

SCHOOL LIAISON.

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SCHOOL LIAISON.

Following the Rishton CBM being given a community base inside Norden High School the Headteacher and myself met to discuss how it could be used to improve relationships between the police, the school and it's pupils. Eastern communications received a high number of calls from the school and reducing this would be one obvious benefit.

Area 7 has three towns, Great Harwood, Rishton and Clayton le Moors. The areas secondary education is served through a number of schools but one of these, Norden County High, is situated within Rishton and the majority of its pupils are from Great Harwood and Rishton. Pupils are from a varied social background but mainly from a lower social background.

The main victim is the community. Others are the Police, School, young people and local businesses. The current system fails to bring together two organisations involved in a child's upbringing. This creates barriers between the police, schools and the community whereby all pull in generally the same direction but without cohesion.

Organisations and parents have a view that each should be in control of its own remit and use it's own punishment/reward system. The reality is that problems are generally caused by the same people and to target these, as one, would have more effect.

A number of initiatives were put in place to target the initial aims of the partnership and to encourage joint working between the relevant groups. Effort went into building trust between the pupils and myself, but with the added spice that they could run but could not hide. This was obviously a difficult balance to achieve but it was felt that the trust could be built if the pupils saw we were 'firm but fair and always friendly. In September 2003 it was branched out to encompass St Augustine's, the other high school providing education to the youths of the area.

There is encouraging feedback from the Head-teachers involved. Information sharing between agencies has improved and pupils are now more willing to speak openly to me. Parents have accepted that their child may be spoken to, in school, by police and some now contact me to request I speak to their child in the hope I can achieve a result they haven't been able to. Juvenile nuisance has reduced 26% in the feeder towns and calls to the school 29%.

SCHOOL LIAISON.

A cost free long-term partnership to provide a partnership oriented cohesive approach to the reduction of youth crime/nuisance in Rishton.



Introduction

In July 2002 the Geographic Inspector at that time, Inspector Lee, approached Mrs Denise Parkinson, the Headteacher at Norden High School, with a view to providing a community base for Rishton's new Community Beat Manager. A basic agreement was made and I was then approached to become the CBM. I arranged to meet with Mrs Parkinson to discuss how the arrangement would work and how we could utilise it for the good of the School, Police and the Community as a whole. I was given office space, shared with the development and pastoral managers, and was invited to a two day induction course at the Water Park in the Lake District. At the beginning of the new term, September 2002, I began my role as the new CBM based at Norden High School. The posting raised publicity through the local press, radio and even teletext. With a solution potentially in place, in conjunction with Mrs Parkinson and the staff at Norden, the SARA model was used to find the best problems to tackle.

Scanning

The most obvious problem to tackle was the historic one of a lack of communication between police at the community level and local schools. This resulted in barriers being built between the police, schools and the local young people. Some schools have held a view that the activities of a child in school are not related to their activities out of school therefore meaning that the child's school has no responsibility to those activities/behaviour patterns. When this is looked at more closely from a police and educational perspective it is not difficult to see that the young people causing problems in the community are the same ones causing problem in schools. The behaviour of these would be the most obvious target, but one that can only be curbed due to the behaviour being 'set.' Looking at the same problem in the long term brings about an opportunity to positively affect the behaviour of the younger end of the school whose behaviour patterns are not yet set in stone. This would allow both partners to achieve their aims in the short and long term, using the skills, abilities and facilities available to each.

Looking at the problem we then decided to break down how each partner would be able to benefit from the work being undertaken. This was done in both a quantitative and qualitative way.

Lancashire Constabulary would look at this with a view to the following:

- Reducing juvenile nuisance/crime through better detection prospects and education of social responsibilities.
- Reducing repeat calls from the school thereby reducing demand on the Communications Centre
- Building up of an improved juvenile offender picture
- Improved relations with young people of the area.
- Improving information sharing through the use of the schools computer systems and local knowledge.
- Highlighting of problem children at the earliest opportunity.
- A willingness to work together in solving youth, behaviour and educational issues.
- Increasing pupil's awareness of the consequences of their actions.
- Improvement in local intelligence.
- Use of teacher's knowledge and experience in tackling problems.
- Providing a link between section officers and the school network through all the above and information available from pupils who will have some trust in the CBM.
- Increase in juvenile trust of police and the non-demonising of them within the police and the community through the improved relationships.

