

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.

'Heroin is legal' say youngsters

A survey has shown that one in five ten-year-olds think heroin is legal. Children's health charity Life Education found a quarter of ten-year-olds also thought ecstasy is legal and more than half of children surveyed could name four or more illegal drugs. The poll quizzed 1,491 nine to 11-year-olds and showed that cocaine was the most well known drug, with 71% of children naming it. The youngsters said the main reason people took drugs was 'to look good.'

Security screening trials

British Transport Police is enhancing its existing stop and search capabilities with the use of x-ray equipment for screening bags, along with the deployment of additional explosive search dogs.

The enhancements build on BTP's existing search measures to screen a proportion of passengers and their bags with minimal delay.

The move follows a series of security screening trials held on rail network and London Underground after the London bombings in 2005. The trials concluded that airport-style security screening arches will not be introduced as permanent fixtures at British railway and underground stations.

Rail minister Tom Harris says the trials - at five locations over a six-month period - showed that large passenger flows and thousands of entry points on the rail and underground networks currently made 100% airport-style screening unfeasible.

In addition, the trials showed that while the public recognises the threat to the rail network, security measures should be proportionate to the threat, and that major delays to journeys resulting in screening, plus a desire to protect personal privacy, makes wholesale screening unacceptable.

However, the British Transport Police security enhancements will build on BTP's existing measures to screen a proportion of passengers and their bags with minimum delay. Mr Harris pledged said the government will continue to work with BTP and rail operators to assess the effectiveness and impact of the new measures and learn from these and other measures in use at home and abroad to keep security arrangements under review.

Adverts tackle binge drinking

A new national advertising campaign aims to challenge attitudes and change behaviour among 18-24 year olds. The £4m campaign includes a range of television, radio, print and online adverts designed to drive home the serious consequences of binge drinking by young adults. The TV ads show the effects of binge drinking as they focus on a night out that goes badly wrong.

The 18-24 age group is the biggest in terms of adult trespasser deaths on the railway, and drink is often a factor, with people choosing to use railway as a short cut or falling from station platforms while under the influence of alcohol.

The move comes in tandem with the launch of the government's Youth Alcohol Action Plan to tackle the problem of underage drinking. The plan provides information for parents on the damage excessive drinking can do to teenagers' health and the problems it can cause them at school.

- A crackdown on underage alcohol sales in Wrexham, north Wales, has nearly halved the number of sales to under-18s. The council funded a part time enforcement officer in a bid to cut the problem by raising awareness of licensee obligations and increasing the number of test purchases. The rate of sales to underage volunteers has dropped dramatically from 30% to 17%.



Crime reduction review

A major crime reduction review has outlined how to better engage communities in the fight against crime and raise confidence in the criminal justice system.

'Engaging communities in fighting crime' is the result of an in-depth eight-month study and contains more than 30 proposals to reduce crime, create safer communities and increase public confidence. The findings are strongly influenced by the views of almost 15,000 members of the public and front-line staff canvassed by the review team since last October.

The starting point for the review is that without public action, support and confidence, the police and other criminal justice agencies cannot make communities safer.

But for the public to play their part, they need to see and experience services that tackle crime effectively, give them confidence and back them up.

The review concludes that radical change is needed to get the public more engaged in tackling crime and to halt the erosion of community spirit.

The review looked at five broad areas:

- Putting victims, witnesses and other law-abiding citizens first
- Fighting crime and delivering justice for communities
- A new approach to crime statistics
- The citizen's role in tackling crime
- Freedom and accountability

The review outlines a number of key recommendations:

- A public commissioner on crime should be appointed to be the independent voice of victims of crime and champion crime issues in behalf of the wider public.
- Greater protection should be given to vulnerable victims and witnesses including special measures for older or disabled people.
- Neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) should have a common name, identity and level of service that the public can expect across all forces. There should also be closer working between NPTs, council services and other criminal justice services.
- Further powers to detain and issue fixed penalty notices for disorder should be added to the standard set of powers for police community support officers (PCSOs).
- Future capital investment in youth facilities across the country should be dependent on a commitment to adequate provision on Friday evenings.
- The courts service should provide more information to the public on cases, sentencing decisions and what happens to offenders on a regular and much more consistent basis.
- The term 'unpaid work' should be replaced with 'Community Payback' with the work being more visible and demanding, and the public receiving

information about it.

- Full responsibility for producing national crime statistics should be handed to the Statistical Authority or other independent organisation, complemented with a push for cross-party agreement to 'depoliticise' crime statistics. In addition, local monthly crime information should be extended to all parts of the country by 2009.
- Responsibility for a reducing police bureaucracy and paper work should be handed to a senior police officer working directly to the Prime Minister.

