

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.

Cable thieves jailed

Two unemployed brothers have been jailed for their part in the theft of high value copper cabling from the railway in Hampshire and Dorset. Karl O'Dell, aged 33, was jailed for two and a half years and his brother Stuart, aged 29, for two years after both pleaded guilty to offences ranging from theft and handling stolen goods. Between them they are said to have caused an estimated £80,000 worth of damage to the railway by taking cable from sidings and sub-stations between January and July 2007.

Rail crime figures down

Crime on Britain's railways has fallen by 11% according to the latest figures released by British Transport Police.

Chief Constable Ian Johnston said the annual figures for the year 2007/8 are good news for passengers and staff.

He said: "Just about every category of crime is down, with violent crime down 11.3% and robberies almost halved. In addition, BTP has achieved 11 out of 12 of its national operational targets, together with 79 out of 84 local targets, and increased the detection rate by two percentage points."

There has been a fall in crime on the railways for four years in succession against a background of record passenger numbers, he added.

"Britain's rail system is clearly a low crime environment," said Mr Johnston. "However, anti-social behaviour and low level disorder remain a significant problem and something which impacts directly on how people feel about travelling by rail, the working environment and the fear of crime."

"Where we have been able to put in dedicated neighbourhood policing teams, they are proving their worth by reducing anti-social behaviour and crime. Through a programme designed to put more of our resources into front line policing, we are aiming to increase their numbers."

Ten out of BTP's 12 crime groups show reductions, with particular success around robberies, which are down 46.4%. Robbery is predominantly a London problem with 84% of all robberies reported in BTP's three London areas. But focused police activity, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police together with the introduction of neighbourhood policing teams, has resulted in dramatic reductions.

BTP has also been pro-active in tackling the knife-carrying culture among some groups of young people. Operation Shield, using mobile detection arches and scanners, has been run at stations across the rail network. Drug dogs are often used as part of these operations and pro-actively targeting knife crime, as well as increased operations around anti-social behaviour hotspots and travelling football fans, accounts for the big increase in reported drug offences for the year.

"These results are a tribute not only to the hard work of our police officers and police staff, but to the commitment and investment of the rail industry in improving safety and security of passengers and rail staff," said Mr Johnston.

How many lives need to be lost?

A near miss with a pedestrian on the foot crossing at Elsenham in Essex (UK) has highlighted how - despite the deaths of two girls on the same level crossing in December 2005 and the provision of a footbridge - there are those who are foolhardy enough to cross behind one train into the path of a second on an adjacent track. The few seconds saved by not using the footbridge could so easily have cost another life. With this in mind it is appropriate that the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) has launched a study (T730) to develop a better understanding of human factors and identify risk reduction measures that might prove effective at pedestrian level crossings at stations.



Rail safety performance in 2007

For the first year in around two decades, no child under 16 was killed trespassing on Britain's railways, according to safety performance figures released by the Rail Safety and Standards Board. The report for 2007 shows public fatalities in line with long term trends, however within the 43 trespasser fatalities around half occurred around stations with a high proportion being young adult males, with incidents peaking in the early and late evening. The figures show that this group are four times more likely to be killed trespassing on the railway than the average citizen.

Suicides and suspected suicides have returned to recent levels but that still means there are four such events every week on average. One of the 13 fatalities at level crossings is a suspected suicide, two were car passengers, one was a car driver and nine were pedestrians. In total, there were 20 suicides and suspected suicides at level crossings. Although near misses and collisions with road vehicles remain at an historic low the number of pedestrians killed on level crossings is above the ten-year average.

The report data shows that public safety performance is essentially flat, although there are clearly pockets of good work from which others can learn. As with all community safety issues the causes of inappropriate public behaviour are to be found in the wider community. Again the report highlights that issues remain

challenging for the industry and its partners in the longer term.

