

Brief Lines

A bridge between business and the local community

About CSP

Welcome to the latest edition of the Brief Lines newsletter, published by Community Safety Partnerships Ltd (CSP), which offers quality solutions to help address safety and other risks. Specialising in personal, community and system safety issues, CSP provides a holistic intelligence-led approach to partnership between business and community, business and regulator and other interfaces where risk arises.

Trainers withdrawn after stab killings

Sportswear firm Nike has withdrawn a range of trainers called Air Stab from its London store following recent knife deaths in the UK.

The company said it removed the shoes from its Nike Town store in Oxford Circus, "given the current climate". In London alone 21 teenagers have been killed with knives so far this year. A spokesman said the name for the running shoes came from stability, and had nothing to do with knives. He said the retro range, which was only sold in the central London store, was "an unfortunate coincidence timing-wise".

£100 million youth crime action plan

Getting young people off the streets late at night, intensive support for the most problematic families and tougher, more visible Community Payback sentences for young people have been announced as part of the government's long-awaited Youth Crime Action Plan.

According to government figures youth crime overall remains stable but challenges remain particularly around alcohol-related crime, delinquent peer groups and gangs and young people carrying knives. Each year around 100,000 young people aged 10 -17 enter the criminal justice system for the first time. The new plan aims to reduce this rate by one fifth by 2020 and in turn to substantially reduce the number of young victims.

The £100 million plan sets out a comprehensive package of tough enforcement and intensive prevention measures as well as more support for parents to tackle offending and reduce re-offending.

It aims to support families with the most entrenched and complex problems in all areas of England and will also offer an intensive programme of action for priority areas where the problem of youth crime is greatest.

Included in the action plan are:

- Better prevention and support for victims
- Expansion of family intervention projects to 20,000 families
- Increasing the proportion of ASBOs accompanied by a parenting order
- Expanding safer schools partnerships
- Increasing the number of youth centres and other activities at times when young people are likely to offend, including Friday and Saturday nights
- Making permanent exclusion from school an automatic trigger to a comprehensive assessment of needs
- Expanding family nurse partnerships
- Use of innovative methods to support young victims and improving support to witnesses

The plan also calls for tougher enforcement of legislation to remove at-risk children from the streets late at night, and more work to tackle anti-social behaviour and underage drinking. It says the police should introduce new enforcement tactics to ensure visible patrols during after-school hours. In addition, teams of youth workers and ex-gang members should be based on the streets in troubled areas to deal with groups of young people involved in crime and disorder.

There should also be more targeted policing, as well as better co-operation between government departments to identify and target prolific offenders.

Communities should be given the chance to decide what type of reparation they want young people on community sentences to do, with young offenders required to work out their community sentences on Friday and Saturday nights.

To help reduce rates of re-offending, the plan also calls for local authorities to fund and commission the education of young offenders in custody, coupled with a more comprehensive package of support for young people leaving custody giving them access to suitable accommodation and health services.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news/youth-crime-action-plan>



Crime figures fall

There were a million fewer crimes in England and Wales during the last year, according to new figures published by the Home Office.

The annual publication Crime in England and Wales 2007/08, produced under new arrangements for statistics overseen by the new UK Statistical Authority, the risk of being a victim of crime has fallen from 24 to 22 per cent, the lowest level ever recorded since the British Crime Survey (BCS) began in 1981.

The volume includes results from the BCS and crimes recorded by the police. All BCS crime is down by ten per cent compared with 2006/07 and police recorded crime by nine per cent. Crime overall has reduced by 18% which exceeds the government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target of 15%. Decreases were recorded in nearly every crime type, including:

- Violent crime down by 12 per cent according to the BCS
- Police recorded sex offences down seven per cent
- Vandalism down ten per cent according to the BCS
- Police recorded violence against the person down eight per cent
- Vehicle related theft down 11 per cent according to the BCS
- Domestic burglary reported to the police down four per cent
- Perceptions of anti-social behaviour down two percentage points to 16 per cent.