Personal safety concerns

Fears for their personal safety are at the heart of the reluctance of women to use public transport at both peak times and in the evening says a study conducted by the Australian National University. The study, which focused on a detailed analysis of the travel patterns of 50 commuters, found that women found peak-hour travelling to be a battleground and the environment intimidating. The passenger user association recognised the concerns expressed and highlighted the need for more customer service staff at rail stations.

Responding to the report, which generated significant media interest, public transport operators cited growing female patronage (56% of commuters) as the basis on which women could be confident in the public transport system.

Neighbourhood teams for London stations

Five new neighbourhood policing teams are now patrolling some of London's



busiest railway stations - in tandem with a new initiative to make British Transport Police (BTP) officers more accountable to the public.

The new teams have been launched by BTP's London North area, alongside giving members of the public, rail staff and community groups easier access to area commander Chief Supt Mark Newton (pictured).

He is asking for people to offer feedback on railway policing across the area to encourage partnership working and generate input from across the community.

Direct access with the area commander follows the neighbourhood policing model which encourages grass roots contact with local communities from police officers. The five new teams are covering King's Cross, St Pancras International, Paddington, Liverpool Street and Euston railway stations - major commuter and long distance travel hubs with thousands of passengers passing through each day.

Each station now has a dedicated neighbourhood policing team of one sergeant, four constables and 12 PCSOs, each with the aim of clamping down on low-level disorder and anti-social behaviour. They will also work closely with rail staff to tackle fare evasion and staff assaults and will be actively

encouraging travelers to approach officers and raise any concerns they may have. In addition the teams will be holding regular Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings to identify local needs with representatives from the local area.

Meanwhile, people wanting to get in touch with Ch Supt Newton can email him at

LNAreaCommander@btp.pnn.police.uk or write to him at **BTP's London North Area HQ, 423-425 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BQ.**

He said: "For our work to be as effective as possible it is vital we have input from everyone who uses or has an interest in policing the railways - industry organisations, rail staff, passenger groups and the traveling public."

- CSP has been commissioned by BTP to work with its London North neighbourhood policing teams as an adviser and 'critical friend' on how best to enhance meaningful community engagement. This builds on CSP's work to develop area management and neighbourhood policing teams' understanding of the national community safety agenda.

10th level crossing & trespass symposium a success

The deaths of seven schoolchildren who were killed when their bus was struck by a train on a French level crossing provided a salutary backdrop for delegates attending the 10th International Level Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention Symposium in Paris.

The tragedy, on June 2, involved a crossing with lights but no barriers

near Evian on the shores of Lake Geneva and served as a stark reminder of the need for such events to keep the focus on level crossing safety and risk.

Partnership was the key message from many of the speakers at the symposium, which was attended by more than 150 delegates from nearly 40 countries including Aidan and Sue Nelson of CSP who both delivered papers and chaired sessions at the symposium.

There was a growing recognition that success in reducing risk at level crossings will only come about when highways authorities and others able to influence the behaviour of road users are harnessed alongside those of the rail authority. The symposium recognised the particular challenge of building partnership when accidents at level crossings are only a very small component of road casualties, typically less than 1%. Also considered was the risk associated with trespass and again the symposium focused on this as an issue where root causes lie within the community surrounding the railway, showing the importance of involving the community in developing solutions.

Japan, here we come

Now's the time to mark your diary with the dates for the 11th International Level Crossing and Trespass Prevention Symposium to be hosted in Tokyo by JR East from October 26 -29, 2010. This will be the first time the symposium has been held in Asia and follows on from France in 2008, Canada in 2006, the United Kingdom in 2004, Australia in 2002 and before that in the United States.

Level crossing car impounded

Police in Australia promptly impounded a motorist's car after they witnessed him veer round stationary traffic and pass through a level crossing gate as the lights flashed and the barrier was lowered.

The 48-year-old driver was caught by officers who immediately confiscated his car for 48 hours. He faces a charge of reckless driving that disobeyed level crossing laws.

The driver's punishment follows the Victoria government's pledge to increase penalties and enforcement for level crossing infringements as part of Australia's campaign to raise public awareness about level crossing safety after 11 people were killed in June last year when a truck ploughed into the side of a train near Kerang in rural northern Victoria.

Gun crime policy questioned

A university think-tank claims policies on gun crime are flawed because root causes of poverty and inequality are overlooked.

Criminologists at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies at King's College, London, say there is "no compelling evidence" that enforcement strategies would cut gun offences. They claim much gun crime is probably unreported because people are scared of calling the police.

