Policing &
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Crime

Policing Anti-Social Behaviour

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Research Development Statistics

Policing and Reducing Crime Unit: Police Research Series

Foreword

Public anxiety about serious crime, particularly residential burglary, drugs and violent crime is augmented by a concern with anti-social behaviour which may often more directly impact on the quality of daily life. This concern has been highlighted in recent years by police surveys of the public and in two recent reports by HMIC on community relations. It is reflected in central elements of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, which includes a number of specific provisions designed to address the problem. The identification of local problems of anti-social behaviour and the application of methods to tackle them represents work of high priority for the police and partner agencies.

It is difficult to define anti-social behaviour with precision. None of the forces we visited used a formal definition, though two had identified a range of incident types to be tackled. Questions of consensus about what constitutes disorder and the problem of deciding whose definition of 'order' should be accorded priority highlight the importance of the police, with other agencies, consulting with local communities to identify the issues of concern.

The absence of a common definition of anti-social behaviour also creates practical difficulties for the police in their efforts to tackle it, because their powers may be unclear and solutions may lie with other agencies. The report describes various methods used to tackle anti-social behaviour. The use of street-level police enforcement is discussed. The study also highlights the role of other agencies both in enforcement and in the development of diversionary initiatives. This requires police forces to consider the overall impact of any mix of responses, whether and how they complement each other when deployed in combination, and how they support efforts against crime. These considerations point to the need for a strategic approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, which builds upon and complements action to deal with crime.

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January 2000

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Many recent public surveys on crime and policing in the UK show the public place a high priority on the police tackling anti-social behaviour. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has similarly highlighted this public concern in two recent reports on race and community relations (HMIC 1997 and 1999a). Central elements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) focus on improving the ability of the police, together with other agencies and the public, to counter the problem.

This report describes research in nine forces between November 1997 and April 1998 into the policing of anti-social behaviour. This involved meetings and interviews with middle and senior police managers, and the collection of relevant documentation detailing the specifics of initiatives to tackle the problem. In most cases, we also observed the delivery of responses and interviewed officers directly involved in their implementation.

It is very difficult to produce a simple definition of anti-social behaviour. None of the forces we visited had a formal definition. Two forces had identified a range of incident types to be tackled and these are provided as illustrations in the report. The police officers we spoke to generally took a pragmatic 'common sense' view based primarily on the operational realities they experience day-to-day; this included criminal and sub-criminal behaviour. Crawford (1997) highlights the absence of consensus about what constitutes disorder and points to the problem of deciding whose definition of 'order' should be accorded priority. This highlights the importance of the police, working with other agencies, consulting with local communities to identify the issues of concern, an area addressed by the Crime and Disorder Act.

The absence of a common definition of anti-social behaviour creates practical difficulties for the police in their efforts to tackle it, because their powers may be unclear and the solution to the problem may lie with other agencies. The report describes various methods used to tackle anti-social behaviour drawing on the initiatives and approaches developed by the forces visited. The use of street-level police enforcement is discussed, but the report also highlights the role of other agencies both in enforcement and in the development of diversionary initiatives. None of the forces visited simply restricted themselves to a single response to anti-social behaviour but typically used a number of responses to address different problems. The report highlights the need for police forces to consider the overall impact of any mix of responses, whether and how individual approaches complement each other in combination, and how they support efforts against crime. These issues point to the need for a strategic approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, which also takes account of, and complements, action to deal with crime.

The research highlighted a number of important management issues relating to the policing of anti-social behaviour, to which the forces visited had variably responded. Drawing on illustrative examples, the report discusses how they managed resources, multi-agency partnerships, the media and public relations. Resource management focuses primarily on the provision of adequate resources to manage the routine reactive demand generated by calls for service in relation to incidents of anti-social behaviour. Some forces visited had tackled this by dedicating resources to handle the calls and/or respond directly to incidents.

The report concludes by suggesting that forces should carefully consider the range of available tactics to tackle anti-social behaviour and select those best suited to provide a coordinated and coherent overall response appropriate to local problems. In adopting such a strategic approach forces may wish to consider the benefits offered by a dedicated centralised unit responsible for organising, coordinating and resourcing their responses, and for identifying and promoting good practice.

The potential sensitivity of certain approaches to anti-social behaviour for community relations, particularly the possible impact of enforcement, needs to be carefully considered. Police actions may be interpreted differently by different sections of the community. As a result, the reasons for any particular approach need to be clearly communicated both to the communities concerned and the officers involved. While the use of the media can play an important role in publicising police efforts and achievements, forces need to consider how their actions and messages may be interpreted, particularly in relation to perceived 'tough' responses to 'soft' issues.

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

1. Introduction

The results from many recent public surveys on crime and policing in the UK (e.g. Bland, 1997) show that, as well as residential burglary, drugs and violent crime, the public place a high priority on the police tackling less serious incidents, described variously as anti-social behaviour, incivility, minor disorder or 'quality of life' issues. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has similarly highlighted public concern about this in two recent reports on race and community relations (HMIC 1997 and 1999a). As a result, central elements of the Crime and Disorder Act (Home Office, 1998a) focus on improving the ability of the police, together with other agencies and the public, to counter the problem.

Under the Act, police forces and local authorities are required to establish local partnerships to conduct and publish an audit of local crime and disorder problems, and following local consultation, to develop and publish a strategy to reduce crime and disorder. Working with these other partners, the police and local authority will have to adhere to the following cycle of events, with each cycle lasting three years:

- conduct and publish an audit of local crime and disorder problems, taking into account the views of those who live and work in the area;
- determine priorities for action;
- devise and publish a strategy which tackles these priority problems, including objectives and targets; and
- monitor progress, fine-tuning the strategy as required (Home Office, 1998b).