This builds on historic reductions in crime over recent years. Since 1997, crime measured by the BCS has fallen by 39 per cent with violence down by 40 per cent and burglary down by over half (55 per cent).

Rural neighbourhood policing guide

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has produced a new guide for police and partners working in all agencies to deliver neighbourhood policing within rural communities.

The policing needs of rural communities are different from those in towns and cities.

The ability of the police to respond quickly to calls for service may be constrained by distance, and by a rural population dispersed over wide areas.

Certain types of crime happen more often in rural areas and some crimes are almost uniquely rural, such as diesel or agricultural machinery theft. The impact of crime and disorder on victims and communities may be greater in rural areas where there may be fewer local amenities and people may feel more isolated and vulnerable.

There may also be a perception that targeted policing in urban areas displaces crime to the countryside.

All these factors make policing of rural communities a challenging task and one that differs significantly from the policing of urban areas.

The guidance has been produced with the help of a variety of organisations, including:

- The National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Farmers' Union of Wales
- The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC)
- Local authorities
- Several police forces and operational officers

Go to

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/rural023.htm> for more details.

Aspects of the guide may be relevant

to rail industry practitioners given that a significant proportion of Britain's rail network runs through the countryside.

Police radio link boosts train security

In a 'first' for improved security on Britain's railways, British Transport Police (BTP) and Southeastern's Railway Enforcement Officers (REOs) can now contact one another immediately should the need arise, thanks to shared access to the police radio network.

BTP is responsible for policing the railways, and Southeastern's REOs are trained and accredited by BTP to carry out high-profile patrols, to deter and deal with fare evasion and anti-social behaviour on trains and stations, and to provide a reassuring presence for passengers. There are now 60 REOs deployed across the Southeastern network, and since they were introduced in November 2005 they have boosted security and helped to cut crime by working closely with BTP officers. Until now, liaison between them has been by mobile phone or landline, but the two-way radios will significantly enhance response times and eliminate poor reception.

Calls for emergency help, reports of suspicious vehicles, persons or packages, assaults and crimes being committed can be made instantly. And joint operations between BTP and REOs, often acting on intelligence to tackle specific problems, are now much easier to action.

Southeastern's radio control will be centrally run from its closed circuit television suite in central London, so that again details of suspicious incidents can be swiftly communicated to officers nearby. A protocol for operating the system has been signed off between BTP and Southeastern.

National stolen metals campaign

British Transport Police (BTP) joined 37 other UK forces in targeting metal thieves in a two-day operation in July. Nationally metal theft is said to cost the UK economy £360m each year with theft of railway signalling cables a particular concern.

Nationally, recorded metal theft has increased by 150% over two years.

BTP's Paul Crowther, the Association of Chief Police Officers' lead on metal theft, made clear that this is not a victimless crime, saying:

"Thousands of people have seen their community facilities stolen or damaged by thieves looking for a quick gain or have suffered service disruption to railways".

He added: "The problem ranges from opportunistic to large-scale organised theft. This has a huge impact across the country - not just financially, but in people's everyday lives."

The operation targeted suspect dealers and transporters of metal. These are significant as rising prices - in some cases more than doubling driven by demand for "scrap" metal in emerging economies - makes export attractive. Copper is particularly vulnerable as it is worth six times the £710 it fetched in 2001. By focusing on those dealing in metals illegally the police aim is to make the theft less attractive as unlicensed dealers are eliminated.

Red runners caught by police

Police in Australia caught 55 people in one day disobeying traffic lights at multiple level railway crossings in and around Melbourne.

The operation coincided with National Rail Safety Awareness Week organised by the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) and held

from July 21 to 27 to highlight the continuing problems caused by level crossing abuse. From January 1 to July 3 this year there have been 30 level crossing collisions resulting in 12 deaths.

