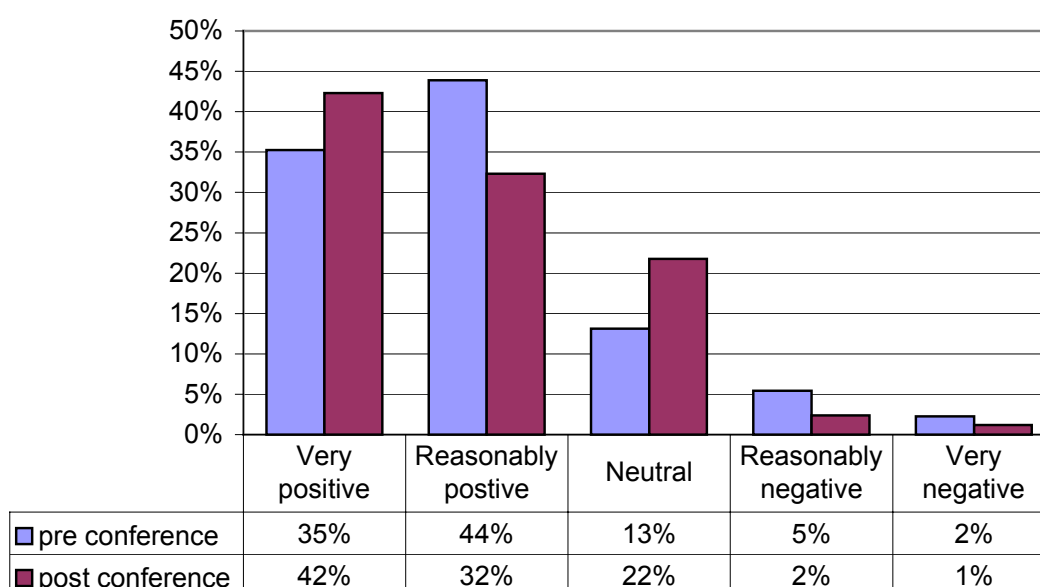
- Learning different ways of doing things (21%)
- Identifying challenges that IAGs face (19%)
- Sharing good practice (19%)
- Networking (16%)

24% of IAG members or voluntary groups representatives cited Identifying challenges that IAGs face as an important aspect of the conference.

A number of keynote speakers identified the broad challenges faced by IAGs including how IAGs are resourced and remain independent. Specific reference was given to the challenges of engaging local communities (Sharon Luke-Pantry/Trevor Phillips) and maintaining integrity with the communities they represent and the organizations they advise (Reverend Derek Webley).

Figure 11

Delegate's attitudes towards their IAG pre and post conference².



² For ease of use, figure 11 excludes those delegates who did not respond to this question pre or post conference.

Figure 11 compares delegates' attitudes towards their IAGs at the start and end of the conference. Whilst there has been an increase in those delegates feeling very positive about their IAG post conference (when compared to pre conference) there has also been a significant shift from those delegates feeling 'reasonably positive' pre conference to 'neutral' post conference. One reason for this may be the identification of the challenges to IAGs' throughout the conference, causing delegates to reassess the role and work of their IAGs.

The conference appeared to have a particularly positive impact on the attitudes of police authority representatives and 'other' delegates towards their IAG as shown in figure 12.

Figure 12

Attitudes towards IAGs pre and post conference by delegate representation³

Delegate – organisations	Very positive		Reasonably positive		Neutral		Reasonably negative		Very negative	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
IAG/Voluntary Group Representative	41%	49%	45%	31%	5%	16%	4%	3%	1%	
Police Officer	35%	32%	32%	26%	13%	24%	6%	2%	5%	3%
Other Police Staff	22%	23%	61%	23%	11%	38%	6%	8%		
Police Authority	5%	17%	50%	50%	32%	17%	9%			
Other	21%	47%	32%	24%	21%	18%				
Not Stated	16%	20%	11%	40%	5%			20%		

4.2 To explore their training and support needs,

Whilst the training and support needs of IAGs were not explicitly gauged during the conference, keynote speakers shared examples of good practice within IAGs. Linda Bellos highlighted specific issues around the support requirements of IAGs.

During a plenary session a delegate asked about infrastructures to support IAGs. The panel of keynote speakers individually responded to the query.

During the evening Question Time session the question “should the responsibility for promoting and supporting IAGs be PRIMARILY that of the

³ The percentages in figure 12 are calculated including those delegates who did not state their attitude towards their IAG. Therefore the percentages do not total 100%

Police Service or the Police Services – and why?” was asked of the panel. Delegates were asked to express their opinions prior to the panel discussing the issue, and following mixed responses by the panel, delegates voted again via keypads to see if opinions had been swayed. Over a third of delegates (39%) felt that IAGs themselves should be responsible for their own promotion and support. Figure 13 displays delegate’s responses to the question pre and post the panel discussion. There was an increase in delegates who felt that Police Services played a primary role following the discussions by the Question Time Panel.