The Act also includes a number of specific provisions in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour: anti-social behaviour orders, child safety orders and local child curfews, parenting orders, and power for the police to remove truants (full details of these are provided in Appendix 1). The identification of local problems of anti-social behaviour and the application of methods to tackle them are high priorities for the police and partner agencies.

Responding to incidents of anti-social behaviour has arguably always been an aspect of day-to-day policing. But in the last year or so some forces in the UK have responded to public concern by mounting specific, organised, high-profile campaigns against the problem. Some of these campaigns, for example the Metropolitan Police's work in the Kings Cross area and those in Cleveland and Strathclyde, have received a great deal of media attention.

The primary focus of such campaigns is to reduce anti-social behaviour and visible signs of disorder. If successful, they may also lead to:

INTRODUCTION

- decreased public fear of crime;
- increased public confidence in the police; and
- reduced incidence of more serious crime.

A link between disorder, fear of crime, and more serious crime, is associated with the work of Wilson and Kelling from the United States, who proposed the 'broken windows' theory to explain it (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

Findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey (Mirrlees-Black et al, 1998) also seem to support this proposition. They show a correlation between the level of physical disorder in an area and the level of victimisation of burglary, vehicle theft and violence.[1] The level of victimisation in areas of high disorder was two and a half times higher for domestic burglary, and almost two times higher for violence than that in areas of low disorder (see Figure 1).

[1] *The measure of physical disorder was based upon the* BCS *interviewer's perception of the level of (a) vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property, and (b) rubbish and litter in the area in which the respondent lived. The crimes specified are: % of households experiencing at least one burglary (attempted or successful) in 1997; % of households owning vehicles experiencing at least one vehicle • related theft (theft of vehicle, theft from or attempted theft) in 1997; and % of adults victims of some form of violence (wounding, common assault, robbery and snatch theft) in 1997.*

Figure 1: Proportion of victims of specific crimes, by disorder level (1998 BCS)
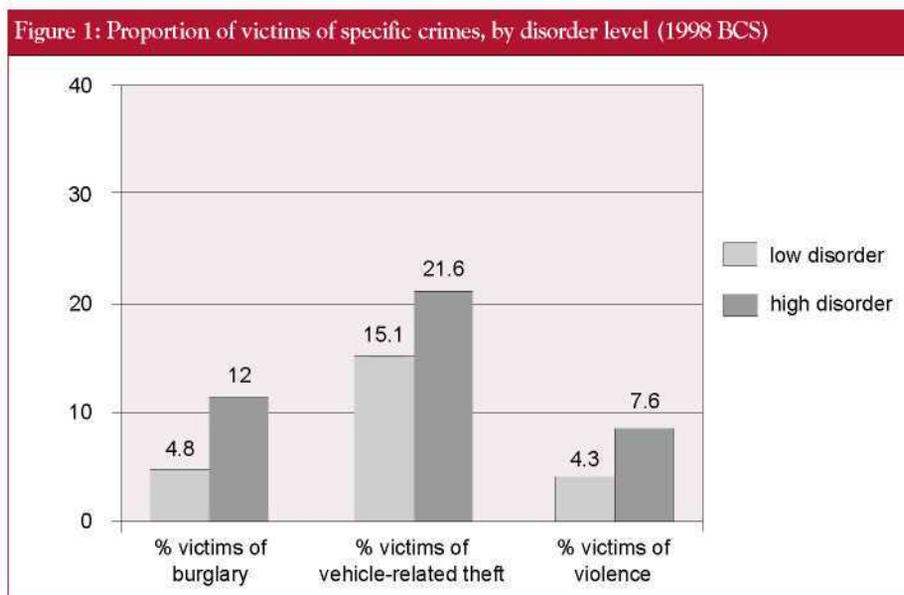
The Broken Windows Theory

The broken windows theory proposes that if a broken window in a building is left unrepaired the other windows will soon be broken. An experiment to test this involved abandoning a car in two contrasting neighbourhoods: one 'respectable', the other 'run-down'. The car was vandalised in both. Wilson and Kelling suggest that the results of this experiment show vandalism can occur anywhere once informal social controls are lowered by signals that 'no one cares'. They go further to suggest that 'untended' *behaviour* also leads to the breakdown of community controls (if a house is left abandoned and untended for example, the weeds will grow, a window may be smashed, children are allowed to be noisy, litter accumulates, young people congregate, public drinking and begging occurs, and there are fights).

This breakdown need not lead inevitably to increases in more serious crime. But Wilson and Kelling propose that the change in the neighbourhood will affect residents' *perceptions* of crime. The level of disorder will lead them to assume that crime, especially violent crime, is rising. This will make them feel less secure and more fearful. They will change their behaviour, using the streets less often and avoiding contact with others. This will weaken community bonds and increase individual isolation. Such circumstances make an area more vulnerable to crime, state Wilson and Kelling. It is more likely, though not inevitable, they say, that drug dealing, prostitution and muggings will visibly flourish there than in a place where people are confident in the informal controls of public behaviour.

