

Pilot project helps youngsters speak out

A ground-breaking Derby project that helps local young people to speak out if they have been victims of anti-social behaviour, knife and gang-related crime is already reaching out to more than 4,000 youngsters only four months after it began. The pilot, which began last November, is working hand in hand with local communities, police, schools and voluntary groups to offer a range of services – including workshops, drop-in sessions and school assemblies – tailor-made to the needs of young people. In addition, on Fridays and Saturdays when anti-social behaviour and gang crime is at its worst, they run a range of music, sport and youth clubs to give local young people a range of options other than hanging around on the streets.

The Derby project is one of five local pilots in England linking in with the Youth Crime Action Plan and the Tackling Knives Action Programme. The other areas include Lambeth, Norfolk Lewisham and Oxfordshire.

Let's Keep Crime Down campaign

A new £1.6million national crime prevention campaign has been launched by the Home Office. Adverts are currently appearing in national and regional newspapers, television and radio carrying simple messages about how the public can make their homes safer and protect themselves from opportunistic criminals with the strapline 'Let's Keep Crime Down'. According to the British Crime Survey 36 per cent of burglaries occur in properties with unlocked doors and windows and this new campaign aims to make people aware of the simple steps they can take to protect their homes and valuables. The new campaign is part of government action aimed at helping people to increase their personal security and avoid becoming victims of crime during the economic downturn.



More time for on the beat

A policing timesheet has been scrapped by the Home Office, which claims it will free up an estimated 260,000 police hours to focus on cutting crime and driving up public confidence. Police officers will no longer have to complete the annual police activity analysis form accounting for their activity for each 15 minute working period of their shifts over a two week period - a step which alone that is said to free up approximately 150 extra officers and staff.

The step is the latest in a series of red tape cuts and builds on actions already underway including:

- Axing the foot-long stop and account form earlier than promised - saving 690,000 hours per year
- Reducing by 80 per cent the amount of form-filling police must do when recording 80 per cent of crimes
- 10,000 extra hand-held devices are now available with further investment made to deliver 30,000 devices by March 2010. This £80m investment in mobile data devices will save officers up to 30 minutes per shift as they send and receive information while on the beat.

These reductions in bureaucracy have been made possible by the reforms in accountability structures announced by the Home Secretary in last summer's Policing Green Paper. Police forces are being empowered to engage with the communities they serve and tackle the issues that matter most to them. By scrapping all central targets except one - to increase public confidence - it is local people, rather than central government who are telling the police what service they need and holding them to account via the Policing Pledge, says the Home Office.

Schools urged to know their local police officer

Every secondary school in England will be urged to get to know their local police officer through local partnerships aimed at tackling poor behaviour.

The announcement by the Department of Children, Schools and Families, forms part of the UK government's response to Sir Alan Steer's latest set of recommendations on how to further improve behaviour in schools. In his latest report, Sir Alan found that Behaviour and Attendance (B&A) Partnerships - which are formed when secondary schools in one area come together to pool resources and collaboratively challenge poor behaviour and attendance – have had a dramatic effect on helping identify problems before they become 'crises.'

He found collaborative working through B&A partnerships ensures pupils have access to a wider range of support that best meets their needs. A partnership in Tower Hamlets has seen permanent exclusions drop by 26 per cent and no pupils picked up by truancy patrols.

The government wants every school to be part of a B&A Partnership and this will become law through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill, published in February. A key element will be that each partnership, working alongside Neighbourhood Policing Teams, should aim to include at least one Safer School Partnership police officer.

Knife crime special envoy

Richard Taylor, the father of murdered London schoolboy Damilola Taylor, has been appointed as a special envoy tackling youth violence and knife crime.

In his role he will be speaking directly to families who are struggling to come to terms with the loss of a family member and will build on and bring together the work already being undertaken by victims' families and community groups.

Mr Taylor is a founding member of the No to Knives coalition formed last December and involving figures from sport, music and business working with families, community groups and government to bring an end to knife crime.

Knife crime crackdown

Major British retailers have joined forces with the government and the police as part of a new crackdown on knife crime.

The Home Office has been working with 21 retailers and the British Retail Consortium to encourage them to adopt best practice to limit the availability of knives to under-18s.

In a new campaign that will be running in supermarkets and other retailers, new signs will be displayed in product aisles where knives are sold and at point of sale to explain that proof of age will be required if the buyer appears to be under 18.

The materials clearly display the message 'We are working in partnership with the Home Office to prevent the sale of knives to under 18s'.

The retailers have signed up to a six-point commitment to:

- Provide training and support to staff on the sale of knives, and keep a register of completion of training
- Clearly display to the public signs stating that knives are not for sale to under-18s
- Ensure that display and storage of knives minimises the risk of theft Ensure till prompts are in place to remind staff at the point of sale
- Enhance safeguards on internet sales to address attempted underage sale of knives
- Monitor attempted underage sales and share information with local police and other partners.

