

# 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.

CSP is headed by Aidan and Sue Nelson who between them have wide experience in corporate reputation handling, developing and delivering community safety strategies and campaigns, crisis management, and the advancement of health, safety and environmental policy both internationally and nationally at industry, multi-party programme and individual company levels.

## Get cool to beat gang crime

Teachers who are fuddy-duddy and uncool are fuelling the growth of gang crime, according to a London anti-gang project. Mike Jervis, the project founder, claims all young gang members have been excluded from education mainly because teachers are so out of touch. He says: "Teachers do not understand the street culture coming through their school gates and their only answer is exclusion." He claims pupil referral units are also ineffective. The solution, he says, lies in more training so teachers can better understand the issues for youths caught up in gang culture.

## Action on alcohol-related crime

Binge drinkers arrested for alcohol-related offences in four areas across the country may be compelled by police to face up to the consequences of their drinking after they have been arrested, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has announced.

The Home Office has provided £330,000 of funding to Drug and Alcohol Action Teams in Manchester, Liverpool, Cheshire and Ealing to pilot Alcohol Arrest Referral Projects (AARP) until March next year. In Liverpool, offenders will be required to pay £30 each towards the cost of the counselling which will be ploughed back into the scheme. If they prove successful, further funding will be available until October 2008.

A typical alcohol referral process might involve the following:

- An adult has been binge drinking and commits criminal damage. They are arrested and taken into custody.
- Police in the custody suite judge that alcohol played a part in the fact that the person committed the offence, and that they might benefit from advice about safer drinking.
- A resident alcohol specialist gives the person advice about unit strengths, the effects of alcohol on the body, and strategies for reducing the risk of offending - and they could be made to pay towards taking responsibility for their actions.
- Those with more complex alcohol misuse problems, and who are given a conditional caution, can be referred to more in-depth advice sessions. If they do not attend these advice sessions, they can be prosecuted for the original offence.

Where similar schemes have operated in Gloucestershire and Dudley, police have reported significant reductions in re-offending. In the former, re-offending among those who had attended two advice sessions approximately halved after twelve months. These four pilots will build on that work and provide an opportunity to collect detailed evidence about how these interventions combat alcohol-related crime and disorder. At the same time they will help to establish a blueprint of best practice for others to follow.

## Serious crime bill gets royal assent

A bill that gives police more powers to tackle serious organised crime has received royal assent. The Serious Crime Act 2007, which became law on October 31, has a number of measures designed to improve the processes used by police and other authorities to identify, find, arrest and prosecute serious offenders. They include:

- Giving police new power to stop and search for weapons in areas where violent crime has occurred.
- Allowing courts to impose restrictions on those proved to be involved in serious crime.
- Smoothing the way for more information sharing between the public and private sectors.
- Making an offence of encouraging or assisting somebody committing a crime.
- Merging key elements of the Assets Recovery Agency with the Serious Organised Crime Agency.
- Seizing proceeds of crime.
- Extending HM Revenue and Customs surveillance powers to combat organised tax fraud.

All the measures are designed to make life difficult for serious criminals, disrupting their operations, and ensuring they don't benefit from the harm they cause.

Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker said: "Serious crime is a menace to our society. It brings misery to the lives of those it touches, and we are determined to do everything possible to prevent it, detect it, and to make sure that criminals do not benefit from it."



## **CCTV co-ordinated approach needed**

A wide-ranging review of the use of CCTV in the UK concludes there is an urgent need for a proper structure to ensure a co-ordinated approach to its use. The National CCTV Strategy, produced by the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) highlights the current piecemeal approach to the use of CCTV where anyone is able to set up a network regardless of what other systems might exist. The report reviews the use of CCTV to date, examining both its strengths and its weaknesses and makes recommendations for future action. It acknowledges that CCTV has been instrumental in helping the police to identify and bring to justice those involved in all aspects of criminality, perhaps the most notable being serious crime and terrorist incidents. Its use enjoys significant public support and year on year fear of crime surveys show the public feels safer due to the presence of CCTV.

However, the contribution CCTV has made in protecting the public and assisting the police to investigate crime has occurred despite CCTV systems being developed in a piecemeal fashion with little strategic direction, control or regulation. This approach has failed to maximise the potential of the CCTV infrastructure and many involved in its operation and management feel a pressing need to examine existing standards, procedures, training and methods of operation. In addition, as local authorities, the police and criminal justice agencies face the challenges associated with the move from VHS technology to digitally recorded

images, the lack of a co-ordinated approach to CCTV development poses significant risks for compatibility of systems, cost of accessing the images and the potential loss of operational effectiveness. A multi-agency team has now been set up representing key stakeholders and reporting to an overarching programme board to take forward the report's 44 recommendations.