- Improving resource management by having a central contact enabling the school to bring problems at a convenient time to the CBM, who will simply need to visit on a regular basis, rather than using section officers.
- Opportunity blocking of the young peoples ability to cause problems/commit petty crime by their knowledge that they will most probably be found out

Lancashire Education Authority would look to benefit as follows:

- Through the improved communications and point of contact for the pupils and teachers alike.
- Professional advice to hand on matters that would normally mean contacting the police, reducing the need to contact, to urgent matters only.
- Continued improvement pupil behaviour.
- An improved view of the school held by the community.
- Further improvement in the schools image and results.
- Reduction in truancy levels.

The community as a whole would hope to benefit:

- Reduction in crime/nuisance.
- Through the children showing a better awareness of their social responsibilities.
- Through the knowledge that the police are more likely to be able to prevent and detect who is responsible for certain acts.

From this information I was then able to define a basic problem as follows:

“Poor communication and co-operation between the main agencies involved in the upbringing of today’s young people.”

Analysis

In the analysis stage I will show how the above problem has manifested itself through the use of the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT.) This splits the problem into three and removal of one would result in the reduction/removal of the identified problem.

Location

Great Harwood Policing Area is split into three towns, Great Harwood, Rishton and Clayton le Moors. Housing within the area varies greatly, from private and council rented properties through to privately owned large, detached properties. A high proportion of the available housing is terraced housing creating a dense population for the size of the area with a wide range of social backgrounds. High school education is served through a number of schools. Norden County High School is situated within Rishton and the majority of its pupils are from Great Harwood and Rishton with a smaller number from Blackburn, Clayton le Moors and Accrington. The school is a county school attended by pupils from a varied social background with a high proportion from families within a lower social background. Since the appointment of the head teacher in results and it’s standing in the community have been improved.

Victim

There is more than one victim as a result of this issue. The main victim is the community as a whole and pinpointed, the community of Rishton. Others are the Police, the School, the young people and local businesses. The community, at present, does not get any benefit from a system that fails to bring together the main organisations involved in a child's upbringing. This creates barriers between the police, schools and the community whereby all are pulling in generally the same direction but not with any cohesion.

Offender

The Offender can be construed to be a number of different groups.

- The young people, who are unaware and uncaring towards their social responsibilities and who have, in the minority of cases, become 'Yobs.'
- The school having not met its' responsibilities in educating the young people properly both academically and socially.
- The police in failing to control the behaviour of the young people.
- The parents in not bringing their children up to be socially responsible.

The truth is that, in the main, all these groups are doing their best to carry out their responsibilities and that the 'Offender' is the lack of cohesive work carried out in partnership with each other to improve the chances that the goals they have set are achieved.

Response

In response to this problem we decided that it should be initially tackled on two fronts. Firstly, we needed to break down the barriers between the police and the pupils and secondly to show the pupils that their behaviour could now be closely monitored and would come back to haunt them whilst at school. This has obvious difficulties as the two aims seemingly contradict each other. However it was also necessary to show that the partnership was to be as open and fair as possible. We decided to attack the barriers at a group level where the issues surrounding them could be dealt with openly. The behavioural side would manifest itself through pupils that came to our attention and the school 'grapevine' would do the rest.

I introduced myself at several assemblies during the first month. I also took several PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education) lessons for the Year 8 group. These were simple and formed a question and answer session on any topic they liked. The sessions were informal and short of a few low-ball questions, were sensible. This opened the initial cracks in the barriers and the PSHE concentrated on an age group still able to be affected by police intervention and education

The first manifestation of the behavioural side came following a report of some chalked graffiti on the playground of a local primary school. Some partial names had been given to the section patrol and these were subsequently passed to me. As a result of enquiries with the teachers a member of the school SMT and I spoke to, approximately eight pupils. A certain amount of bravado was employed to increase the impact on the pupils by me removing them from their class. Youth Referral Forms were submitted and a letter in partnership with the school was sent home. They were also given litter duties and had to write letters of apology to the school. This also brought up the sensitive issue of parents not liking their child being spoken to in school. I spoke to several parents and allayed their fears regarding this matter. Each time a child was spoken to we wrote home and informed the parents, keeping the policy of openness central to what we were trying to achieve. Over time parents appreciated the fact that there was another discipline tier in place and I am now able to speak to any child without problem.

Following the initial graffiti incident other incidents came to light and the ones that some information to locate those responsible were followed up with pupils and teachers. Each time culprits were highlighted they were dealt within the partnership, with a joint penalty to fit the offence. An information board was also set up to highlight the current nuisance and crime

issues that related to the pupils in order to attempt to glean information out of them and to highlight the fact that incidents were being reported to the police.

During the following months several more simple initiatives were started to continue the build up of trust between the pupils and I. These included a mobile phone marking initiative where children were encouraged to bring their mobile phones to be security marked and information/advice in the form of leaflets to be given out to them. This was later superseded by a borough wide initiative through the Hyndburn Community Safety Partnership.