Wilson and Kelling highlight the part local residents can play, without substantial police involvement, in maintaining order through neighbourhood watches or patrols, for example. But they emphasise that the police play the key role in this by reinforcing informal social control mechanisms. They recognise, however, that there is no easy answer for police chiefs considering how best to deploy their resources to achieve this. The key, according to Wilson and Kelling, is for the police to identify those neighbourhoods at the 'tipping point' where public order has deteriorated a little but is not unreclaimable. The provision of additional officers, particularly directed foot patrol, to such areas, they claim, is likely to be the best use of resources and have the greatest impact.

INTRODUCTION

The research

The research aimed to identify the range of tactics and strategies used by the police to tackle anti-social behaviour. We did not seek to obtain a complete national picture of all forces' activity. In collaboration with ACPO, we identified a sample of nine forces with developed initiatives explicitly focused on anti-social behaviour. The forces were:

- Cleveland Constabulary;
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary;
- Greater Manchester Police;
- Hampshire Constabulary;
- Lancashire Police;
- Merseyside Police;
- the Metropolitan Police Service;
- Strathclyde Police; and
- Surrey Police.

The fieldwork for the research comprised visits to all sample forces between November 1997 and April 1998. These visits involved meetings and interviews with middle and senior police managers, and the collection of relevant documentation detailing the specifics of the initiatives. In most cases, we also observed the delivery of responses and interviewed officers directly involved in their implementation.

The report

The central aim of this report is to draw general lessons and conclusions about the policing of anti-social behaviour, on the basis of the specific force examples we visited. The report draws on these examples throughout to illustrate specific points but does not provide in-depth analysis or evaluation of the individual responses employed by the forces visited.

In section 2, we categorise the range of police responses to anti-social behaviour and identify how, and in what circumstances these responses are applied. The use of street-level police enforcement is discussed, but we also highlight the role of other agencies both in enforcement and in the development of diversionary initiatives.

The research highlighted certain management issues as central to the policing of anti-social behaviour. These included managing resources, the media and public relations, and are considered in section 3. Section 4 focuses on the difficulties of measuring anti-social behaviour and monitoring the impact of police efforts to tackle it, and attempts by the sample forces to counter these difficulties. The conclusions are outlined in section 5.

2. Tackling anti'social behaviour

What is 'anti-social behaviour'?

It is difficult to define anti-social behaviour. The range of other terms employed to describe the problem highlights this: 'quality of life' issues, minor disorder, incivilities. None of the forces we visited had a formal definition of anti-social behaviour. The officers we spoke to generally took a pragmatic 'common sense' view based primarily on the operational realities they experience day-to-day. So, for the police at a local level, 'anti-social behaviour' is a description of whatever 'minor' problems intrude on the daily life of communities and lead to calls for police service.

While not producing a formal definition, Hampshire Constabulary had developed a list of incident types to be addressed under their 'Enforcing the Peace' initiative. This initiative aims to reduce 'the incidence of disorder, nuisance and anti-social behaviour within communities' (Hampshire Constabulary, undated). The incidents formally identified to be addressed were:

• drunken loutish behaviour;
• intimidating gatherings of young people in public areas;
• the public use of obscene language;
• aggressive begging;
• litter;
• graffiti;
• damage;
• inconsiderate or reckless riding of cycles;
• illegally parked or abandoned motor vehicles;
• drug dealing; and
• prostitution.

The Spotlight Initiative by Strathclyde Police, launched on 1 October 1996, set out to 'dramatically reduce violent crime, disorder and fear of crime' across the force (Strathclyde Police, 1997). Tackling minor crime and anti-social behaviour is a means by which the force aims to meet this objective.[2] As well as targeting the carrying of offensive weapons and street robberies, the following were identified as targets for police action:

• alcohol-related disorder:
  - problems associated with drinking in public places and at sporting events, and under-age drinking; and
  - control of licensed premises;

[2] It *is interesting to note that both Hampshire and Strathclyde make explicit reference to the 'broken windows' theory of Wilson and Kelling as underpinning the rationale of their approaches.*

- litter and public nuisance: including dog-fouling, illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles and noise nuisance;
- problems (notably fear of crime) associated with use of parks and public places;
- truancy; and
- vandalism.[3]

The absence of a common definition of anti-social behaviour creates practical difficulties for the police in their efforts to tackle it, because their powers may be unclear and the solution to the problem may lie with other agencies. Crawford (1997) writes that a central component of the 'broken windows' thesis is that disorderly behaviour violates community expectations of appropriate civil behaviour. However, he highlights the following difficulties:

- there are no clear and consistent definitions of what constitutes disorder;
- the legal justification for police intervention may be unclear;
- there is an absence of consensus about what it is that constitutes disorder;
- whose definition of 'order' should be accorded priority?

This points to the importance of the police consulting with local communities to identify the issues of concern, an area addressed by the Crime and Disorder Act. It also, however, illustrates some of the difficulties that will need to be tackled by the police and other agencies in developing local crime and disorder strategies. We later highlight examples of the police attempting, at an operational level, to mediate competing conceptions of acceptable behaviour, specifically between young people and older residents.

The following sections describe various methods used to tackle anti-social behaviour, including their application to young people. We draw on the initiatives and approaches developed by seven of the police forces visited, summarised in Table 1.[4] There are, therefore, other tactics, not covered here, that may form part of an overall response, for example the use of CCTV

The discussion is structured in terms of the broad categories within which these methods fall. However, this should not be taken to mean that forces' overall approaches to anti-social behaviour conform to these categories. Typically forces are employing a range of methods to address anti-social behaviour, from direct street-level law enforcement to working with partner agencies on a problem-solving basis.