Figure 13

Delegate response to the question “Should the responsibility for promoting and supporting IAGs be PRIMARILY that of the Police Service or the Police Services?” pre and post discussions by the Question Time Panel.

Delegate – organisations	Police Service		Police Services		IAG’s themselves		Other	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
IAG/Voluntary Group Representative	19	10	12	18	32	33	4	5
Police Officer	13	11	16	19	20	21	4	2
Other Police Staff	2	1	5	6	4	6		
Police Authority			8	8	3	1		
Other	4	2	8	7	5	10	4	2
Not Stated	1	3	3	5	4	6		
TOTAL	39	27	52	63	77	77	12	9

4.3 Explore how they remain independent and outside the police family,

The conference chair and keynote speakers spoke about issues of IAG independence. Reverend Derek Webley, who was the delegate’s favourite speaker (see figure 4), highlighted the need for IAGs to remain independent in the context of critical incident management. Cressida Dick and Cheryl Sealey, also rated highly by delegates, gave examples of IAG independence and good practice in TRIDENT IAG. A question relating to IAGs independence in facilitating communication was also asked to a panel of keynote speakers.

Given the difference in views expressed in figure 13, it may be difficult to achieve complete agreement amongst the various interest groups involved in IAGs as to how they remain independent.

4.4 Discuss how IAG's can achieve sufficient organisation and resources to become responsible for the organisation of their Annual Conference,

This conference was obviously very well organised and a very successful conference. However, given the views of a small minority of the delegates who feel that their issues did not feature on the conference agenda, it is perhaps premature to hand the role of conference organisation over to IAG's. A model of conference development that allows all interest groups to have their issues considered needs to be developed by an organising agency (e.g. A Police Service or Police Authority). Once this model is working, it can be "handed over" to IAG's. An alternative to this would be the development of a future conference as a partnership activity between a Police Service and one or more IAG's.

4.5 Increased awareness and understanding of how IAGs, PA's and Police Services can work together to promote and sustain community cohesion.

Whilst all of the presentations touched on the issue of community cohesion in its broadest sense, six of the nine guest speakers spoke specifically about different elements of community cohesion including dialogue about what the term actually means.

A Question Time question relating to how community cohesion can be measured sparked a lively debate, although there appeared to be some level of consensus that the softer side of relationship building cannot be measured.

4.6 Conference Objectives - Summary

On the whole the conference was successful and was rated highly by delegates, with 59% of delegates saying they are more likely to attend future IAG conferences following their experience of the 4th IAG conference. The objectives have obviously informed conference planning, but the broad scope of them has led to some difficulties in clarifying the success criteria of the conference. The organisers of future conferences may find it helpful to develop SMART objectives as a contribution to the evaluative process.

5. Conclusion

It is clear from all the material gathered by Crime Concern Trust Ltd that this has been a very successful conference that has been organised in a very professional way by Leicestershire Constabulary. It is clear that the lessons of the previous conferences have been absorbed and acted upon.

On the whole delegates indicated a high level of satisfaction with most of the elements of this conference; one delegate stated that the conference was 'very well organised with many inspirational speakers and contributions from the floor.' Future organisers would do well to maintain and develop the methodology that Leicestershire have put in place. There are a small number of enhancements that are highlighted in the body of this report but this is not to detract from a positive and successful 4th IAG conference.

Future IAG conference organisers may wish to take account of the following points in arranging subsequent events:

- The need for detailed project planning is vital
- Ensuring that future conferences are as interactive as possible
- Continue to use keypad voting as this leads to delegates feeling that their views are fed directly into the conference. Future organisers may wish to insist that keynote speakers seek delegate's views through the use of keypad voting as part of their presentation.
- Continue to use the keypad voting system in future conferences to ensure that as many delegates' views as possible are used in future conference evaluations.
- Organising – pre conference – some consultation with IAG members to find out which issues they would like to see featured on the conference programme
- Discontinue the evening entertainment as this does not seem to be cost effective or valued by delegates
- Review the use of question time in future conferences, as delegates do not seem to rate this highly. Also, in this conference, there were a limited number of questions submitted and used. These did not always reflect the concerns of delegates.
- Dependant on the views of IAG members prior to the conference, it may be helpful to have an optional session after dinner on the first day that deals with specific issues. These could form "fringe meetings" that enable delegates to discuss particular issues that are not covered in the main body of the conference⁴.
- Consider undertaking a post-conference review with IAG members, to assess the impact that any future event may have on IAG working practice.

⁴ A Race and Diversity Strategy workshop was offered to pre selected delegates after the close of the presentations on Day 1.