The study authors reviewed statistics and policies on firearms and offending throughout England, Scotland and Wales. They say that while gun crime accounts for only a fraction of the total number of offences recorded by police, the trend had been upwards over the past decade before recently falling. However there is no evidence to

suggest that banning weapons and having mandatory sentences in England and Wales was having an effect, and government ministers should address a "direct correlation" between economic inequalities and violent crime.

The study says there is a gulf between reporting of gun crime and the facts and urged the government not to be 'hoodwinked' into panic measures. Gun crime now appears to be falling and that is often overlooked in the media frenzy that follows shooting incidents.

Go to www.crimeandjustice.org.uk for more information.

Call for youth justice reform

Youngsters who commit minor crimes should face community panels instead of police and the courts, according to researchers.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) says this would help cut the number of young people in custody, the number of which rose by six per cent last year. Only the most severe crimes should be dealt with in criminal courts, with less serious anti-social behaviour handled through the panels and restorative justice. The panels should make the young offender pay back the victim and community through community service, mediation and compensation, such as clearing up graffiti, says the IPPR. This would stop re-offending because the community, victim, the young offender's family, school and friends would all be working together to prevent repeat behaviour. Go to www.ippr.org for more details.

Personal security on public transport in New Zealand

Concerns about personal security on public transport are a key focus of a report by Land Transport New Zealand (LTNZ).

The study shows about 1 in 7 people said that darkness while travelling on buses made them feel very unsafe or uneasy. About 1 in 6 people said uncertainty about when the bus will arrive made them feel very unsafe or uneasy. Similar results were found for trains. But people are more concerned about their personal security when walking to or from the bus stop or station.

As such, addressing concerns at stations and bus stops should be in the context of wider community action to address the personal security concerns of pedestrians

As far as public transport is concerned, the study says there are measures that can be adopted easily which would improve confidence. Principal of these are improved lighting and real-time service information at bus stops and train stations. Other measures advocated include "panic button" alarms and CCTV surveillance. The report recommends that the measures are seen as a package. The concept of retail outlets - cafes and kiosks - at stations has strong user support, as does the introduction of random security patrols at less busy times of the day. However, the overwhelming view of users was that a human presence at stations is required whenever the service is operating. For more information view the report at:

www.landtransport.govt.nz/research/reports/344.pdf

Sharper focus on knife crime

Anyone - including teenagers - caught carrying an illegal knife now faces criminal charges under a tightening up of the law. For many years teenagers found carrying illegal knives were cautioned if it was their first offence, but increasing concern about knife crime, has led to the get-tough policy.

The effective end of knife cautions for those aged 16 and older is a key element in a range of new measures that include:

- £5m for police and agencies in areas most affected by knife crime
- Increased use of searches in targeted and intelligence-led operations, to complement 100 new portable knife arches and 350 search wands
- Fast tracking a knife referral project in which all young people convicted of the knife offence are taught the consequences of knife crime
- Home visits and letters to parents of young people known to carry weapons

The change in policy will not impact on young people under the age of 16. They can still receive a caution for their first offence, coupled with referral to a knife education programme where they will be taught the consequences of carrying knives. Their parents will also be notified and may receive parenting orders in a bid to help them change their child's behaviour.

- A survey in Lancashire in the north of England showed that one in three shops have sold knives to under-18s. A survey by Rochdale's trading standards officers using young volunteers found six out of 18 shops tested sold knives to young people. The Local Government Association has warned that councils will use tough measures to catch shops selling weapons to children.

Best ever, but still 338 fatalities

US statistics for 2007 record a total of 2,746 collisions leading to 338 fatalities on the country's 227,000 level crossings. These are respectively 10.8% and 9.1% better than recorded in 2004. The number of crossings has reduced by some 18,000 over the same period.

Private level crossings in focus

Action to address risk arising at private level crossings is a declared priority of the US Department of Transport (USDOT) in response to a comprehensive report published by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The FRA report describes and proposes possible courses of action to improve safety at private crossings through development of a national policy or the issuing of federal regulations. The report can be found at www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/safety/privatexingsafetyresearchinquiry_061008.pdf

Scottish youth justice framework

Early intervention and prevention form a strong part of a Youth Justice framework published by the Scottish government to tackle youth crime. The framework has been agreed by the Convention of Scottish local authorities, police chiefs and youth justice organisations. It also highlights creating more positive opportunities for young people, and encouraging more positive behaviour in relationships and schools.

The same in any language

Cartoons are a very effective way of promoting safe behaviours and these from Latvia are worth a look for those interested in level crossing safety, vandalism and other aspects of community safety:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqTR3nn6REw&feature=related>

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=jU_Ze_EK4d8&feature=related

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm493OIYCtl&feature=related>

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=8g0DIMSdSCQ&feature=related>

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