

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

Common sense campaign

A major campaign to reduce the number of people killed or injured while trespassing on railways in the US has been launched. The Common Sense campaign is focused on 18 to 34-year-olds who make up the largest percentage of rail related pedestrian casualties. It includes an interactive website, internet ads, videos and local events. Go to www.commonseuseit.com for more information.

Youngsters should be taught about knife crime dangers

Every 11-year-old child in England should be taught about the dangers of knife crime in a bid to stem a huge increase in stabbings among young people, say MPs. A report by the Home Affairs Select Committee says children as young as seven are routinely carrying knives, and that 11 is a "key risk age" as children move from primary to secondary school.

Now the committee is recommending all Year 7 pupils should receive an assembly or lesson focusing on knife carrying and the consequences for victims, their families and offenders.

The report says the "worrying" prevalence of young people carrying knives is mostly motivated by fear and a lack of faith in the ability of "natural protectors" like police and parents to keep them safe, with a perception that everyone else is carrying a knife leading to what one witness described as an "arms race". Therefore efforts to reduce knife carrying should be directed at these root causes.

The proportion of young people who actually use knives is very small, but a recent increase in knife violence appears to relate to escalating street violence between groups of young people in the poorer areas of large cities. While the overall number of murders has remained relatively stable since 2006, the number of those being committed with a knife has risen dramatically, by 26% from 2005/6 to 2006/7. This is reflected in a sharp increase in knife injuries in hospital statistics since 2006 with an increase in admissions seeming to show that serious stab wounds are becoming more common.

The Committee supports the use of prison sentences for knife possession – it is a serious crime and many more people are killed by knives than guns. However, it notes the failure of custodial sentences to prevent re-offending and therefore recommends more work with prisoners and young offenders to address their behaviour. It also says that young people in particular may not be deterred by the possibility of a custodial sentence, which may not seem real to them. The prospect of being caught with a knife may in itself be a greater deterrent so the MPs support strong police action against knives such as - appropriate - use of stop and search powers. However, they do not recommend wholesale use of metal detectors at schools for example, which may actually make young people feel less safe there.

Key facts to emerge from the report include:

- The number of knife homicides rose by 26.9% between 2005/06 and 2006/07.
- There were 270 knife homicides in 2007/08: the highest total since the Homicide Index was introduced in 1977.
- Knives were used in 6% of British Crime Survey violent incidents in 2007/08. This is estimated to correspond to use in approximately 138,000 robberies, woundings or assaults taking place throughout England and Wales in that year.
- 5,239 people were admitted to NHS hospitals in England with a stab wound in 2007/08. The number of patients admitted rose by 48% between 1997/98 and 2006/07.
- Between 2003 and 2007 stab-related hospital admissions for under-16s increased by 62.7%.
- Penknives and flick knives are most routinely carried but kitchen knives are more frequently used in injuries presenting to hospital.
- 85% of young people who carry knives claim they do so "for protection".



- 21% of people convicted of possessing an offensive weapon were jailed in the last quarter of 2008.
- More than half of prisoners re-offend within a year of release.
- 5% of young people commit half of all youth crime. The Government estimates that they come from 110,000 high-risk families, 20,000 of whom require intensive interventions.
- The organisation Kids Count estimates that knife crime costs the state in the region of £1.25 billion per year.

For more information go to:

www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom/

More cash to tackle knife crime

More than 150 organisations will receive £2.3m to tackle knife crime and support victims.

The funding – which follows the Home Office Select Committee report on knife crime - will go to help groups that work with young people to prevent them becoming involved in gun, gang and knife crime.

The money will also be given to organisations that support the families and friends of homicide victims. These include the Damilola Taylor Trust and Mothers Against Murder and Aggression.

The funding is part of the government's one-year extension of the Tackling Knives Action Programme that works intensively in 15 areas around the country with serious knife crime problems. Organisations working in the Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) areas, will receive funding from the homicide section of the victims' fund, the youth sector development fund or the community fund.

The areas taking part in the Tackling Knives Action Programme are: London, Essex, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Nottinghamshire, South Wales and Thames Valley.

More knife crime offenders jailed

More criminals are being jailed for carrying a knife and the number of offences dealt with involving knives has fallen, according to new statistics published by the Ministry of Justice today.

The statistics also show that offenders caught carrying a knife are receiving longer prison sentences and fewer cautions.

Between January and March 2009 the statistics show a fall of 7% in the total number of offences involving possession of a knife or other offensive weapon dealt with to 6,477 from 6,931, compared to same period in 2008. This fall increases to 15% for youths aged between 10 and 17.

The number of prisoners serving a sentence for possession of an offensive weapon increased by nearly half again (44%) between the first quarter of 2008 and the same period in 2009.

Society will not tolerate cable theft – judge

Three men who caused repeated disruption to rail services in Kent after stealing live cable from railway tracks have been jailed for a total of 17 years.

In sentencing Peter Penn, Peter Taylor and Stuart Smith of Snodland, Kent at Maidstone Crown Court Judge Martin Joy said society cannot tolerate attacks on an essential service and the sentence was to deter others and protect the public.

The court was told the men's thieving activities in more than 20 separate incidents between December 2007 and August 2008 resulted in extensive delays and disruption to train services.