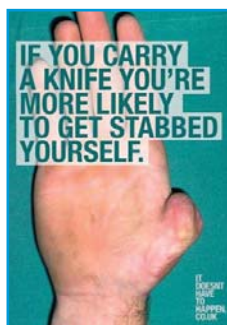
£8m to tackle knife crime

The Home Office has pledged to invest an extra £5 million in a nationwide effort to stop the spread of knife crime, coupled with a £3 million high-profile anti-knife advertising campaign. The cash boost builds on the support offered to four cities last autumn to tackle gang related violence where there has since been a 51% reduction in gun-related injuries and a 27% overall drop in the number of gun offences.

A total of £1.5 million was invested in troubled neighbourhoods in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool as part of the government's Tackling Gangs programme and the apparent success of this initiative has led the Home Office to spread the approach to knife crime. The £5 million will be focused on ten crime hotspots and will include more knife search arches and targeted stop and search operations will be used. British Transport Police has led the way in the use of search arches, which have been used to great effect as part of Operation Shield.

Meanwhile, hard-hitting radio, web and mobile adverts designed by those most affected by knife crime have been unveiled.

The campaign, featuring graphic



images of real injuries inflicted by knives, will run over the next three years and features ideas developed by a group of 18 young people who wrote the scripts and recorded the radio adverts.

The teenagers, from across England and Wales, took part in a creative summit in April, sharing ideas about how to convince young people not to carry knives. They developed the concept of a series of stabbings that could have been averted and then created adverts around the idea.

The ads are running in June on Kiss FM, Choice FM, Galaxy and Trent FM. More ads are at www.itdoesnthavetohappen.co.uk and viral ads will be distributed via networking website Bebo at www.bebo.com, and mobile phones. The campaign will run simultaneously alongside another series of adverts encouraging mothers to talk about knives with their children.

The Home Office said its discussions with young people suggested they were carrying knives out of fear for their own safety. Linked to that was a dislike of, and a lack of respect for, authority figures.

- One in four young people have carried a knife and one in ten said they had carried a gun, according to a new poll. A survey of more than 350 16-24 year-olds by youth lifestyle research company Tuned-In, showed 30% of young people now think it is okay to carry a knife and 23% said they would actually use one.

Tube drinks ban sparks trouble

A 'party' marking the banning of alcohol on London transport led to six underground stations being closed, seven members of staff and two police officers being assaulted, and 17 people arrested.

Several trains were also damaged and withdrawn from service as drinkers gathered on Tube trains and station concourses for a last drink before the ban came into effect on June 1.

London's new mayor, Boris Johnson, implemented the ban shortly after taking office in May with the aim of making the capital's public transport safer and more pleasant.

The party, mostly on the Circle Line, was dubbed the Last Round on the Underground or Last Orders. It had been widely advertised on social networking and other internet sites. It began in celebratory mood but as the night wore on eye witnesses said partygoers began fighting and vomiting, ripping up maps and adverts and leaving spilled alcohol and debris everywhere.

British Transport Police (BTP) reported numerous examples of disorder and closed Liverpool Street underground station for several hours to ease overcrowding. Officers also closed underground stations at Euston, Euston Square, Aldgate, Gloucester Road and Baker Street.

Seventeen people were arrested for offences including assault, being drunk and disorderly, assaulting police, public order related offences and drug offences, said BTP. One police vehicle was damaged and two officers assaulted and another injured. There were also four assaults on train drivers and three

assaults on other members of London Underground staff.

The ban now constitutes London Transport policy and forbids the consumption of alcohol or the carrying of open containers, although sealed containers will still be allowed. It will be another year before specific legislation covering the ban comes into effect.

Alcohol bans already exist on some other systems, including Tyne and Wear Metro since 2004. Within a year incidents of violence were said to have fallen by 25% and criminal damage by 20%. Most transit systems in big cities in the USA, such as New York, Washington and San Francisco, ban drinking alcohol, while Washington's Metro prohibits all eating and drinking.

Youth alcohol strategy launched

The government released its Youth Alcohol Action Plan on June 2 to tackle problems of youth drinking in tandem with harnessing parental responsibility. As well as urging greater take-up by police of existing powers to confiscate alcohol and disperse youngsters, ministers are spotlighting parents as a means to tackle underage drinking. Those failing to stop their children abusing alcohol could be made to attend parenting courses or ultimately face prosecution.

