



GATESHEAD WEST AREA COMMAND

**The Tilley Award for Problem
Orientated Policing**

OPERATION DELIVERANCE

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ABSTRACT

OPERATION DELIVERANCE

This application details the Problem Solving Initiative developed and implemented by Gateshead West Area Command of Northumbria Police. Community Orientated Problem Solving (COPS) demonstrates how juvenile disorder was successfully addressed using the SARA methodology.

C.O.P.S. was developed in order to improve the service given to the community and to reduce demand on operational officers. The initiative has been used to address a wide range of problems from repeat incidents of disorder to instances of crime: It

- has also been designed to cater for resolving internal organisational problems to maximise the efficiency within the area command. The attached example highlights an everyday and typical incident that police forces around the world regularly encounter - juvenile disorder. In this particular scenario the disorder had escalated to an unacceptable level and provides evidence that the methodology can be successful.

The C.O.P.S. initiative follows the principles of problem orientated policing. It provides a framework that can identify community problems and concerns, and by using a partnership approach address underlying causes by implementing long term solutions. The initiative was implemented 'at a minimum financial cost making use of existing personnel and technology.

Following a series of community representations, letters of complaint, and articles in a local newspaper research was carried out which showed that there had been 106 reported incidents of youth disorder at a given location.

An in-depth analysis was conducted of the reported incidents, and personal interviews were carried out with members of the community and with the owners of local businesses that had been subject to abuse and harassment.

This process identified the cause of the problem to be underage youths purchasing and consuming alcohol in an adjoining car park and disused garages situated near to a local off-licence.

To find a lasting solution to the problem the response adopted included working with other partners, the local community and the local shopkeepers. The garages were demolished, a bus shelter was modified, covert observations and high profile policing identified offenders who were warned in the presence of their parents regarding their behaviour.

During the 'assessment stage only four incidents of a similar nature were reported to the police. For the next six months there were no further incidents of juvenile disorder in that vicinity. This is a trend that has continued to date.

COMMUNITY ORIENTATED PROBLEM SOLVING

INTRODUCTION

Community Orientated Problem Solving (C.O.P.S.) was introduced into the Gateshead West Area Command of Northumbria Police to improve the quality of service provided to the community and to reduce demand. It follows the principles of Problem Orientated Policing (P.O.P.) and utilises the S.A.R.A. problem solving model.

It was developed by examining our existing procedures and policies carrying out research in other Police Forces and agencies in England and the U.S.A. as well as taking into account the good practice identified by the Police Research Group (Police and Reducing Crime Unit-)

The demand for our service today is greater than it has ever been. At certain times of the day, especially in the evening, officers find it difficult to cope with the level of incidents. Due to the upward trend in incidents our response had become reactive and driven by solely by incidents. '

.Most incidents attended by local officers were found to be repeat quality of life issues. This was reinforced by the findings of the Gateshead Crime and Disorder Audit. Prior to the adoption of C.O.P.S. the traditional area command response proved at times to be ineffective.

C.O.P.S. provides a framework and system that enables the S.A.R.A. methodology to be used on operational problems. (TACTICAL)

.At the Strategic level the model provides a means of addressing internal problems effectively and efficiency. (STRATEGICAL)

Since its introduction the indications are that the initiative is proving to be a success. Operation Deliverance was chosen because it clearly demonstrates that the philosophy of Problem Orientated Policing is an effective means of resolving recurring community problems.

PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL RESPONSES

In today's ever-changing and fast moving environment traditional methods of policing have been found wanting - demand and responding to the needs and expectations of the public are exceeding our capabilities. By analysing the area command's procedures and methods of operation a number of key areas were identified for development to allow problem solving to work effectively. These were:

- 1) Identifying the real problems and concerns of the community
- 2) The collation and centralising of all information to attain the full picture
- 3) Incorporate a quality control system
- 4) Making sure the problem is allocated to the right person who has the time and necessary skills
- 5) Give ownership and responsibility
- 6) Prevent duplication of effort
- 7) Empower and encourage innovation and creativity
- 8) Develop internal and external methods of communication and marketing
- 9) Provide training and support
- 10) Monitor and evaluate initiatives to identify best practice and areas for development

THE AIM OF C:O.P.S.

