

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.

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

Coming soon...

Watch out for a new web-based service for level crossing practitioners across the world. CSP is developing an on-line information resource fronted by a regular news service for the worldwide community working to address level crossing risk. LXinfo will be going live before the end of 2008. If you have any news about level crossings, passage à niveau, grade crossings, bahnübergang or whatever they're called where you are, we would like to know.

If you would like to know more or have any news for LXinfo please contact either Aidan or Sue at aidannelson@comsafetypartners.com or suenelson@comsafetypartners.com

Building confidence in fight against crime

Four major regional seminars are being held to focus on developing practical solutions for increasing public confidence in the fight against crime.

Improving public confidence is seen as essential as crime can only be tackled effectively when the public, the police and criminal justice agencies work together.

Leading research company Ipsos MORI and the Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Unit at the Home Office have arranged the briefings to be held in Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester and Bristol during November and December. All are free.

The events will draw on the recommendations from the review 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime' undertaken by Louise Casey, the head of the neighbourhood crime and justice group, and published this summer. She will be the key speaker at each of the events.

The review involved 10,000 members of the public and set out 32 proposals on areas such as integrated delivery of neighbourhood policing, a stronger public voice on crime, better support for victims and witnesses, more visible and tougher 'community payback' and better information.

The seminars will also draw on the thinking from Ipsos MORI's 'Closing the Gaps' report published earlier this year by highlighting some of the best practice for communicating effectively with the general public, and the benefits and pitfalls of public consultations.

The report explores why the gap between actual crime and the perception of crime exists and considers what government can do to improve public perceptions.

Crime has been a major focus for the government over the past decade, with a raft of new legislation implemented since 1997. And this has given people a lot of what they asked for — there are more police and they are more visible, sentencing is tougher and there are more people in prison. Overall, crime has fallen significantly.

But there are major gaps between these measurable facts and public perception. In particular the public still think that crime rates are soaring and that personal safety has declined — and they blame the government.

Despite continuing government action, only 25% feel confident in the current government's crackdown on crime and violence, a fall of 4% over September 2006 and roughly half the levels of confidence felt in Germany, France and Italy. Research shows this is largely due to the influence of a negative media, as half or more of the population consider that it is television and newspapers that make them consider there to be more crime than previously. This is twice the rate of those considering their own experience or the experience of people they know.

The seminars seek to address this by looking at practical solutions to build public confidence. They will be held on:

- November 19 – Birmingham, 10.00 – 12.30
- November 20 – Sheffield, 10.00 – 12.30
- November 26 – Manchester, 10.00 – 12.30
- December 2 – Bristol, 12.30 – 15.30

For further information and to book a place go to:

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimereduction039.htm



Crime figures down

Latest crime statistics in Britain show a 6% reduction in crimes recorded by police compared to the same period 12 months ago, and falls in several other crime types. The bulletin covers the 12 months to June 2008.

Recorded crime showed violence against the person fell by 7% in the same period, 10% falls in offences against vehicles and criminal damage, and a 22% drop in firearms offences in April to June 2008. Most serious violent offences involving a knife were unchanged over the same period.

Since 1995 crime has fallen by 48% and is now at its lowest level since the British Crime Survey began in 1981.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith welcomed the figures and said: "Gun crime, robbery and homicides are down, and the chance of being a victim of crime is at its lowest level ever."

However, she said the government remained particularly concerned about serious violence especially knife crime. But the Tackling Knives Action Programme, launched in June is beginning to show results with more than 2,200 knives being seized following targeted stop and search operations. The courts are also getting tougher with offenders, as since May the proportion sent immediately to prison for weapons possession under the programme has increased by almost a third.

Helping to reduce crime

A code of good practice for public access to local crime information has been developed as a core element of the British government's cutting crime strategy for 2008-11.

The code outlines how to make crime data available on a monthly and consistent basis to members of the public at a level that makes sense to them locally and as part of the availability of wider local data about neighbourhood issues.

It forms a key part of the government's wider agenda to strengthen the engagement of local communities in policing and crime and to enhance local accountability. Local crime information has to be meaningful to local people and presented in a local context including what practical steps are being taken to tackle local priorities. The recent policing Green Paper contains a number of proposals relating to local accountability.