The trio targeted railway lines by cutting live cable from the tracks and causing damage to critical railway signalling. The cost to Network Rail in repairs and materials was estimated at £65,000 while the cost of disruption and loss of service was calculated at £159,000.

Penn, aged 49 was jailed for five years and Taylor, aged 53 and Smith, aged 27, for six years after being

charged with conspiracy to steal and damaging property recklessly to endangering life. Penn had pleaded guilty to both offences while Taylor and Smith denied them.

Det Con Leigh Marshall of British Transport Police said: "Not only did this group risk their lives by pulling live cable from the tracks but for very little financial gain they caused untold misery to thousands of commuters.

"It is pleasing the court has imposed jail terms to reflect the severity of the offences and to act as a deterrent to others from being involved in cable crime."

Making criminals pay back communities

A new programme will let the public decide how money seized from criminals will be spent in local communities.

The programme, called Community Cashback, is designed to give people more of a say in how criminals' pay back their community for their crimes.

The latest Home Office figures show that the value of assets recovered from criminals this year rose to an all time high of £148m. Until now that money has been split between frontline services, such as the police and courts. This is the first time a portion of that money is being paid back into communities.

People will be able to vote on the Community Cashback website (www.cashback.cjsonline.gov.uk) to decide which local projects should receive money. They can also suggest a project in their area that they believe deserves investment.

New projects that provide good value for money, and are related in some way to preventing anti-social or criminal behaviour, will all be considered. The kinds of projects that would qualify include things like renovating a vandalised playground, enhancing a youth centre or improving security on a housing estate.

Call for civil youth courts

More restorative justice and the introduction of civil youth courts would help tackle youth crime more effectively, according to a policy think tank.

The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) says the use of restorative justice empowers communities and can be used as an alternative to arrest. In addition, partnerships between communities and schools can help tackle the causes of offending more effectively.

The IPPR's report suggests the government should adopt a system like the one in Scotland where the focus is on prevention and diversion coupled with civil youth courts to deal with offending in the community.

Carey Oppenheim, co-director of IPPR, said the current approach to youth justice relies heavily on police targets for people being brought to justice.

"Our research shows that this has not resulted in a reduction in crime but serves to criminalise children, increases re-offending as a result, and misdirects important resources away from dealing with severe offences and crime prevention," she said.

"Young people are more likely to give up crime if they face up to communities and victims to pay back for their crimes and tackle the causes of offending."

To see or download the report go to: www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=673

Community crime fighters

Seven regional roadshows will run from September to November this year to train volunteers as community crime fighters.

The Community Crime Fighter programme is being launched as one of the recommendations of the Louise Casey review 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime' published last year.

The review looked at how the police, local authorities and other criminal justice agencies can work more

effectively with local people to reduce crime and the fear of crime. A total of 10,000 people took part in the review, many of whom said they wanted to be better informed about, and involved in, actions taking place at local level to reduce crime.

The aim of the programme is to foster stronger links between crime fighting agencies and the communities they serve and seeks to involve community 'activists' by giving them the necessary skills and training to work in closer collaboration with relevant partners such as the police and CDRPs.

Go to

www.communitycrimefighters.org.uk quoting reference CCF02 to register for the roadshows.

Justice Awards – nominations open

Staff and volunteers working in community safety are being called upon to get involved in this year's Justice Awards, the annual campaign to recognise outstanding achievement across the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Anyone working or volunteering in the CJS is eligible, including community groups and cross agency teams, who could be prime candidates in categories such as Engaging Communities, Tackling Youth Crime or Partnership of the Year (sponsored by Crimestoppers). The Attorney General, Baroness Scotland, who was then a Home Office junior minister, launched the Justice Awards in 2004 and are now seen as a highly regarded national scheme recognising excellent and good practice. The nominations period runs until July 27 and more information can be found at www.justiceawards.cjsonline.gov.uk

New Information Pack for Neighbourhood Watch

The Home Office Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Unit has produced a new information pack for Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators and other residents' leaders. The pack contains information on what the public can expect from the police, local criminal justice services and local

authorities in terms of tackling anti-social behaviour. It also provides information on the rights of victims of crime and how to make suggestions for local community payback, as well as information about the Community Crime Fighters programme. To order a copy Prolog Home Office publications on tel: 0870 241 4680, or send an email to homeoffice@prolog.uk quoting reference: JSJD/GEN/PACK

National Rail Safety Week nearly here

The number of organisations supporting National Rail Safety Week in Australia and New Zealand continues to grow. The week, which is being held from July 24th to 31st, 2009 focuses on raising public awareness of the part they need to play if risk reduction at level crossings is to be maximised and, as the strap-line for the week says, make people aware that "All Level Crossing Collisions are Avoidable."

The aims of the week are to:

- Raise awareness in both metropolitan and rural areas of safe road user behaviour at level crossings
- Emphasise the impact that level crossing accidents have on train drivers and rail operators
- Encourage widespread understanding of actions being taken by the rail industry to address the issue.

Chris Cairns, former New Zealand international cricketer, will share his first hand experience of a family member losing her life on a level crossing. Chris will also explain how he came to found the Chris Cairns Foundation to address level crossing safety issues and the successes that have so far been achieved by the Foundation. In total National Rail Safety Week is supported by 30 organisations drawn from both public and private sectors.

More information about National Rail Safety Week is available at: www.ara.net.au/site/railsafety_theweek.php