New powers to break up gangs

Giving the police new powers to break up violent teenage gangs is the core recommendation contained in a new report from

the UK's Centre for Social Justice. The suggested arrangement to better tackle gang violence is through Gang Activity Desistance Orders (GADO) aimed at gang leaders and backed up by stiffer penalties, including imprisonment. The police would apply to a court for GADOs when gang violence is intimidating witnesses and informants and stopping them co-operating with the prosecution of offenders.

However, the report recognises that well targeted GADOs alone will not tackle the violence committed by gangs, which have a combined membership of 50,000 across the UK. The report therefore advocates other medium and longer-term measures to steer young people away from gangs, in whose name violence is all too often committed.

In proposing the GADO civil order approach, the report is critical of ASBO arrangements on the basis that they have been over-used and too easily breached without any consequence to those who are subject to them.

Where gang crime is prevalent, the report proposes that the area should be designated a Gang Prevention Zone which would be the focus of intensive multi-agency efforts to reverse the influence of gang culture. Support should include skills training, remedial education and drug rehabilitation as well as help in finding employment. But first and foremost there has to be recognition that an increasing number of gang members are still children in need of support and not just sanctions from within the criminal justice system. Go to www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk to find out more information.

On the spot rewards for youngsters

Devon and Cornwall Police are handing out spot rewards to young people doing good deeds, following a suggestion by teenager Kirsty Ogborne.

Officers will issue youngsters with reward tickets as part of the motiv8 scheme, a charity that works with 8-25 year olds, with a primary focus on 13-19 year olds, to provide support and activities in local communities. Youngsters seen picking up litter or handing in lost property, for example, will be rewarded with shopping or attraction vouchers.

The scheme was thought up by 16-year-old Kirsty as part of a competition to promote 'pro-social behaviour.' It will initially run in the seaside resort of Torbay and will be rolled out across the force area if successful.

A long and bumpy road

A woman driver turned right onto the railway at a level crossing and then drove along the railway track for hundreds of metres until an electrification stanchion halted her progress.

The incident began on the level crossing in Fawdon, Newcastle late at night and continued all the way to Wansbeck station on the Tyne and Wear Metro. To see the level crossing at which the incident began on Google Earth™, go to coordinates 55° 00' 49.00" N / 01° 38' 38.56". If you want to see how far the car travelled along the railway, go East on Google Earth™ until you reach Wansbeck station. Northumbria Police arrested the woman driving under the influence of alcohol.

Late night round up

Police found a drunken 15-year-old girl asleep next to a railway line as part of a co-ordinated late night round up of young people.

A total of 120 children were safely returned to their homes after being found unsupervised on the streets late on a Friday night as part of a wide-ranging police operation.

Police and children's services in 27 areas of England ran Operation Staysafe patrols as part of a co-ordinated effort to protect vulnerable children and to reassure the public they are dealing with issues of local concern.

The patrols identified young people who were out late at night and at risk of becoming victims of crime or of being drawn into criminal behaviour, and took them to a place of safety.

They were then returned to their parents or carers. More than 1,000 young people were spoken to of which 120 were returned to their homes, and 103 referrals were made to other services including Family Support Teams, Parenting Programmes and Alcohol Awareness Projects.

Design and evaluation of safety campaigns

The European union CAST project considering the design and evaluation of traffic safety awareness campaigns recently

held its final conference.

Although focused on road safety education, there are transferable lessons from the CAST project of value to those responsible for awareness and safety education in other risk areas.

The guidelines developed within the CAST project which brought together 19 partners from 15 countries reflect the inputs of a diverse range of stakeholders from government, research organisations and others sharing an intent to reduce the risk to those using Europe's road network whether on foot, two, four or more wheels. Go to:

<http://www.cast-eu.org/>

to learn more.

Come on and do the conga....

The social networking site Facebook posted an entry advertising a 'mass naked conga dance' at Park Lane Interchange station on the light rail Metro system in Newcastle. Officers attended with enthusiasm but the conga was a no show....

Lxinfo

CSP's LXinfo e-magazine is attracting considerable interest from around the world - and plaudits too.

- This is awesome - Canada
- Just wanted to congratulate you on this useful resource. Great to see somewhere where this info might start to be aggregated - Australia

- My congratulations! I am impressed by reading your professional and well-informed newsletter - Norway
- Very impressed by the amount of relevant information available on the site - Ireland
- The site looks great. I especially liked the icons and short description in the middle of the screen instead of the usual list on the left. It is very easy to find what you are looking for from the site - Finland
- Very interesting and I am sure will provide us with useful information (United Kingdom).

To view LXinfo go to

www.lxinfo.org or to receive regular updates contact

aidannelson@comsafetypartners.com

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