

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.

Crime advice cards

Youngsters in a London borough have come up with iPod-style cards warning of the dangers of street crime. The cards are designed to look like an iPod and highlight advice on how to keep mp3 players hidden, using black headphones instead of white, and keeping music low so youngsters can hear if someone approaches. Around 5,000 of the cards are being distributed through schools in Barnet at part of anti-crime campaign in the borough.

Crime figures down

Latest crime figures show there has been a 12% reduction in recorded crime. In addition, British Crime Survey interviews show that the risk of being a victim of crime has returned to its lowest ever level - 23% - since the survey began in 1981.

The number of crimes recorded by the police fell by 12% for the period October to December 2007 compared with the same quarter the previous year. Violence against the person fell by 10%, there was a 5% fall in domestic burglary, a 19% drop in offences against vehicles, a 17% fall in criminal damage and an 8% drop in vandalism. However, recorded drug crime showed an increase of 20% but much of this is put down to increased use of police powers to issue cannabis warnings. Firearms offences also showed an increase of 4%.

Ian Johnston, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead on crime, and chief constable of British Transport Police said: "The crime statistics show a welcome fall in overall recorded crime, with notable reduction in some key areas such as robbery and violent crime. It is particularly pleasing to see there has been a reduction in firearms offences that are involved in fatal and serious injuries. While the figures show that other firearms offences have increased overall, tackling gun crime remains a high priority for the police service."

Mr Johnston added that the growth of neighbourhood policing has resulted in increased partnerships between police and communities. "This closer working has no doubt led to increased intelligence, and ultimately, convictions, for offences involving drugs, burglary, criminal damage and vandalism that have a great effect on the quality of life for so many communities."

Europe metal theft day of action

European police forces visited 2,470 scrap dealers, confiscated 39,631 kg of stolen metal and arrested 110 people in a European day of action targeting metal thieves. In Britain the day of action was led by British Transport Police whose officers visited 57 scrap dealers, conducted 26 crime reduction visits and made 13 arrests.

The day of action involved rail police from across Europe in an operation co-ordinated through Railpol, the European railway policing organisation. Police forces from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands and the UK took part.

BTP Chief Constable Ian Johnston said: "Because of ever-rising commodity prices, metal theft is now major economic crime across Europe, not least in the rail industry. For BTP, combating cable theft across Britain's rail system remains one of our biggest challenges and this concerted action across Europe was just one element in a continuing police effort to thwart the thieves."

The day of action, held on April 22, came a month after ACPO held its first ever metal theft conference in London. It brought together law enforcement agencies, representatives of the metal recycling industry, utilities and government to look at co-operative ways of tackling the problem. The UK metal recycling sector has a turnover of £3.5 billion annually and is itself one of the main victims of metal thieves. The estimated cost of metal theft to UK industry is £360 million a year.



Neighbourhood policing teams on patrol

British Transport Police officers will tackle local problems with local solutions when new Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) roll out across the London Underground (LU) and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) network. By May 31, a total of 30 NPTs will be on patrol across the entire system, working together with station staff, passengers and local residents to tackle the issues that matter to them.

The new neighbourhood policing model has evolved from the reassurance policing model that has been successfully operating on LU and the DLR for the last two years. The teams include up to six officers each who will be dedicated to policing their neighbourhoods. Officers will host community engagement sessions to identify local priorities for action, meet frequently with LU and DLR staff, work in partnership with other local police forces, and conduct proactive patrols and operations to tackle specific local problems.

Chief Inspector Paul Wilson of BTP said: "Neighbourhood policing builds on the community relationships developed through reassurance policing on the London Underground and DLR network, but provides more dedicated teams to deliver a quality policing service. "Our neighbourhoods include Tube and DLR stations and their staff, as well as other people who work on the railways, passengers, and people who live and work near the rail network. Officers will be focused on working on their own patch, to reduce crime and the fear

of crime on the rail network."

Every BTP area has neighbourhood policing teams in place, which coincides with the spreading of neighbourhood policing teams nationwide. According to government there are now neighbourhood policing teams in every locality across England and Wales.

Suicide film protest

The makers of a feature film about a London Underground driver who wants someone to commit suicide under his train so that he receives compensation are reported to be threatening legal action against LU following allegedly 'derogatory comments' about the film.