Table 1: Force initiatives		
Force	Initiative	Coverage
Cleveland Constabulary	Problem-Oriented Policing and Zero Tolerance	Force-wide
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	Quality of Life Team	Plymouth Division
Greater Manchester Police	Operation Gilpin	Wythenshawe Division
Hampshire Constabulary	Enforcing the Peace	Force-wide
Lancashire Police	Multi Agency Nuisance Eradication Strategy	Burnley Division
Merseyside Police	Townsafe Team	Central Wirral Area
Strathclyde Police	Spotlight Initiative	Force-wide

Street level police enforcement

Many, if not all, of the forces we visited, used street-level, direct policing methods to tackle aspects of anti-social behaviour. However, the approach adopted by the police to enforcement differed. In some cases, intervention against aspects of anti-social behaviour was described as an integral part of the force's policing style. In practice, what this entailed was the police taking action against individuals engaged in anti-social behaviour, rather than turning a 'blind-eye' to these activities.

For example, in a description of the policing approach employed in the Middlesbrough Division of Cleveland Constabulary, the then Crime Manager suggested that his officers should 'confront, interact and assert' in the face of anti-social behaviour. Officers should make a point of directly tackling individual incidents of anti-social behaviour that they might have ignored in the past; littering for example, or members of the public urinating in the street. The officer claimed that as a result of encouraging officers to be positive, and to intervene at a low level, public confidence in the police would increase, general fear of crime diminish, and changes be effected in the public's behaviour. The aim was to provide a consistent response to these sorts of activities within the division.

There were, however, also examples where forces undertook direct enforcement against anti-social behaviour, but in a targeted manner, either in relation to an identified problem or in a specific location. Cleveland, for example, has adopted a problem-oriented policing (POP) approach throughout the force. A number of initiatives introduced under POP have involved targeting anti-social behaviour

through the use of patrol and enforcement. Problems with youths congregating at a local school in Stockton were tackled by the local beat officer arranging for patrols, both by community beat officers (CBOs) and by shift officers, to attend the school and remove people from the school grounds. In Middlesbrough, problems with prostitution in one particular part of the town were made a divisional target.

It has been widely debated how compatible the 'zero-tolerance' approach adopted in Middlesbrough is with the concept of POP One argument suggests that zero-tolerance is an element of short-term reactive policing rather than longer-term problem solving. This, however, is not an argument that Cleveland would accept. They claim that it is perfectly possible to run the two approaches in tandem, with POP providing the long-term policing strategy for the force, while zero-tolerance provides a tactic to address short-term problems (Leigh et al, 1998).

Hampshire Constabulary has introduced a force strategy to counter aspects of anti-social behaviour called 'Enforcing the Peace' (ETP). As part of this strategy officers were involved in ETP patrols. These 'high visibility' patrols were undertaken three or four times a week by four or five officers (both shift and community beat) sent out in vans to identified problem locations. A tasking group determined the priorities for patrol. For example, at one location in Gosport there had been problems with late night damage to shop windows. Following consultation with local shopkeepers, additional high profile patrols were arranged to coincide with offending patterns. Subsequently a number of youths were arrested for criminal damage, ending the incidents of damage and the need for additional patrols.

In the examples above, the police responses had been established on an *ad hoc* basis, temporarily running until the problem had been resolved, and did not involve any permanent re-allocation of resources by the police. Other forces, however, have gone about tackling identified problems or problem locations in a different manner: by entrusting enforcement to permanent dedicated units. An example is the 'Quality of Life' (QoL) team set up by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in Plymouth to deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour notified to the police by members of the public. Members of the team analysed incidents of anti-social behaviour and identified the locations of repeat incidents. The team then undertook high-visibility patrols in these areas.

On Friday and Saturday nights the regular officers in the QoL team (one sergeant and four constables) were supplemented by a number of special constables. Problem locations were visited three or four times in an evening, dispersing crowds, moving people on, or confiscating drink from under-age drinkers. In addition, as well as

targeting problem locations the QoL team was available to the control room in case of any spontaneous disturbances. Members of the team also patrolled the city centre tackling incidents of begging and vagrancy. This patrol was distinct from the beat officers routinely patrolling the area or the shift officers responding to calls for service from the area.

Similarly, in the Central Wirral Area of Merseyside Police, a 'Townsafe' team was formed in 1997 with geographic responsibility for policing central Birkenhead. Much of the team's work is based on a high profile enforcement policy and mixes problem solving, multi-agency approaches with direct on-street enforcement. Highly visible street patrol forms a central part of this policy, particularly in the evening. Then, the team aims to challenge anti-social behaviour and more serious disorder associated with the town centre's many pubs and nightclubs. As part of this, there is a policy of charging all drunks found in the area and of charging incidents of affray far more widely (approved with the local Crown Prosecution Service). The team is also highly involved in developing and organising multi-agency enforcement operations predominantly focused on crimes such as shoplifting, licensing offences, prostitution and drug-related crime (particularly associated with offenders coming onto the Wirral through the Wallasey and Birkenhead road tunnels).

Police powers

One of the problems for the police in dealing directly with incidents of anti-social behaviour is establishing what sanctions are available to them, particularly if they are not covered by a specific offence. A number of the forces visited had developed formal guidance for their officers to help them deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour. Hampshire, for example, as part of ETP has produced a booklet that identifies 35 scenarios and potential legislation that may be used in these circumstances. Among the eventualities covered are:

- littering;
- riding/driving on a footpath;
- peddling without a certificate;
- urinating in the street;
- causing a nuisance/disturbance on educational premises;
- selling tobacco to under-16s; and
- begging.