The code of good practice sets out the core requirements and data holding sets and has been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including the Association of Police Authorities (APA), the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and a virtual network of practitioners. It contains a set of minimum standards that all forces will be expected to meet. Additional variables to meet local needs can

also be included as part of local reporting systems.

To get a copy go to www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/policing025.htm

Quarter of teens feel unsafe on public transport

A major new survey of almost 150,000 10 to 15 year-olds in England shows that more than a quarter feel unsafe on public transport.

The annual TellUs3 national report conducted on behalf of Ofsted, the UK government's Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, shows that 27% of youngsters felt 'a bit unsafe' or 'very unsafe' while using public transport, and 24% felt a bit or very unsafe in public areas. A total of 27% also said they were worried most about being bullied, with 30% of all those surveyed saying they had been bullied in school once or more in the past year. More than a quarter – 27% - said their biggest fear was crime.

The survey questioned children in years 6, 8 and 10 and included questions covering Every Child Matters outcomes, the government programme supporting the "joining up" of children's services - education, culture, health, social care, and justice. For more information about the survey go to www.ofsted.gov.uk

£13m cash boost for young people

A total of £13 million will be shared between 20 areas in England to help them set up Intensive Intervention Projects that will challenge and support youngsters in trouble.

Evidence has shown these types of projects are effective in turning around the lives of young people and their families through a highly targeted package that will both challenge young people – and their parents if necessary – to do better as well as support them in overcoming their problems. The focus is on prevention and support to stop youngsters getting into situations where their bad behaviour can spiral out of control and enforcement has to be used.

The 20 areas to receive additional funding for use between now and the end of the year 2010/11 are:

Birmingham, Bolton, Bournemouth, East Sussex, Gateshead, Haringey, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Newham, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Peterborough, Sandwell, Sheffield, Southampton, Swindon, Trafford and Walsall.

Tackling fireworks misuse

A practitioners' guide to tackling firework misuse has been published by the Home Office.

The guide highlights anti-social behaviour involving fireworks and outlines the sanctions available. In particular the use of Penalty Notice for Disorder (PNDs) are identified as a quick and effective way of tackling fireworks misuse, allowing agencies to punish offenders immediately with £80 fines. While PNDs are issued to those aged 16 and over, seven police forces – British Transport Police, Essex Police, Lancashire Police, Nottinghamshire Police,

Merseyside Police, Metropolitan Police and West Midlands Police have piloted the issuing of PNDs to 10-15 year-olds to good effect.

Firework offences punishable by an £80 PND include:

- Throwing fireworks in a thoroughfare or public place.
- Breach of the fireworks curfew (2300 – 0700). Exceptions to the curfew include major events such as bonfires in November 5 and New Year's Eve.
- Possession of adult fireworks in a public place by an under-18.
- Possession of a category 4 firework i.e. professional display fireworks for specialist use only.

CSX launches corporate responsibility website

The American rail company CSX has launched a new website to inform customers, shareholders and the wider community of the company's approach. On the community safety front the site highlights the company's programme to:

- Provide emergency planning assistance and training to local fire, police, and emergency response personnel in communities in the 23 states, the District of Columbia and two Canadian provinces traversed by their 21,000 miles of track
- Deliver industry-leading safety performance with CSX Transportation being seen as among the rail industry's leaders in safety, with a 41% reduction in train accidents recorded over the period 2004-2007.
- Deliver a better than 99.9% success rate for transporting hazardous material carloads without incident. This equates to nine cars out of more than 518,000 handled annually releasing any contents.

- Work to secure improvements in level crossing safety.

The community element of the site can be found at:

<http://www.csx.com/?fuseaction=responsible.community>

Grayrigg investigations complete?

Britain's Rail Accident Investigation Board's (RAIB) final report into the derailment at Grayrigg in Cumbria in February 2007 contains 29 recommendations, many of which highlight areas for improvement in the way Network Rail manages points (switches) across its system. After the accident and following completion of the rail industry's own investigation in September 2007, Network Rail responded to many issues exposed by the incident.