Our strategy is to respond to and address the needs and expectations of the communities that we serve by improving our style and approach to local policing. Additional aims include reducing demand and the empowerment of our officers to solve problems.

In order to achieve these strategies the area command aims to:

- 1) Reduce the demand
- 2) Make the best use of all resources to respond to the needs and expectations of the public that we serve
- 3) Develop partnerships
- 4) Tackle the causes as well as the symptoms of community problems
- 5) Improve community relationships and involve them in the problem solving process

Provide better internal support and training to all of our staff

THE FRAMEWORK

In order for problem solving to work effectively. in the area command a more streamlined and focused methodology was developed. The model is based around two elements - tactics and strategical

Tactical Level (Community Problems)

Identification of Problems

In order to obtain a full and accurate picture information and intelligence is collated to identify problems and concerns effecting our community.

Prior to the C.O.P.S. initiative incidents created were not fully analysed. To assist in this process we now gather information from a variety of sources which includes: the local officers knowledge, reviews of correspondence and routine phone calls, and information from the local authority and. other partners. (see fig. 1)

Local Ward Surgeries have been set up by members of the Community Police Team to encourage residents to report their problems.

A researcher scans all incidents and crimes to identify trends and problems. In addition other information is forwarded to the researcher on a Problem identification Form. (see fig 2)

The researcher then develops a package which is fronted by a **Scan Form** (see fig 3) which is forwarded to the Problem Solving and Tasking Group (P.S & T.G.).

What do the P.S. & T.G. do?

- 1) Discuss and Prioritise the problems identified
- 2) Allocate the problem to an owner
- 3) If required, task an owner to carry out short term response in order to suppress or stop the problem escalating

Monitor and evaluate ongoing problems

Discuss bids for resources by the owners for long term problems who either . require them for analysing (i.e. door to door enquiry) or responding (i.e. high profile police presence, Crime Prevention etc.) and where necessary consider costing

- 6) Act as an Advisory Group
- 7) Ratify assessments

This group meets at 9.00 am Monday to Friday. It is chaired by the Chief Inspector of Operations and is attended by the Detective Chief Inspector, Detective Inspector, Duty Inspector, Community Sergeant, Intelligence.Sergeant and the Crime and Disorder Unit Sergeant.

How do the P.S. & T.G. allocate problems ?

All problems that are to be allocated will be graded as follows

<u>GOLD</u>	COMMAND AREA PROBLEM i.e. Escalation of burglaries in a particular area
<u>SILVER</u>	LONG TERM PROBLEMS i.e. Disorder in a particular area
<u>BRONZE</u>	SHORT TERM PROBLEM i.e. Horses escaping from a field Shoplifting at a particular shop

The P.S. & T.G. review the daily incidents and crimes and if any recurrent problems arise, task the researcher to carry out background research and if appropriate develop a package for allocation. (see fig 4 &fig 5)

What do the owners of problems do?

The owner of the problem is responsible for fully analysing it to identify the underlying causes to find a long term solution..

For a problem graded Gold the owner will discuss the result of their analysis at a P.S. & T.G. to consider the most appropriate method of dealing with the problem.

Silver or Bronze graded problem owners are responsible for analysing and formulating the response. The P.S. & T.G. act as an advisory body.,

During the analysis stage of all problems owners complete a Green Analysis Form (see fig 6) asking themselves two basic questions :

What do I need to know about this problem to understand it better

- ▶ Who can provide the answer to the questions

This allows the owner to identify the possible cause of the problem. Once this has been achieved the owner formulates a response on the Pink Response Form (see fig 11).

Who does the Assessment?