The booklet specifies any points that have to be proven in relation to the offence (for example, where an individual is suspected of peddling without a licence, it is

necessary to prove that the individual is travelling from house to house, or town to town offering goods for sale). The booklet also discusses partnership-based problem solving approaches and identifies the use of mediation in conflict resolution, particularly in neighbour disputes. Details of a charitable mediation organisation are provided. The booklet also highlights the roles and responsibilities of other agencies in tackling anti-social behaviour.

A community policing team inspector in Cleveland had done something similar, producing guidance for his officers on handling queries from members of the public about what the police intended to do in certain situations. For example, he had explained to his officers that people playing football in the street, while not an offence in itself, could be prosecuted under the Highways Act as an act of obstruction.

Multi-agency enforcement

It was rarely the case that enforcement by the police alone was the only tactic employed against anti-social behaviour. Normally, it comprised one element in a range of tactics. Analysis of problem-oriented policing data from Cleveland Constabulary found that the police acted alone in only 30% of the identified problems. The remainder involved the police working with other agencies (Leigh etal., 1998).

A number of the forces used partnerships to service multi-agency enforcement operations. By so doing, the police were able to work with agencies whose legal powers complemented, and sometimes added to, their own. For example, officers in Hamilton Division, Strathclyde Police worked with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) on enforcement operations against littering and fly-tipping. SEPA officers possess specific legal powers not available to the police, but also have the necessary expertise and knowledge required to develop a case for prosecution.

Several forces worked with the Benefits Agency to identify and prosecute perpetrators of anti-social behaviour also guilty of benefit fraud. In Burnley, Lancashire the police had been troubled by incidents of off-road motorcycling. Analysis of the location of the problem had identified that it was often taking place on land owned by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE). The police had therefore asked the CPRE to take civil sanctions against offenders. At the same time they contacted the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that those who were convicted of such offences faced confiscation of their motorcycles.

There were other circumstances where the police played a relatively minor role, supporting other agencies taking the lead. This was particularly the case when the sanctions available to the other agencies were likely to have a greater impact upon the offender than those available to the police.

The following examples concentrate on co-operation between the police and other agencies in the housing arena. The 1996 Housing Act has provided a number of new powers to local authorities and housing associations to deal with tenants involved in anti-social behaviour (for example, the use of probationary tenancies or injunctions under the Act). In such cases the police's major role has been to act as witnesses or evidence gatherers in supporting cases brought against problem tenants by local authorities and social landlords.[5]

In Burnley, the police had arranged a 'Safer Estates Agreement' with the council and housing associations. The police agreed to provide evidence to the other two organisations to assist civil proceedings where nuisance and criminal tenants had been identified.[6] Similarly, in Greater Manchester, as part of Operation Gilpin,[7] the police would act as witnesses, due to estate tenants' fears of intimidation, in support of the local council's Neighbourhood Nuisance Team (NNT). The NNT had been established specifically to deal with neighbour disputes, harassment and to handle evictions, and used covert video and surveillance teams, as well as police data, to gather evidence. The police were keen to stress, however, that only details of serious calls were sent to the Neighbourhood Nuisance Team. The remainder were screened and dealt with by the police.

Greater Manchester Police had produced a leaflet, 'Your Children Your Responsibility - A Parent's Guide', which explained what they were doing to tackle 'youths causing annoyance', the behaviour covered by this term, and the sanctions available to the council for use against tenants whose children committed these acts. ("Section 4 of your tenant's agreement clearly explains that you are responsible for your child and anyone living with you. This responsibility stretches to surrounding land and the local neighbourhood. If your child causes a breach of the agreement you could ultimately be convicted" (Greater Manchester Police, undated).) While these sanctions were not mentioned to parents on first contact, they would be discussed if there were subsequent visits to the address.

Clearly, however, the sanctions outlined above are only of use against local authority or housing association tenants, not private tenants where the landlords are unprepared to take action against anti-social tenants. As an aside, faced with a similar situation in the United States the police have focused upon the use of

[5] For *information about the 1996 Housing Act see Crime Concern, 1998.*

[6] *Further details of Safer Estates Agreement, and a practical example from the Bell Farm Estate in York, can be found in Crime Concern's 'Reducing Neighbourhood Crime: a manual for action' produced for the Home Office Crime* Prevention *Agency.*

[7] *Operation Gilpin ran in the Wythenshawe Division of Greater Manchester Folice to tackle calls from the public about 'youths causing annoyance'. It aimed to improve response times to all such incidents, provide high visibility policing to reassure the public, ascertain the exact actions being taken by the youths, and, if necessary, liaise with local neighbour nuisance units who might wish to take action in relation to breaches of tenancy agreements.*

abatement laws, based on state and city legislation, to apply pressure on landlords to get rid of problem tenants. In Joliet, Illinois, for example, abatement laws have been introduced to counter acts of drug activity, prostitution, gambling and public nuisance (City of Joliet, 1998). In circumstances where such activities have been identified by the police, and action to curb them has not been taken by the landlord, the landlord may be open to criminal penalties including the closure of the property, fines (including legal and city fees), imprisonment and, ultimately, forfeiture of the property.

Developments in the UK have taken a different direction, focusing upon sanctions that can be applied against the offender rather than the landlord. The new Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), available since April 1999 under the Crime and Disorder Act, allows the police and local authorities to take out a preventative order designed to put an end to persistent and serious anti-social behaviour by an individual or a number of individuals (i.e. a family). The guidance for the ASBO, however, suggests that it should be targeted at criminal or sub-criminal behaviour, not minor disputes between neighbours (see Appendix 1 and Home Office, 1998c).