The week followed those held in 2006 and 2007 and was designed to be collaborative effort with major rail operators and government agencies from all states and territories in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Brian Nye, Chief Executive Officer of the ARA said: "Level crossing safety is a major national issue, which does not respect state borders. Therefore, in order to effectively improve safety at level crossings, cooperation is needed between all levels of government, the road and rail industries, enforcement agencies and relevant road safety authorities."

He added that level crossing crashes and trespass are two of the most serious safety concerns faced by the rail industry in Australia and New Zealand.

The industry is taking positive and proactive steps to address these issues through the development of various initiatives focusing on education, enforcement and engineering as part of the solution.

Graffiti gang sentenced

Eight graffiti vandals have been sentenced following one of the largest graffiti conspiracies to be brought to trial.

The group, collectively known as the DPM crew, targeted trains and railway infrastructure across England from 2004 until their arrest in 2006. Their crimes cost the rail industry at least £600,000.

The eight pleaded guilty in Southwark Crown Court to conspiracy to commit criminal damage, following a major graffiti investigation by British Transport Police codenamed Operation Shuttle.

They were given sentences ranging from suspended jail terms and community service to jail terms of up to two years.

In sentencing Judge Christopher Hardy said: "This was a wholesale self-indulgent campaign to damage property on an industrial scale".

He also commended the work of BTP officers attached to the inquiry.

Det Supt Michael Field, who led the inquiry, said the group was responsible for 120 offences across the rail network.

"This group targeted the rail network in a guerrilla-type fashion.

Often masked and working under the cover of night they would strike at railway depots and sidings across the country to scrawl their crew name. They sought only to gain some sort of kudos by branding trains, station walls and platforms with the name of their so-called crew. They thought they were untouchable."

Most of the DPM crew's activities were concentrated in south London but they also committed crimes in Liverpool, Manchester and Sunderland, as well as in Amsterdam, the Czech Republic and Paris.

Most of the men were arrested in June 2006 and charges were laid in October and November that year. Operation Shuttle took BTP more than seven months to complete.

14 charged in £2.2m theft probe

British Transport Police has charged 14 people with conspiracy to steal following the theft of and from cash machines across London and the southern home counties.

In March, police made a series of arrests in dawn raids at addresses across East London. The arrests were part of Operation Flatline, an ongoing investigation into thefts of and from cash machines at railway stations, service stations and drive thru restaurants across Britain since April 2007.

BTP London South Area Crime Unit Det Sgt Paddy Kerr said the arrests and subsequent charges came as a result of a lengthy police investigation.

"The total loss for this type of offending over the past 18 months is believed to be in excess of £2.2 million, including the theft of cash along with damage to the ATM machines," he said.

The 14 are due to appear before City of Westminster Magistrates Court on August 7. Further charges are pending.

ASB actionline

The Anti-social Behaviour ActionLine, run by the Home Office, takes calls from community safety practitioners on tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour. The line provides fast, free and easy-to-follow advice every working day. Call 0870 220 2000 or email actionline@bss.org

The ActionLine has been provided by the Home Office to give support and advice to practitioners working in the field of anti-social behaviour. Since its inception in 2004, running alongside the Together and Respect campaigns, the service has become

a reliable and quality based source of information for practitioners advising on how to implement legislation, researching and promoting good practice and providing support and encouragement to practitioners experiencing difficult cases at the cutting edge.

The service is free and is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. At other times, you can leave voicemail or send an email and an advisor will contact you within 24 hours or the next working day.

Getting home safely in NZ

A "Transport Accord" for the city centre in Christchurch has been launched to help ensure that those on nights out get home safely. The accord is the fruit of a three-year partnership initiative involving the city council, police, transport operators - including licensed taxis - and the public health authority. The accord has emerged from a community alcohol action programme that centred on helping people avoid the temptation of drinking and then driving. The accord promotes the availability of all aspects of public transport as an integral component of the city's safe and desirable night-time social environment. The accord responds to negative publicity surrounding a number of incidents involving both alcohol and violence.