To download the report go to: [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/cctv/cctv048.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/cctv/cctv048.htm)

---

## **Crime continues to fall**

Crime in England and Wales remains stable according to the British Crime Survey (BCS) and has fallen by seven per cent according to the police recorded crime statistics. For the crime types it covers, the BCS provides a more reliable measure of trends in crime as it has a consistent methodology and is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police, recording practice or police activity. While the BCS interviews in the year to June 2007 showed violent crime as stable, there were nearly 21,000 fewer violent crimes recorded by police in the quarter April to June 2007 compared with the same quarter in 2006. The greatest fall occurred in 'other violence against the person with injury' (down 15,500 offences). There was a six per cent decrease in firearms offences equating to 639 fewer offences bringing the annual total down to 9,712. Serious and slight injuries from firearms fell by 11 and seven per cent, respectively. However, firearms offences resulting in fatalities increased from 53 to 56.

The BCS in the year to June 2007 showed overall levels of anti-social behaviour and worry of crime to be stable compared with the previous year, but confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) fell in five areas. For more information go to [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/)  
**First ASBO for TfL**

Transport for London has obtained its first anti-social behaviour order. Prolific graffiti vandal, Billy Murrell, aged 17, is barred from travelling on the top deck of any bus in England and Wales after persistently vandalising buses and underground trains. He is also banned from entering non-public areas of any depot, siding or other property belonging to transport undertakings throughout England and Wales. Both restrictions apply for three years.

Murrell was convicted by Greenwich magistrates of spraying graffiti on a wall on the A2 in March of 2007, and previously had been convicted of vandalising a Tube carriage at Brixton by etching a window. He has numerous convictions for damaging buses using marker pens.

John Strutton, TfL's Transport Policing Enforcement Directorate's Crime and Disorder Partnership Manager said "This order would not have been possible without the partnership support of the Metropolitan Police in Bexley and the London Borough of Bexley. We have all worked together to find a suitable solution to the problems caused by Billy Murrell, and this is reflected in the terms of the ASBO we have obtained."

## **Bid to tackle truck crime**

A new initiative to combat truck and road freight crime has been launched by ACPO's Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (AVCIS).

A highly visible trailer carrying a clear crime prevention message will be available to police forces across the UK to park up in roadside lay-bys to highlight that the location is not safe and that drivers should park elsewhere. Truck and road freight crime is a significant problem within the UK. In 2006, more than £100 million pounds worth of trucks and loads were stolen. The initiative is being co-ordinated by TruckPol, part of AVCIS and responsible for gathering road freight crime data and intelligence, which then provides a national strategic overview. TruckPol's trailer carries the message 'Truckers beware, this is a load theft hot spot' and the advice is available in most European languages. For further information contact TruckPol at [www.truckpol.com](http://www.truckpol.com)

---

## **Beating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**

Stockholm train drivers and station staff employed by Veolia Transport have been participating in a study to address the impact of PTSD on those involved when a person is hit by a train or seriously assaulted while on duty. Under the auspices of the Karolinska research institute, participants in the study are taught to relax and think of something positive. Then those affected by PTSD voluntarily retrigger their traumatic memories and associate them with something else. The association can be as simple as the patient's eyes tracking a doctor's finger passing in front of their eyes at the point in time where the traumatic memory is at its peak. This technique programmes the brain to experience the traumatic

event as a regular memory and frees the patient from the worst feelings associated with it. The method - known as eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing or EMDR for short - is cost effective and works around 70% of the time for patients attending all five of the ninety minute sessions that make up the treatment.

## **International Railway Safety Conference (IRSC)**

CSP were represented at this year's IRSC held in Goa, India in October. The issue of safety at level crossings emerged as a central and recurring theme of presentations from around the world. The common agenda included: the need for railway authorities to better engage with those responsible for highways and the competence of drivers of road vehicles; applying a holistic approach to the management of risk through the more effective targeting of investment to upgrade level crossings at higher risk locations, and the central importance of changing attitudes and behaviours of road users. In 2008 the IRSC will return to the United States and be held in Denver, Colorado during the week of October 5th. Watch for details. Meanwhile the 11th International Level Crossing and Trespass Prevention Symposium is convening in Paris, France from June 24th to June 27th, 2008 and will bring the world together to consider these key railway risks.

