



Milton Keynes

Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

Providing independent community advice to Thames Valley Police (TVP)





Leadership Messages

Anouar Kassim

Over the last year, the Milton Keynes Independent Advisory Group (IAG) has continued to play an important role in supporting understanding and dialogue between local communities and Thames Valley Police. This has been during a period when many people have felt uncertainty, anxiety, or concern in response to events taking place both nationally and internationally.

Our members represent a wide range of communities and experiences from across Milton Keynes, including faith groups, younger and older residents, rural communities, LGBTQ+ networks, and those working closely with people facing vulnerability and disadvantage. This breadth of perspective helps ensure that the IAG can offer insight into how policing decisions are experienced in everyday life, not simply how they are intended to operate.





Leadership Messages

Anouar Kassim

Throughout the year, the group has discussed a broad range of important topics, including community cohesion, hate crime, neighbourhood policing, stop and search, public reassurance, and the use of emerging technologies.

These conversations have not always been easy, but they have consistently been open, respectful, and constructive. Members have felt able to raise concerns honestly, while police colleagues have shown a genuine willingness to listen, explain, and engage thoughtfully. This has enabled the IAG to provide timely and valuable feedback during sensitive periods and to support a better understanding of how policing decisions affect different communities.

I have been particularly encouraged by the continued engagement and openness shown by the Milton Keynes policing leadership team. The regular attendance of the LCU Commander and senior officers has demonstrated a clear commitment to hearing community voices and ensuring those perspectives are considered at the right level.





Leadership Messages

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It has also been important for the IAG to recognise and acknowledge positive work taking place across Milton Keynes. Members have regularly highlighted the value of visible police presence at community events, reassurance patrols during times of concern, and respectful engagement with individuals who may feel hesitant or anxious about approaching the police. These actions may sometimes seem small, but they make a meaningful difference in building trust and confidence within our communities.

The real strength of the Milton Keynes IAG lies in the relationships that have been built over time. Members are trusted within their communities and are often able to share concerns early, before issues escalate further. In turn, policing colleagues are able to use this insight to shape responses that are informed, proportionate, and sensitive to local needs and experiences.





Leadership Messages

Anouar Kassim

I would like to sincerely thank all IAG members for their continued commitment, insight, and the time they give so generously. I would also like to thank colleagues from Thames Valley Police for their openness, professionalism, and willingness to engage positively with the group throughout the year.

As we look ahead, the IAG will continue to focus on representing community voices clearly and constructively, supporting cohesion across Milton Keynes, and contributing to policing that is fair, visible, compassionate, and trusted by all our communities.





A message from Chief Superintendent Emma Baillie

We have had another good year for which I am very grateful for to the members and chair Anouar Kassim of Milton Keynes Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The Milton Keynes IAG has been in formation for many years under Anouar's leadership and we have a very diverse representation on the group. Most of our many religious establishments and key community groups are represented on our meetings.

With the feedback from IAG members this year we have navigated the local impacts of tricky geopolitical issues in an ever increasingly unstable world. I have received invaluable advice on operational matters regarding how to retain the confidence of our wider communities after critical incidents that have happened in the city or incidents that without the right context can concern some communities disproportionately.





A message from Chief Superintendent Emma Baillie

I have had probing questions about hate crime, stop and search and facial recognition, as well as discussed topics such as crime prevention (in a variety of crime types) and had a focus on mis and dis-information amongst many other things. The broad IAG membership and willingness and openness of the membership allows me fluid access to understand unique community issues and concerns and at times quick time advice on how to best engage and communicate effectively with each group.

The IAG is without doubt a key contributory factor in policing being able to forecast community tensions before they arise, allowing policing a way of showing an empathetic approach to concerned communities on a wide variety of impacts.





About the Milton Keynes Independent Advisory Group

The Milton Keynes Independent Advisory Group (IAG) is made up of twenty-seven residents that volunteer their time to help support Thames Valley Police (TVP) by providing a community-based insight, honest feedback and helping TVP identify areas where improvements or clear explanations are required. Members act as a critical friend and come from a wide-ranging backgrounds, experiences and cultures. They help the police to have a greater understanding of how their actions and policies affect residents. The views of the group are also fed into the TVP's Trust & Confidence governance structures.



Meetings & membership

- Eight meetings during 2025/26
- Average attendance: 15 members
- TVP representation: Average 3 per meeting
- There are 27 members of the IAG including Age UK voice, LGBTQ+, Rural, Mental Health, MK Council Community Safety and various faith perspectives; range of ages 21–80+
- We would like to encourage increased membership diversity in the form of disabled and youth voices





What we focused on



Themes

During 2025–26 the Milton Keynes IAG focused on **community reassurance, cohesion and confidence**, particularly during periods of heightened sensitivity arising from national and international events.