Enforcement and young people

Young people and anti-social behaviour

Contact with police forces during this research revealed that, in many cases, 'anti-social behaviour' served as a generic term for problems with young people. Analysis by Cleveland Constabulary as part of their problem-oriented policing (POP) work revealed that of the 206 problems addressed by the police between March 1997 and December 1997, 51% involved young people (Leigh et al., 1998).[8]

[8] By *comparison, the figure for the other force in the study, Leicestershire, was* 18%.

Public calls for service about the behaviour of young people were a common feature in all the forces we studied. The types of behaviour that fell under the banner of 'problems with youths' were wide ranging:

- shop-lifting;
- criminal damage;
- truanting;
- under-age drinking and drug taking;
- intimidating behaviour; and
- general 'hanging around'.

The problems faced by the police in taking action against individuals who may not be involved in illegal acts are illustrated most starkly in relation to young people.

There are, for example, circumstances where other members of the public deem the simple presence of young people unacceptable, particularly in large groups, regardless of their actions.

The size of the 'disturbance' compounded the problem. Problems often came to police attention because of the number of young people involved, not because of what they were doing *per* se. As one officer from Cleveland remarked, two people drinking out on the grass was not a problem, and did not require a police response. Thirty people doing the same constituted a public order problem. Clearly there were circumstances where other members of the public found the sheer numbers of teenagers gathered intimidating.

The 'Quality of Life' team dealt with problems of this nature in Plymouth. Groups of 40 to 50 young teenagers gathered, for example, in a local park and in a local underpass. These sites were well known to the police, to the extent that the 'Quality of Life' team routinely stopped at these sites whilst on patrol to check for groups of youths. When present, the youths were mainly milling about and chatting, although there was some under-age drinking and smoking. In such cases, as officers approached some members of the group would scatter, taking the drink with them. The remainder would stay and chat to the officers who would ask them to quieten down before resuming patrol. The officers expected to be called back to the location a number of times during the evening as a result of calls from local residents.

The result was a good deal of frustration and fatalism from the officers, not least because they felt their actions failed to have any constructive impact upon 'the problem'. Here, as elsewhere, officers often took a sympathetic view of what might be termed 'nuisance youth' problems, recognising the difficulties facing young people. They highlighted the lack of social and recreational provision for young people. Attempts by some of the forces to tackle this, in partnership with other agencies, are described later in this section.

Officers in Devon and Cornwall, and in other forces, suggested that tolerance of certain types of behaviour differed amongst different sections of the public. A number of police officers made the point that behaviour that might be tolerated in one area would not be tolerated in another, depending on the residents. In general, their view was that middle class areas had different perceptions about what constituted disorderly behaviour than did working class areas (cf Crawford, 1997), and were more likely to complain to the police about the activities of young people. One of the community policing inspectors mentioned that in South

Middlesbrough there was a large amount of new housing, both private and association. He felt that tolerance on these estates, for example of kids playing football on grassed areas, was much lower than on the working class estates.

Similarly, officers felt there were differences between generations in terms of their expectations of what constituted acceptable public behaviour by young people. The difficulty for the police was establishing what role they should play when faced with these differences. One senior officer from Devon and Cornwall expressed fears that the use of enforcement in Plymouth might drive a wedge between the police and young people. He stressed that the young people the police were dealing with were "not recidivists, they are not the people who should be coming into contact with criminal justice agencies". He also felt that trying to legislate for all quality of life issues risked bringing young people into conflict with the law more frequently, and 'criminalising' them unnecessarily.

There were circumstances where the police felt that complaints were unreasonable, and where the best course of action was to speak to the complainant rather than deal solely with the youths concerned. Officers in Greater Manchester and Cleveland described a 'common sense' approach to such situations. Community police officers would visit callers to reassure them, but would also seek to elicit a more sympathetic understanding of the problem, often by highlighting the limited facilities available to young people. Experience from Operation Gilpin in Manchester suggested that such a response could often be sufficient, particularly if it was teamed with appeals to the young people concerned to consider the feelings of local residents, and to avoid giving them further cause for complaint.

More seriously, officers also alleged that some members of the public exaggerated the extent of bad behaviour by youths in their complaints (citing examples where they had been at the scene of an incident when a subsequent call about it had been received), or worse, falsified behaviour. In particular the police stated that members of the public sometimes reported incidents in terms that necessitated a police response, alleging, for example, that drug taking or dealing was taking place. This is not to suggest that drug taking or under-age drinking were not sometimes factors in anti-social behaviour by youths, either causally or incidentally, merely that in some cases their presence was used as a rationale by the public for police intervention. Interestingly, it also suggests that the expectation on the part of the members of the public concerned was that the police would not intervene without the presence of the additional involvement of drugs and alcohol.

Enforcement

There were many situations where the police were required to play an enforcement role in relation to young people. Countering truancy in areas such as Birkenhead in Merseyside, Strathclyde and Hampshire was an important tactic in reducing problems during school hours, and forces often worked with educational welfare officers in the 'enforcement' of school attendance. Strathclyde Police, for example, ran initiatives against truants as part of the force's Spotlight strategy.[9] This involved the police patrolling with school attendance officers during school hours, removing children of school age from the streets and returning them either to school or their parents. In the period between 1 October and 31 December 1996 the force ran two such Spotlights. As a result, 55 children from primary schools and 467 children from secondary schools were returned to home or school. The police found that the truancy initiative had an immediate impact. The school rolls increased, and level of truancy dropped, with the impact continuing for up to a month after the initiative. After this point the deterrent effect faded, and the initiative needed to be repeated.