Objectivity is important. For this reason the assessment is carried out by the Area Inspector who has responsibility for the area where the problem emanates from. If the Inspector is the owner, then the assessment is carried out by a Chief Inspector.

A completed assessment form (see fig 7) is forwarded to the P.S. & T.G. who discuss the result and decide whether to finalise or re-allocate the problem.

In order that a problem can be finalised one or more of the below must be satisfied - the problem has been:

- 1) Eliminated
- 2) Reduced as far as possible
- 3) Displaced to another area
- 4) Removed from Police consideration and given to other agencies which are better qualified to deal with the problem .
- 5) Dealt with more effectively

The details of the whole problem, how it was solved and who assisted is then kept on a Database to act as a Good Practice Guide.

STRATEGICAL

Strategical Problems (Internal) are those issues within the area command that are considered to be effecting the efficiency of the service we provide to the community. (e.g. management of property, issues relating **to fleet management**)

These problems are identified, in the same way as Tactical problems but are submitted directly to the Management Team who will allocate an owner.

The owner is then responsible for analysing and implementing a response.

TRAINING.

All **staff** working within the Area Command were given a one day input into the theory of C.O.P.S. The training was also attended by a number of managers from other agencies i.e. Housing Office Managers from the local authority.

In addition to the above a training guide was produced together with aide memoir cards.

Every probationer posted to the Area Command is taught the principles and concept of C.O.P.S. and allowed to develop their skills and level of confidence during a five week attachment to the Community Policing Team

MARKETING

The marketing of C.O.P.S. and its principles was considered to be an important element if it was to be successful.

Internally this was achieved by a poster campaign and the issuing of booklets to all staff. Externally the strategy involved extensive media exposure and personal meetings with Neighbourhood Watch Team Leaders, Residents Associations, and local councillors. In addition to these meetings presentations were given at Community Forums and a special training day was given to the Community Safety Team at the Local Authority.

Gateshead West Area Command

Problem Orientated Policing

Project

OPERATIONAL DELIVERANCE

OPERATION DELIVERANCE

SCANNING

This problem was identified by researching incidents created in the Area Command, by letters of complaint and by an article in the local newspaper (Appendix A) where a shopkeeper was employing bouncers to keep teenage trouble makers away from their store.

An initial search was carried out of police data on the force Crime Pattern Analysis system centring around a half mile radius of the shop in question. This research identified 106 reported incidents of youth disorder.

Each complainant was re-contacted by telephone or if they wished visited at home by a community police officer who noted their views and concerns.

The nature and number of calls was a constant drain on police resources and traditional police action was having no effect in solving the problem. An intelligence gathering package was subsequently allocated to an Inspector responsible for that area. Police Officers were deployed at relevant times, however this had little or no effect on the problem. Youths were happy to move on and avoided the location when police were in the area only to return when they had gone.

Despite the police activity enquiries with the owner of the shop and local residents revealed that instances of disorder were still occurring and had reached an unacceptable level. Youths were congregating outside the shop or in the bus shelter on the opposite side of the road. Staff were being abused and customers were being pestered by under age drinkers to purchase alcohol, those who refused were threatened by the gangs of youths. Other residents were dismayed with the **loutish** behaviour and damage that was being caused.

These complaints were reinforced by local residents and the Ward Councillor who held a meeting with the Area Commander.

During this meeting the residents informed the commander that they had been plagued with this problem for a number of years which coincided with the shop being granted an off-licence. Despite repeated complaints and police attention the area had become a communal gathering place where youths were openly having sex, drinking alcohol and causing disorder. Older youths were lawfully purchasing alcohol and passing it on to younger friends. The bus shelter on the opposite side of the road was of such a design that it allowed the youths to conduct their activities out of sight, but in full view of an adjacent Aged Persons Home - "Sun Hill". This bus shelter was also used as a launching pad for projectiles such as empty cans and golf balls at passing traffic and members of the public.