Community cohesion, faith relations and global tensions

A recurring theme across the year was the local impact of international conflict, particularly events in Gaza, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran and parts of Africa. Members described how international conflicts were directly influencing feelings of safety, visibility and participation in Milton Keynes. This was particularly felt among Muslim, Jewish, Hong Kong Chinese, Afghan, Iranian and African diaspora communities.

The IAG explored:

- Reduced participation of Muslim women in public and inter faith spaces during periods of heightened tension
- Increased fear among visibly identifiable groups (e.g. women wearing hijab, niqab or religious dress)
- Anxiety among older and migrant residents who felt less confident engaging in public life
- Police reassurance measures, including attendance at mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras and community events



Hate crime, reporting and victim experience

Hate crime and hate related fear remained a standing concern throughout the year. Members highlighted:

- Fear of hate often shaped behaviour and wellbeing
- Under reporting remained a challenge, particularly among communities who felt incidents would not meet criminal thresholds
- Empathetic call handling responses significantly affected trust and willingness to report
- The value of intelligence only reports to identify risk and patterns



Stop and search, policing powers and transparency

The group maintained a strong focus on how policing powers are experienced, not just how they are exercised.

This included:

- Briefings on stop and search powers, disproportionality and scrutiny processes
- Discussion of tone, explanation and recording during encounters
- Consideration of wider policing powers and developing practice, including custody searches following legal rulings.



New technology and trust

Across the year, IAG members engaged openly with developments in policing technology, including:

- Facial recognition and its governance, intrusiveness and necessity
- Use of screening arches, dispersal powers and visible patrols near schools
- The future role of AI and automation in reducing frontline bureaucracy

The group was clear in positioning itself as a critical friend, supporting transparency and challenge rather than endorsement.



What we heard from the community

Through members experience and community connections, the MK IAG heard that:

- **Fear and uncertainty were increasing across communities**, particularly following national and international incidents. In many cases, fear of crime and hate outweighed actual victimization, but still significantly affected behaviour and confidence
- **Online misinformation and rhetoric** significantly amplified anxiety, even where local crime levels remained stable
- **Older people, migrants and minority groups** were disproportionately impacted by fear of crime, scams and hate
- **Young people and LGBTQ+ residents** experienced a return of language and hostility that felt reminiscent of earlier decades



What we heard from the community

- **Young people and minority communities** expressed a desire for clearer explanations of police powers and reassurance that they will be treated fairly and respectfully
- **Faith communities** asked for clearer updates on hate-crime cases and support routes
- **Rural and farming communities** raised concerns about crime, wellbeing and mental health risks exacerbated by wider uncertainty and regulatory change

Despite this, there was also strong recognition of positive policing, including effective reassurance, engagement at events, and respectful responses to reports.



Key messages for the community

- Communities are encouraged to support accurate narratives and challenge misinformation
- Neighbourhood policing teams are continuing to prioritise visibility and reassurance
- Residents are encouraged to report concerns, including hate incidents, to help build an accurate picture





Examples of local impact

- Work is ongoing to increase rural visibility through the introduction of monthly Rural Beat Surgeries and the publication of patrol routes online
- Improved hate crime updates for victims, clearer signposting to support and a single email point for queries have been implemented
- Plain-English “Know Your Rights” explainer has been shared locally and refresher briefings for local policing teams in response to concerns raised by young people and minority communities relating to police powers





Reflections on how the panel is working

What worked well:

- Strong attendance and continuity of membership.
- Open, respectful challenge between members and senior police leaders
- Strong use of community venues to improve accessibility and understanding
- Space for members to raise uncomfortable or sensitive issues safely
- Improved circulation of agendas and materials, alongside a single point of contact
- Training inputs at the start of meetings



Reflections on how the panel is working

What we will improve:

- Stronger feedback loops demonstrating how IAG insight informs local policing decisions.
- Targeted recruitment to address representation gaps
- Continued focus on accessibility, inclusion and wellbeing within meetings



Areas of future focus

IAG cycle	Proposed areas of focus
May 2026	Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) consultation: TVP Trust & Confidence Strategy delivery plans
June 2026	Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plane; Neighbourhood priority setting and progress
Sept 2026	Neighbourhood Engagement Plan; update on Trust & Confidence sentiment survey
Oct 2026	ASB Action Plan; T&C Strategy delivery updates
Dec 2026	Co-design a youth-focused session on police encounters



How to get involved

Your views and experiences are important to us.

For any enquiries relating to our Independent Advisory Group please contact:

scrutiny@thamesvalley.police.uk

We are committed to supporting members' learning and development through training and informal learning sessions and seek your valuable input to help shape and improve what and how services are delivered to our communities.

Next meetings planned:

- 30th June 2026
- 8th September 2026
- 20th October 2026
- 8th December 2026