I work closely with the Pastoral manager, Mr Roy Cavanagh to identify problem pupils that were also causing a problem out of school. Various options were available and utilised to suit the pupil e.g. Close supervision, report cards, letters to parents etc each tailored to the individual. Following a number of incidents that were dealt with in partnership with the school, occurring in and out of school we decided to produce a Liaison form that could be held in the personal folders of a pupil to act as a permanent record of action taken through the partnership. Any enquiry from parents could then be actioned by a year head, who would normally deal with them or passed onto me.

A road safety campaign specifically targeted at parents who parked outside schools to pick up/drop off their children was started. This took the form of a poster competition to highlight the dangers of parking outside schools. WH Smith, Accrington and Rays Cut Price Stores, Rishton donated prizes. The competition was also highlighted in the local press.

Other simple ideas utilised during the initial months were truancy which was being tackled by the school and a simple way to help was to walk to the school from the police station at different times using different routes in order to catch truants. The Constabulary Drugs Education Program - Choices is delivered once a year and following guidance from PC Lyon (YIO) I delivered it to the year 7 pupils with the help of PC1799 Manning. I took part in a slave auction for Comic Relief and raised £32 for the cause. This entailed being slave to the consortium of pupils for 45mins (during dinnertime) and doing as they chose - within reason.

Following an initiative by PC 2446 Jackson in Great Harwood we decided to bring into use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts that would apply both in and out of school. A candidate for this came up almost immediately and he accepted being put on to one. He breached it almost straight away and some further work followed with his GP. The Group Intervention Panel (GRIP) contacted Roy Cavanagh and through the partnership we were quickly able to identify two pupils who were prime candidates to be referred to this project. This pupil was one of the two and through the work undertaken now causes few or no problems.

Operation Oberon was the flipside of the partnership. On a Friday evening foot patrols were tasked with going out on patrol to tackle youth nuisance issues. Each patrol took with them, either a local councillor or a member of the senior management team (Mrs Parkinson or Mr Cavanagh.) This enabled them to see the types of problems the police come across in an evening and to further enforce the principles of the partnership.

As part of the end of year rewards I was invited to help supervise a trip for the Year 9 pupils to Alton Towers. This meant that I had covered all but Year 11 in school in order to assist in breaking down the barriers that were in existence. At the end of each term awards are given to pupils and forms who are rewarded for various reasons. I have been privileged enough to be asked to present some of the awards on different occasions.

The first year of the initiative was a great success with pupils now willing to speak openly and my presence there becoming normal. The new school year started with the intention of allowing the partnership to begin running itself. Visits to the school still occur daily when on duty but the same strictness of timing is not as necessary. The pupils now are confident enough to leave messages in the knowledge that I will at some point that day pick them up and respond accordingly, as are the staff. If I am unable to get in then a phone call to the admin staff provides the necessary communication without loss of service.

I decided that a partnership with Norden was only hitting half of the target audience as the pupils of the other main education provider; St. Augustine's had no contact from me, other than seeing the Headteacher whilst he visited Norden. Several meetings between Anthony McNamara (Headteacher) and I followed and we decided on how closely to create a relationship. A form was created that could be sent via email to pass or request relevant

information between us. I had a tour of the school and the relationships I had built with the Rishton youth showed through the number of kids actively acknowledging me.

The new partnership was put to the test when juvenile problems were occurring on the local cricket club grounds. Large groups of youths were congregating at weekends and causing nuisance to local residents. Enquiries showed that these youths were coming to Rishton from Accrington, Harwood and even as far as Clitheroe. They also showed that the majority attended St Augustine's. A police operation was put into place utilising the new partnership and the problem was solved within two weeks.

Work continues at Norden and following an anonymous complaint regarding Norden pupils using an abandoned garage at dinner times to congregate, I attended the garage with Roy Cavanagh and as a result thirteen youths (eleven pupils) were searched for drugs and one was arrested. Although this created a difficult situation the pupils involved were shown that drugs were not to be tolerated, but also that the support would be provided.

We are now putting together a school travel plan to reduce the number of pupils' arriving/leaving in cars. Funding is available from government to put the plan together and further funding to implement it. The school, police and the council are working in partnership for this project.

These are some examples of how the partnership works and support is given to each partner as requested.

Assessment.

I will try to assess the POP, showing the difficulties encountered in managing it and how these were tackled followed by the successes, failures and the future of the initiative.