To learn more go to:

[www.levelcrossing2008.com](http://www.levelcrossing2008.com)

---

## **US rail safety record on target for best yet**

Railroads in the United States are on track to record the all-time lowest train accident rate in the history of the industry, according to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Railroads reported the fewest train accidents in more than a decade for

the first seven months of 2007, including 263 fewer train derailments and collisions - a 15.2% reduction - compared to the same period last year. If the trend continues 2007 will see the railroads' lowest accident rate ever - 3.19 accidents per million train miles. In addition highway-grade (level) crossing accidents dropped by 7.3% and crossing fatalities were down by 11.2%. The FRA figures show that the two leading causes of train accidents - human error and track issues - fell by 12.5% and 11.1% respectively. Incidents caused by equipment failure fell by 11.3% and signal problems by 36%.

## **Investigating road accidents**

In recent years Britain's reputation for having the safest roads in Europe has been overtaken by Sweden and the Netherlands. To help restore the momentum to reduce the harm arising from road accidents, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is advocating that Britain establishes a dedicated road safety accident investigation body to sit alongside those tasked with investigating air, marine and rail accidents. PACTS has proposed that the new unit should in the first instance sit within the Health and Safety Executive tasked with investigating the 1,000 or so deaths that occur each year as a result of work related driving. Moves to raise the profile of road accident investigation are to be commended as learning from them will enable a more effective response to the risks posed to both those travelling in road vehicles and pedestrians. Moving ahead with independent investigation of accidents is clearly appropriate as using the road network is many times more dangerous than travelling by rail or performing everyday activities such as do-it-yourself.

## Crackdown on beggars

The city of York in the north of England has launched a controversial hard-hitting campaign in a crackdown on street beggars. The Safer York Partnership has produced a "killing with kindness" poster for distribution across the city urging people not to give money to beggars after complaints soared. York attracts around four million tourists a year and the initiative aims to educate visitors and residents alike that the money they give may be spent on drugs or alcohol. Government research shows that 74% of those who beg have been dealt with by the criminal justice system for committing offences, with begging often undertaken to support problematic drug abuse. But research also shows their lifestyle also prompts many of them to become victims of crime with 68% having suffered violence or assault.

Safer York director Jane Mowat says: "If begging is not managed it creates a climate in which other crime can flourish. There is a general lack of awareness of the lifestyle that beggars may be leading and the decision to give us based on the individual's belief that the person begging is in need. It is clear the public need to become more educated about the facts relating to where their money goes every time they throw a coin into an offered cap." As part of the campaign support agencies are working alongside the police to engage with those begging and offer

them the opportunity to seek help to address their lifestyle problems.

## Honorary family liaison role

Cabinet minister Tess Jowell has been made an honorary family liaison officer in recognition of her 'outstanding' contribution to families after major disaster. Dave Johnston the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) lead on Family Liaison and a commander in the Metropolitan Police Service, presented Mrs Jowell with the title for work she undertook during her role as minister responsible for humanitarian assistance. Commander Johnston said she had been given the title for the "outstanding contribution, commitment and support she has given to this expanding area of policing." The role of the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) has increased greatly over the last few years with FLOs being deployed in many complex situations and investigations which in some instances can involve a large number of fatalities.

## Online safety programme for youngsters

Children as young as 8 years old are for the first time the focus of an online safety programme being launched by the UK police organisation dedicated to tackling child sex abuse - the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre. The programme - developed and launched with BECTA - focuses on a state of the art cybercafe

where children between the ages of 8-11 years will be able to use games and characters to complete their homework, send emails and text messages, post online forums and a host of other activities safely. There is also a glossary for children to use should they need help in understanding online "language." Behind the programme - [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/cybercafe](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/cybercafe) - is the overarching message, have fun, know what to do and go to a trusted adult to seek help if feeling threatened in any way. The programme can be delivered either as a stand-alone online service for children and parents at home, or through teachers in schools who can download lesson plans and other resources, all of which have been designed by teachers for teachers and are free. Parents can also find help by visiting [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents) which explains different ways in which children are using the internet, gives practical advice on how to protect them and provides useful first-warning signs in how the behaviour of young people may change if they are being targeted by offenders.

## 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](mailto:suenelson@comsafetypartners.com) or [aidannelson@comsafetypartners.com](mailto:aidannelson@comsafetypartners.com)