In Hampshire, a truancy initiative in Southampton City Centre was coordinated by a steering group comprising members of the City Council, Education and Welfare Department, retailers, secondary schools and the police. The city council provided funding for the printing of leaflets and posters. These were distributed to shop staff explaining how to identify truants and what subsequent action to take. Where truants were identified, stores faxed details to the Education Welfare Department who then carried out follow-up enquiries with schools and pupils. Leaflets and posters were also distributed to the secondary schools in the area, and to parents of children. In describing the scheme the police clearly stated that in combating truancy they were aiming to reduce the level of nuisance behaviour and shoplifting in the city centre (Hampshire Police, 1997). During the initial seven months of the scheme, which began in early 1997, it was claimed that there was a considerable reduction in the number of truants in the city centre, and the number of juveniles arrested for shoplifting fell by 40%.

There has, however, been recognition of the limited powers possessed by the police in relation to truancy. Section 16 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, which came into operation on 1 December 1998, now provides police officers with the power to take a child or young person back to school, or another place designated by the local education authority, when the officer has reasonable cause to believe he or she is of compulsory school age and is absent from school without lawful authority.

9 *Spotlight is Strathclyde's coordinated strategy to deal with problem issues, both at a force and a divisional level. A fuller account of the organisation of this strategy is provided in section 4-*

Parental enforcement

Outside school hours, forces were often keen to encourage what might be termed 'parental enforcement' against problem individuals. If initial, informal contacts with parents failed, the police would often use more formal methods to persuade parents to exert control over their children. A common policy among forces was to send a formal letter to the parents of identified perpetrators, to inform them of the problem and to ask for their co-operation in modifying their child's behaviour (used by Hampshire, Lancashire, GMP, Devon and Cornwall, for example). These letters were often written to deal with specific circumstances. For example, Hampshire Constabulary had produced letters which refer specifically to incidents dealt with under the Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997, and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Another method used, by Devon and Cornwall and Lancashire for example, was the filming of acts of anti-social behaviour. The film collected was particularly useful when the police were subsequently faced with parents who were reluctant to accept that their child had been involved in anti-social behaviour. It was recognised, however, that filming, particularly of young people, had to be done with sensitivity and so often required authorisation by a senior officer. In Plymouth, young people had complained to youth workers that such police actions constituted harassment.

Often, parents had simply been unaware of any problem and no further police action was required. However, if a first letter was ignored, and further incidents occurred, parents were then asked to attend their local police station for a meeting to discuss the matter further. In Burnley, if there was not enough evidence for a criminal prosecution, officers attending incidents were told to take details of the youths involved, which were then entered onto a 'Juvenile Nuisance Register' database. If there were two notifications in six months, the police would send a letter to parents. In cases where the approach via parents was ineffective, a sergeant in Burnley had approached the Crown Prosecution Service and established that, if the database provided details of incivilities, the police could prosecute. By February 1998 the police had prosecuted two people (one for causing a nuisance on educational premises three times in five weeks). Statements were taken from officers who had attended the incidents, and the individuals prosecuted under section five of the Public Order Act, receiving deferred cautions.

Hamilton Child Safety Initiative[10]

An intermediate approach, directly involving the police and an element of parental enforcement, but avoiding the prosecution of young people, was the Child Safety

[10] *The initiative has since been extended to cover the whole town of Hamilton and renamed Children and Young Feople's Safety Strategy (ChYPS). Its progress is monitored and driven by a multi-agency steering group.*

Initiative (HCSI) introduced by the Hamilton Division of Strathclyde Police. The HCSI is part of the force's Spotlight Initiative (discussed in section 3), and was initially planned to run from October to December 1997. In the force's press release the scheme was described as a "pioneering initiative, which aims to protect the safety of young people, cut down on youth disorder and reduce crime concerns in one Lanarkshire town [Hamilton]".

The scheme was introduced on three council estates in the division selected on "the basis of locally expressed concerns in relation to community safety and a desire by the local communities themselves to take positive action" (McGallaghly et al., 1998). It was based around "high-profile after-dark Community Police patrols in local streets" (Strathclyde Police and South Lanarkshire Council, 1997b). Officers on evening patrol who found unaccompanied children whom they deemed to be at risk would return the children home. Parents or guardians would be reminded of the dangers facing children out alone after dark. If there was no suitable adult supervision at home, the children were to be taken to Hamilton Police Station. If the police felt there was cause for concern they would inform the council's social work department. In cases of emergency the duty social worker would be contacted immediately. Every time a child was taken back to their parents or to the police station a contact card would be completed so the police had a record of previous contact with the individual.

The patrols were undertaken by community police officers on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, these being the times identified as busiest by the police. During its first week of operation 35 children were taken off the streets, and 19 in the second week. Five of these 54 children were drunk, but only one child, with learning difficulties, had to be taken back to the police station. Two hundred and twenty-nine interventions with children were recorded for the first six months of the scheme's operation (October 1997-April 1998). Only four children were charged with an offence over this period (McGallaghly et al, 1998).

Analysis of complaint and disturbance calls to the division found that the total number of calls fell both in comparison with the previous six months of the year (by 22%), and with the corresponding six months of the previous year (by 12%). Comparison of numbers of calls for a 'control' estate found that, while the number of calls in the control also fell compared to the preceding six months and comparable six months of the previous year, the fall was smaller in both cases (14% and 9% respectively). The fall in the control area was not explained.