In assessing this initiative there is an early difficulty that is impossible to overcome unless the first assessment is left for around three years. Owing to the benefits of it being aimed at the initial Year 7 pupils and those following through after that it is difficult to assess how their behaviour has changed in the short term. A few examples of how the initiative has affected the behaviour of some of this group are the male pupil who, through the early identification, was referred to GRIP. Others who were closely supervised through the partnership have had any signs of their behaviour heading towards unruly, quashed. Again, early identification and partnership working has, hopefully solved these issues before they were embedded in the behavioural patterns of the pupils.

Although Police have worked in schools in other forces, it has generally been done in a school within a deprived area and in difficulties. Norden is an improving school with a mix of social classes. There were no particular problems with the pupils apart from the normal ones associated with juveniles of High School age. This meant that there was a blank sheet to work from. The first year of the POP was spent finding all the ways that the partnership could be used for the benefit of both agencies with the biggest gain being for the pupils. A number of initiatives were then put in place and allowed to discontinue if no benefit was found. The problem was the pull of my wider role as CBM. This meant that although I had set times when I would try to be available I couldn't always do it. For the sake of the POP's success I put the emphasis onto the school and tried to ensure I was there when I said I would be. As the POP has progressed and the barriers have been broken I am now able to contact the school if I am unable to get in and the pupils are aware that I will make contact with them should they need it.

Another difficulty was parents concerns that their children would be spoken to about matters that occurred outside school, at school with no parent in attendance. This was initially overcome by the presence of a teacher when a pupil was spoken to and a letter sent from the school to the parent outlining what had happened and offering the chance to contact me. Once trust was built up the parents became of a mind to contact me to speak to their children about matters that they had concerns about, totally reversing the original difficulty and turning it into a positive.

The last problem was the inability to make use of the force systems within the school thereby taking me away from there. If access to the systems was available I could do my morning briefing and any other paperwork in the school so increasing my presence and availability to

the wider community. This is still the case that will hopefully be overcome once systems are available for reception by iPod type devices.

A view from the Police

The POP as a whole has had a number of benefits for the police with barriers being broken, information availability increased and a captive audience to target where nuisance occurs. The number of calls to the school have decreased by 29% as they are now willing to pass on less urgent information to me personally and allow me to deal with it. In Great Harwood and Rishton, Juvenile Nuisance has been reduced by 26%. Both these figures are from the 17-month period prior to and since the commencement of the POP. I am also a central contact for police officers to request information that may be useful in their own capacity. The pupils now have a police officer they can trust and speak to regarding a number of wide ranging issues and I play an active role in their welfare, which they appreciate. I also have an expanded knowledge of the youths of the town and their peer groups. The recent expansion means that now I have the main providers of high school education supporting the fact that the behaviour of young people outside and inside school is closely linked and working with me to direct and influence it in the long term. The main benefits will not be seen until the current year 7/8/9 pupils become 9/10/11 pupils, as these are the groups that have been concentrated on to educate long term.

From the partners

The schools now have a central point of contact and a police officer they can go to for advice on pupil matters. Close work has been conducted to refer pupils to the Group Intervention Panel and the school have been actively involved in finding out what their pupils do in an evening outside of school. They have been able to incorporate my presence into citizenship lessons where the pupils can ask questions knowing they will get an answer they can trust. A Travel to School Action Plan is being formulated in partnership with others. In the words of the Headteacher, "the school is seen to be pro-active in the community" and "I am of the firm opinion that this kind of liaison should be extended to other schools, the benefits far outweigh the problems, of which so far there have not been any!" From the extended liaison at St. Augustine's the Headteacher states, "Thank you for all the work you put into sorting out the anti-social behaviour in Rishton over the weekend. And thanks for picking up the concerns of the Year 7 children who all crowded round you in the foyer when they saw you this morning. They were clearly delighted to see you and that says a great deal to me about the links you have developed with our pupils outside of school."

Appendices A

Internal Partners

Community Safety Team

External Partners

Norden County High School

St Augustine's RC High School

WH Smith

Rays Cut Price Stores

Lancashire Evening Telegraph

Accrington Observer

Radio 2BR

Appendices B - School Liaison Form

School			
Date		Log Reference Number	
Incident Details / Information Required			
Action Taken			
Pupil Details 1 Name: D.O.B: Year: Address: Tel:	Pupil Details 2 Name: D.O.B: Year: Address: Tel:	Pupil Details 3 Name: D.O.B: Year: Address: Tel:	
Pupil Details 4 Name: D.O.B: Year: Address: Tel:	Pupil Details 5 Name: D.O.B: Year: Address: Tel:	Pupil Details 6 Name: D.O.B: Year: Address: Tel:	

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