Further investigation found that the majority of calls to the police were reported in the early evening during peak operational times. Due to the demand placed on the officers by the back log of other incidents, the results showed that by the time officers arrived the youths had moved on, or if any youths were still present no positive action was taken other than moving them on due to the lack of evidence or willingness of the community to come forward as witnesses.

ANALYSIS

To establish the cause of the problem information was sought from the following sources :

What the victims say

This resulted in contacting the shop owner, the residents; the Councillor and original complainants.

• A review of previous incidents

This was carried out via the force Crime Pattern Analysis and Command and Control systems.

• Survey the location

A Community Police Officer visited the area and photographed the garages and bus shelter, scale maps were obtained from the police computer system and copies of relevant press releases acquired.

This survey identified three separate locations within the vicinity which were perceived to be the catalysts of the problem:-

- 1) The car park adjoining the premises
- 2) A bus shelter opposite
- 3) Disused garages at the rear of the premises

• What was attracting the youths to the area

It was evident that the bus shelter was an attraction due to its design as it provided the youths with a sheltered area to the rear in which they could drink alcohol, engage in sexual acts, and generally act in a disorderly manner whilst remaining partially obscured.

The garages were providing excellent shelter and cover which further encouraged drinking and disorderly activities. Subsequent enquiries revealed that the garages were owned by the local Council but due to their state of repair they were no longer used.

The car park adjacent to the off-licence was an open space with no form of security or monitoring equipment

An analysis of the offenders was conducted to obtain their views and thoughts on their conduct and the provision of local facilities. It was considered that this was important to aid the right response to be formulated in an attempt to find a long term solution.

The involvement of external agencies was also an important aspect during the analysis stage. This re-directed elements of the problem and allowed the agencies to conduct their own analysis.

The police analysis identified one particular complainant whose tolerance levels were apparently lower than other residents. This would prove to be an important factor when designing the overall response.

RESPONSE

The overall analysis revealed that this was a multi-agency problem. The initial police response was to re-direct the information regarding the problem to other agencies that had the most appropriate resources to assist in the problem solving.

Having achieved the above the police response was then to increase uniformed patrols and mount covert observations to identify those responsible. This was further supported by static observations obtaining video evidence of the youths behaviour. In all cases parents of the offenders were notified personally or by letter informing them of their children's conduct.

When a member of the community contacted the police a return call or house visit was made by the community officer which aided the identification of offenders and relevant times of disorderly behaviour. This response was considered essential as it made the community feel that the police were acting positively by responding to their needs. This strategy was designed not only to build up their confidence and self-esteem, but to reduce their fear of crime.

Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Councils analysis of the problem revealed that there was a high cost in maintaining the garages. There were also health and

safety issues, and due to their location and state of repair no-one rented the garages. Their response, after consulting with all parties concerned, including the owner of the land adjacent, enabled the garages to be demolished.

An analysis by the company owning the bus shelter highlighted that local government legislation and high usage by elderly residents in the area prevented it from being demolished or relocated. Whilst this was initially problematic it was agreed that the surrounding area of the bus shelter could be modified by planting shrubbery to restrict access. Due to budgetary restraints this is to be progressed when finances allow.

Community police officers addressed the needs of the local youths by working with local authority to provide Out Reach workers for the area and making them aware of the effects of their behaviour on the community.

ASSESSMENT

A six month assessment was conducted by carrying out a series of visits to the area and by interrogating police data.

The data assessment consisted of checking all incidents of crime and disorder at that problem location on a monthly basis. An initial assessment after six weeks showed that the number of reported incidents had dropped dramatically to four - only one of which was related to juvenile disorder.

Field assessment consisted of contacting previous complainants, other agencies and local residents. With the exception of one member of the community, it was considered that the problem had been successfully resolved.

The Community Police Team facilitated the development of non-conflicting communication between the youths and the adults in the area which has resulted in a greater level of understanding between both parties.

Even though one member of the community may still consider that youths are a problem in the area the general consensus of opinion, is that Operation Deliverance has after several years returned and delivered normality to the community.