The government says the number of 11 to 15-year-olds drinking regularly had fallen from 28% in 2001 to 21% in 2006.

However, average consumption by school pupils who drank had nearly doubled from 5.3 units in 1990 to 11.4 units in 2006.

The government is keen to make the link between excessive alcohol consumption and anti-social

behaviour with the new measures making it clear that young people consistently found to be consuming alcohol in public places will be subjected to anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) and acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs).

In February, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said she was in favour of making it easier for the police to prosecute under-18s who drink in public, by removing the necessity to prove "reasonable suspicion" that an offence could be committed.

Bluetooth anti-crime tool

Cutting edge technology is helping revellers enjoying a night out to be alerted to incidents such as drink spiking within seconds of it being reported.

Police in Peterborough have launched five Bluetooth boxes, each with the ability to speedily send messages to mobile phones within a 100m radius. People with mobiles that have an enabled Bluetooth capability will receive a note asking them if they want to receive a police message. If they accept they will receive information on a range of topics including getting home safely, warnings about drink spiking, and generic advice on personal safety or crime prevention.

Officers hope the new way of dispensing advice and making appeals for information will help cut down crime in the city. The devices cost about £1,000 each, but are free to use, and have been funded by the Peterborough Community Safety Partnership. The boxes can send messages to seven mobile phones every 40 seconds. No mobile will be sent the same alert twice and the technology will only be used to send messages.

Using design to protect against crime

Forty of the UK's leading technology designers and manufacturers have met up with young people to discuss new ways of harnessing the power of design to protect young people from crime - particularly theft of 'hot products' like mobile phones and MP3 players. The event, hosted by the Design Council, was the first where senior designers from leading technology firms, including Sony and Nokia, have joined with young people, youth workers, branding experts and police representatives to develop products and services which will protect young people from becoming victims of crime. The focus is on generating innovative design briefs that offer a clear business opportunity for manufacturers who will be encouraged to develop them into the next generation of crime-safe gadgets. New research published by the Design Council on behalf of the Home Office shows that the vast majority of 11-16 year olds in England carry a gadget with them at some point. The data also shows that one in eight (12 per cent) have been the victim of 'hot product' theft in the last three years and one in three (31 per cent) victims were listening to music on headphones, talking or texting on a phone or playing on a games console when their item was stolen.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has also announced proposals to extend the British Crime Survey (BCS) to include surveys of under-16s' experiences of crime. By extending the BCS, the government will build on current research to understand as fully as possible young people's concerns and experiences about crime - establishing the most comprehensive picture of youth victimisation.

More PDAs for police

Extra funding to increase the number of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) for police officers has been welcomed by British Transport Police, which led the way in piloting the use of computing on the move.

The force is to receive almost £2 million to fund an additional 800 PDAs and printers, which more than doubles the number in use by BTP officers to 1,350. BTP is in the forefront of using mobile computing, taking the lead among police forces in piloting the system, which aims to increase the time officers can spend on the beat rather than deployed back at the station filling in paperwork.

The force began the roll out of PDAs on London Underground in 2006, where there are now 500 in use on the Tube and a further 50 elsewhere.

Applications available to officers include checks on people and vehicles via the Police National Computer, access to the voters'

register, the Force Intelligence System, the ability to issue stop and search forms using handheld printers, crime recording and BTPs command and control system.

The Home Office additional funding will be earmarked for PDAs for front line officers, particularly those involved in neighbourhood policing teams and counter terrorism activity. The roll out is due to be completed by the end of September with PDAs being allocated to the following BTP areas - Scottish, 70; North Western, 100; North Eastern, 100; Wales and Western, 100; London North, 200; London South, 200; Counter Terrorism Unit, 30.