Three and Out - billed as a comedy, and on general release from the end of April - has sparked protests from train drivers' trade union ASLEF whose members picketed the premier of the film. Around 30 LU drivers handed out letters to cinema-goers in London's Leicester Square saying that 'you'll have to excuse us for not seeing the funny side of people being killed on the railway.' The film tells the story of a Tube driver who experiences two suicides under his train in rapid succession and then learns of an obscure rule that if drivers are involved in three fatalities they receive thousands of pounds in compensation. The film then follows the driver's attempts to persuade people to kill themselves under the wheels of his train.

Following complaints that LU had assisted in the making of the film its managing director Tim O'Toole is said to have conceded in a staff bulletin that 'in hindsight it may

have been better to refuse co-operation.'

Last year 249 people were killed while trespassing on the rail network and of these 194 were suicides. There are around 50 fatalities a year on London Underground. Many drivers suffer trauma from being involved in fatalities and some have been known never to drive again.

£17m to fight crime

Police forces across England and Wales will receive millions of pounds seized from criminals, and use the money to fight crime. The money was confiscated under the asset recovery scheme, which requires the Home Office to invest 50% of all money seized back into front-line agencies. As a total of £34 million was recovered between October and December 2007, this means that police, along with prosecutors, courts and other public agencies, will share £17 million.

Seizing assets has been found to be an excellent anti-crime tool, taking away the reason people commit crimes in the first place. In 2007, the government reached its goal of recovering £125 million from criminals, five times more than the amount seized five years ago. The programme has been so successful that police powers to seize assets are being expanded. They include the right to seize high-value goods from offenders when they are arrested before they have chance to disperse them, widening the kind of assets liable for seizure and removing the current 12 year time limit on seizures.

New performance framework

The new local performance framework for local authorities and their partners is now up and running. In addition, Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS), the new assessment framework for the police has also gone live. Where outcomes are delivered by the police and local government together, the indicators used by APACS and the indicators in the local performance framework will be the same. This will mean that data collection requirements on local partners will be significantly reduced and that discussions between them on performance issues will be simplified by a common language for the measurement and assessment process. These shared indicators will also help to drive joint working between local partners. Similarly, discussions about performance between local agencies and partnerships and central government will be based on shared information to avoid central government placing conflicting demands on police and local authorities.

As well as simplifying performance monitoring, the alignment of the local performance framework and APACS will enable local partners to agree shared improvement targets through new local area agreements (LAAs). Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) have a crucial role in the identification, agreement and delivery of community safety priorities for LAAs, for there is a

now statutory requirement for CDRPs to consult, engage and report regularly to their communities. Guidance on the new arrangements can be found on the Department for Communities and Local Government website at www.communities.gov.uk

Youth centre cash

A total of £190 million over the next three years is being made available to build youth centres in a bid to keep youngsters off the streets.

The government fund, to be known as myplace, will be allocated by the Big Lottery Fund in grants between £1m and £5m. The money has to be used to build places for young people to access activities that keep them engaged and diverted away from trouble. There will be particular emphasis on attracting disadvantaged young people and making advice and guidance services accessible. Bids can come from public, private or voluntary sector groups but must be endorsed by the local authority. They must also demonstrate that young people are involved in the development, design and future running of the project. The new fund has the potential for organisations and agencies to work together in providing facilities for young people that keep them away from danger or involved in inappropriate behaviour.

Application guidelines are available from May 6 and projects already underway can apply for

fast track funding by July 29.

The deadline for other applications is September 30.

For more information go to www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/aiminghigh/myplace

Road speed limits cut at level crossings

Australia's Victoria state government has begun a programme to reduce the road speed at 72 level crossings across the state. Nearly all of the speed reductions, which will be fully implemented by August 2008, are from 100kph (62.5mph) to 80kph (50mph). To back up the new speed limits, police enforcement activity is being enhanced.

Level crossing safety in Victoria has a very high profile with public consciousness raised by the 11 fatalities at Kerang last June and a further six at rural level crossings since then. Since Kerang, a number of additional controls have been introduced and more are under consideration, including the introduction of a new offence of crossing the railway when lights and barriers indicate that the crossing is closed to road traffic. This legislative change will prepare the way for photo-enforcement the equipment for which is on-trial at two heavily used crossings.

Victoria's approach has been welcomed by the Australasian Railway Association, which is urging other states and territories to follow Victoria's lead.