The immediate cause of the derailment was a faulty, deteriorating, set of points, which should have been spotted by a track inspection five days before. The RAIB has also said an "incomplete" understanding of the type of point that caused the Grayrigg crash was contributory.

The RAIB has also ordered the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to review its study into whether safety belts should be installed in trains. The RSSB has previously determined that fitting them is not justified. The RAIB report says that the circumstances of the Grayrigg accident warrant a re-examination of RSSB's conclusions.

However, trades unions and others have repeated their call a joint public inquiry into the fatal Potters Bar and Grayrigg rail accidents, both of which were caused by failures in the switch and crossing maintenance regime. Geoff Hoon, the Secretary of State for Transport, has left open the option of a joint public inquiry being convened.

National Passenger Survey – focus on policing

Britain's national rail passenger survey provides an insight into how much the travelling public knows of British Transport Police and their approach to policing the rail network.

System-wide, the spring 2008 survey, shows that 86% are aware of British Transport Police, a figure which rises to above 90% at most London termini. Knowledge of the nationally-applied neighbourhood policing approach is much lower with a force-wide recognition of 19%, rising to a maximum of 24% at one London terminus.

However, the relatively low recognition of the national neighbourhood policing approach is high when set alongside the levels of recognition of this approach at rail stations where a maximum of 95% at a single London terminus sits alongside a national figure of just 4%.

Building awareness of the neighbourhood policing approach is key to improving confidence in personal security in both the wider community and travelling public where roughly one-third do not rate their security at stations as good, a figure which falls to one-quarter on trains. Neighbourhood policing teams certainly see reducing feelings of insecurity as an opportunity. In the future it will be good to review progress as and when the National Passenger Survey is repeated.

Post disaster support

Aftercare advice offering support and information for families, friends and survivors about how to cope in the aftermath of a disaster or major incident has been published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Developed by the department's Humanitarian Assistance Unit (HAU) the advice takes the form of web

pages on the government's Directgov website designed to provide the information that people are most likely to need in the medium to longer term following a major incident.

The advice, contacts and information have been gathered with the help of a number of bereaved families and survivors of previous major incidents. The pages will act as a gateway to provide practical information on a range of issues such as emotional and financial support, and will link to relevant sites and provide clear information about where to seek further help.

In November 2006, the National Audit Office published its report 'Reviews of the experiences of UK nationals affected by the Indian Ocean Tsunami'. This report, combined with the government's Lessons Learned report from the London bombings, exposed the need for public access to information following a major incident.

The new Aftercare pages can be found at: www.direct.gov.uk/helpafterincident

Psychologists to help those informing relatives

Police and firemen in Barcelona, Spain can now choose to be accompanied by a trained psychologist when they inform relatives of road traffic accident victims. The five-year scheme, which may be extended, has the full support of the medical emergency service.

FRA funding suicide prevention study

The Railroad Research Foundation in the US is receiving a \$250,000 grant from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to support the ongoing research project to assess the prevalence and underlying casual factors of rail-related suicides.

This North American project also includes development of effective

counter-measures to reduce the incidence of suicide on railways, including at level crossings.

Help for young crime victims

Sport is to be a key focus in a pilot scheme to bolster services for young crime victims. Under the Youth Crime Action Plan the Home Office is ploughing £500,000 into five schemes in Derby, Lambeth, Norfolk, Lewisham and Oxfordshire. Young people will help with police training to improve the way officers deal with young victims, with youngsters being offered sports sessions to boost self-esteem.

IRSC, Denver: the partnership agenda

CSP's Aidan Nelson summed up the overarching themes of this year's International Railway Safety Conference (IRSC) hosted by the Association of American Railroads in Denver, Colorado during October. Building on the tri-partite strength of this conference series in which railways, trades unions and safety regulators meet to discuss issues of shared concern, the CSP message was the importance of looking beyond the rail industry to build resilient, externally orientated partnerships to address community safety risks including those posed by level crossing abuse and trespass.

If you would like a copy of Aidan's presentation, please contact him at aidannelson@comsafetypartners.com

- One for the diary. Next year's IRSC will be held in Båstad, southern Sweden at the invitation of Banverket, from September 28 to October 2, 2009

Keep in touch...

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