Chief Constable Ian Johnston said: "Police visibility is a key aim for us and our experience so far has shown an average gain of 51 minutes per officer per shift. That is a tremendous amount of extra police cover on the front line. With this new investment we can begin to roll out mobile computing around Britain, which is really good news for passengers and staff.

"Mobile computing is a way of working smarter, getting more from our existing resources, and empowering people to deliver an even better police service. It is an important part of policing in the 21st century."

Fear of crime - or anxiety about society?

Do we really fear crime or are we just anxious about neighbourhood breakdown and the speed of change in society?

Research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) shows that everyday concerns about crime in England and Wales are much less frequent than previously thought.

For people who live in high crime areas, the fear of crime tends to be an everyday experience that reduces their quality of life. Yet for those people who live more protected lives, the fear of crime tends to be a less focused feeling that reflects a broader expression of concerns about social change.

The research was conducted on behalf of the Home Office by Dr Stephen Farrall of Sheffield University and Dr Jonathan Jackson of the London School of Economics. They found that people did not neatly separate out the issue of crime from general unease towards social stability and the pace and direction of changing society. Rather than being about an irrational sense of crime, both fear of crime and anxiety about crime distilled popular concerns about neighbourhood breakdown.

Two types of fear of crime emerged from the study. The first type was a fairly rare, everyday worry about crime. This is experienced as intensely frightening episodes where there is the feeling of real danger from crime. It tended to affect those living in high crime areas and who may have experienced crime either directly or indirectly and who may be more worried about behaviour and social disorder in their own communities.

The second type was one of general anxiety about crime, a feeling that 'it could happen', more common among people leading protected lives in lower crime areas, which led people to caution and concern about society's problems but which never emerged as acute episodes of perceived immediate threat.

The research indicated that people tend

to associate the issue of crime with concerns about the breakdown of society and the flouting of society's rules. To be afraid of crime is to show moral outrage and disapproval of the way society seems to have loosened its moral standards and the expectation to conform to a set of traditionally understood rules.

The ESRC is the UK's largest funding agency for research and post-graduate training relating to social and economic issues. For more information go to www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk

Emergency preparedness: new resources available

A CD compilation of more than 40 documents addressing public access to emergency services, enhanced information sharing, evacuation management and operations, transportation operations during biohazard situations, preparedness and response, and planned special events has been published by the USA's Federal Highway Administration.

The range of documents addresses:

- Opportunities to reduce deaths and injuries from emergencies, which exist through better communications technologies
- How public safety can be improved when information is shared across organizations and jurisdictions
- New tools and processes to help agencies plan for and manage evacuations
- A comprehensive and actionable understanding of the role of the transport system during a bio-hazard situation to help communities better plan for, respond to, and recover from such situations
- The wide range of activities, programmes, and systems which need to be addressed to prepare and safely and effectively respond to emergencies
- New approaches to planning for major events

The documents, which provide a useful comparison for emergency planners are

at www.its.dot.gov/its_publicsafety/index.htm

Red light running

One in every 25 road-users has been found to run traffic lights after they have turned to red. The study conducted by London's Evening Standard newspaper identified cyclists as a particular problem at Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus and other similar high profile locations. For example in Trafalgar Square where 117 red light violations were observed 51 were cyclists, 23 were car drivers and 13 were motorcyclists. Other categories included four police vehicles not responding to emergencies and five buses!

With red light running on Britain's roads endemic, it is important that this same issue at level crossings is not dealt with in isolation - rather a national awareness and education campaign backed by co-ordinated robust enforcement of the law similar to those used to address drink driving is needed.

Community safety first for Scotland

The Scottish area of British Transport Police has appointed its first community safety co-ordinator. Adam Kerr's role is to expand the area's partnership working throughout Scotland and he is working with a number of industry agencies and local community groups. A key role will be to ensure BTP is properly represented in formal information sharing protocols with community planning partnerships, which will enhance the area's community safety and anti-social behaviour strategies.

Adam can be contacted at BTP's area headquarters in Glasgow, telephone 0141 335 2814 or at adam.kerr@btp.pnn.police.uk

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