Rear-end collision at level crossing kills 40

At least 40 people were killed and many more injured in Northern Egypt when a truck ran into a queue of traffic stopped at a level crossing. As a result several road vehicles, including a bus, were pushed into the path of a passenger train.

Reports have highlighted that the level crossing is concealed by the brow of a hill with restricted sighting of both the crossing and any traffic already stopped. This accident is a timely reminder of the topographical hazards that need to be addressed when level crossings intersect with roads in hilly and undulating terrain, particularly, where road vehicle speeds may be excessive.

Public transport's role in emergency evacuation

The US Transportation Research Board (TRB) has published a special report exploring the role of public transport when large-scale evacuation of a city is required. The report focuses particularly on major incidents and the demonstration of the role of public transport provided in New York and Washington DC on September 11th 2001 and more recently in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina devastated the city and the planned role of transit was not fulfilled.

The report identifies that emergency plans do not adequately consider the capability of public transport agencies and that these agencies are not fully engaged in the planning processes. The report recommends that public transport agencies become a full partner in emergency planning and response where large numbers of people need to be either evacuated or deployed. The report is realistic in cautioning emergency planners, public authorities and indeed the general public not to expect too much if the evacuation occurs at peak travel times without notice. To access a report summary visit:

<http://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/sr/sr294.pdf>

2,000th loco-mounted camera

BNSF Railway recently installed its 2,000th locomotive-mounted camera. New locomotives delivered since 2005 have come equipped with cameras, and BNSF's retrofit program is adding cameras to locomotives delivered before 2005. The cameras capture circumstances and events that lead up to grade-crossing and train/pedestrian incidents and confirm that train crew members took the appropriate action. The footage may be used to help defend BNSF train crew members who are on occasion sued as a result of such accidents. In addition, information from the cameras can also confirm the nature and visibility of signal indications. An estimated 3,000 camera systems should be in place by the end of 2008.

Operation Lifesaver's international symposium

Delegates from across the United States were joined by representatives from Argentina, Canada, Estonia, Finland, Mexico and Britain to share experiences and learn new techniques to address level crossing and trespass risks. The backdrop to the symposium was a further reduction in fatalities at US level crossings but a rising

trend in trespasser fatalities.

In the trespasser domain it was clear that much thought is being given to how best reach and influence young adult males who are at the heart of the worsening trend. Both undergraduate media students and advertising agencies engaged by Operation Lifesaver highlighted the opportunities for targeting this important audience with simple common sense messages. Research has shown that comments like 'it's just common sense' was a recurring theme among this age group when shown examples of poor behaviour at level crossings, around railways, and elsewhere.

The conference's international panel, which included Aidan and Sue Nelson of CSP Ltd, highlighted many initiatives including:

- The use of music as a vehicle for teaching safe behaviours (Argentina)
- Computer based training of new road vehicle drivers www.traintodrive.net (Canada)
- Police officers trained to deliver level crossing safety messages in road traffic safety training programme (Estonia)
- Safety around railways

taught as an element of traffic safety training in all elementary schools (Finland)

- Encouraging and supporting a child's own reasoning and ability to act appropriately (Finland)
- Focus on the family and cultural events as a vehicle for promoting safe behaviours (Mexico)
- How transport providers can benefit from more generally engaging with partners in the wider national community safety initiative and the exemplar approach of Transport for London (Britain)

September 16 sees the focus move to Canada where Operation Lifesaver is holding its annual conference and, new this year, technology showcase. Sue Nelson of CSP Ltd will be attending the conference as a keynote speaker on community safety. Go to

www.operationlifesaver.ca/site_olregistration/en_default.asp for more details.

Keep in touch...

If you have any news to share, details of an event you want to highlight, or want further information on Community Safety Partnerships Ltd contact suenelson@comsafetypartners.com or aidannelson@comsafetypartners.com