

# Activity Sheet 1.5

## Interview 2 (part 1)

### Mark Pugash is the Press Officer for the Kent Police

'Kent has a number of specific issues it has to deal with. For the past four years it has been the focus area for many animal-rights protestors. It has been a magnet area for criminals keen to make money from smuggling alcohol and tobacco. It has also had a relatively large number of asylum seekers arrive in a short time and the subsequent activities of the National Front (NF) to deal with.

'These issues do create a huge drain on our resources – there's no doubt about it. If you have 30 NF members marching and 200 anti-fascists protesting that's a very manpower-intensive operation but that's our job. To help with this we've received extra money from the government.

### Asylum Seekers

'Asylum seekers do not commit more crimes compared to the local population. The area was already economically depressed. This makes it more likely that a group of new arrivals who are perceived to be "receiving something for nothing" can make some locals feel hostile. Kent is not unique in that language and culture differences have led to problems.

'Police monitor "tension indicators": for example, types of crime and levels of disorder in certain areas. They intervene when tension rises. Lots of

this work relies on good community relations, they talk to local organisations, community leaders, etc.

'Problems were made worse by the behaviour of a local newspaper *The Dover Express*. The paper called refugees "human sewage". The editor (who has since left the newspaper) appeared to be going out of his way to raise the tensions in the area and the police met with him and the management to remind them about the law against "inciting racial hatred". We wanted to encourage him to stop driving wedges between community groups.

**What do the police do to try to ease the situation?**

**What stereotype is Mark trying to disprove at the beginning?**

**What role do the police have in the problems that exist between the two communities?**

**Is there anything here you find surprising about the way the police reacted?**

**What overall impression do you get about the work of the police from this part of the interview?**

**How do you think the police feel when they are criticised for trying to control anti-fascists and animal-rights campaigners? How do you think the protestors feel when they see the police at their demonstrations?**