Analysis of crime data for the HCSI estates and the control estate, while showing decreases against the previous six months did not reveal decreases when compared

[11] *Defined as 'offences involving disorderly behaviour and young people'.*

to the same six months of the previous year. The exception to this was 'juvenile miscellaneous offences'[11] where the number of offences had fallen significantly further on the HCSI estates than on the control estate (a decrease of 41% as opposed to an increase of 25% (McGallagly et al., 1998)). The introduction of the HCSI in Hamilton created a great deal of interest, nationally and internationally, the ramifications of which are discussed in greater detail in section three of this report.

Subsequent to our research, the police in Hamilton held a 'Proximity Conference' in October 1998 aimed at bringing young people and older residents together to facilitate greater understanding between them. Forty-nine 'delegates' attended including representatives of elderly forums, Victim Support and pupils from local secondary schools. The use of pre- and post-conference questionnaires with delegates identified significant changes in attitude.[12] This is another interesting example of the police attempting to mediate different conceptions of what constitutes anti-social behaviour between generations.

[12] *The proportion of adult delegates who said they understood young people and their needs increased 16%. The proportion who believed young people were tolerant of the older generation also increased by 16%. The proportion of young people who said they understood older people and their needs increased by 6%. The proportion who believed older people were tolerant of the younger generation increased by 34%.*

Under section 14 of the Crime and Disorder Act, introduced in September 1998, local authorities, with the support of the police and the local community, are able to introduce local child curfew schemes. They are designed to work with a different age group and in different circumstances to the HCSI.

A curfew notice imposed under such a scheme will apply to children of specified ages under ten who are unsupervised by a responsible adult or a parent during specified hours between 9pm and 6am for a maximum of 90 days. Police officers are required to return home any child that they believe has breached the conditions of such a notice. If there is nobody at the child's home, the police may take the child into police protection (under their existing powers under the Children Act 1989). The police are required to inform the local authority of any breach of a curfew notice and social services are required to investigate any such breach.

Multi-agency diversion

As well as the various enforcement-based tactics described above, forces worked with other agencies to develop alternatives to anti-social behaviour. In the case of young people, solutions often involved agencies pooling their resources to provide social and recreational 'diversions' from other behaviour likely to annoy local residents. The following provide examples of police involvement in two broad, and inter-related, areas: the formation and support of groups to provide diversionary activities, and the acquisition of facilities to assist these activities.

In Hartlepool, Cleveland, police involvement in developing schemes for young people was partly due to a recognition that recreational facilities for young people were lacking in the town. As an illustration, a disco for young people arranged in a nightclub in the town centre had been such a success that demand for tickets had far surpassed the venue's capacity. As a result, some 800 children had been turned away from the club. At this point the police had become involved, not because the young people concerned were acting in an anti-social manner, but simply because the number involved presented a public order problem. Plans for a subsequent disco limited ticket sales to 600, with the local police involved from the outset. There had also been discussions with the local council about opening a 'pub' for kids in the town, which the police indicated they would not oppose.

In Hamilton Division, Strathclyde, the Community Involvement Branch had been running a 'Safe Rave' scheme monthly for over a year. Organised on a Thursday night for children aged between 12 and 18 years of age, these were 'raves' where the police were present and could supervise, selling soft drinks and crisps. Up to 14 police officers had been involved, in their own time, although in the future it was intended that the local authority would take over the organisation, with police involvement limited to keeping order.

In Hartlepool we found an example where a similar initiative had backfired on the police and local authority. One particular youth club in Hartlepool had had trouble with youths drinking on the premises, particularly on Friday night, something the police and other authorities had not anticipated. As a result the decision had been taken to close the youth club. Problems for the police still remained, however, as groups of youths continued to gather around the club, even though it was shut. The result had been groups of 50 to 60 youths hanging around the estate, outside local shops. So recreating the difficulties of 'policing' such groups described earlier.

Elsewhere in Hartlepool the police had more success. The Raby estate had been the source of a number of calls to the police about children hanging around on street corners, sometimes drinking. The police decided to establish alternative activities for these children. The local school was supportive and willing to make its premises available, but was unable to pay for staff. Fortunately the local authority provided youth workers and funding (with money obtained from City Challenge). As a result, facilities were provided and a meeting with the children led to the formation of a youth group called the 'Raby Rebels'(now renamed the 'Raby Youth'). Members of the group were aged between 10 and 22. They ran the group, produced their own set of rules, and policed themselves (for example, members littering or causing a disturbance on the estate would be answerable to other group members).

The group, with police assistance, has organised trips during the summer (quad biking, dragon boat racing, and outward-bound courses). The scheme had led to a reduction in the number of calls from residents on the estate. In addition, relations between the police and the children, and between the police and those members of the public who had previously been complaining about the children's activities had improved. The police had even managed to involve one of the persistent complainants in the organisation of the group.

In Burnley the police were involved in the organisation of a scheme called ROBOT ('Relief of boredom of teenagers') which provides a mobile drop-in centre for young people. A converted ambulance is sent to locations where 'hot-spots' of anti-social behaviour have been identified. The ambulance, which provides food, drink and music, is used to try to draw the children away to areas where their presence is less likely to cause offence.

Police in the town also identified a problem with youths congregating outside a local supermarket, resulting in complaints from shoppers. The Community Support Sergeant had then arranged for a detached youth worker to contact the young people to design a shelter which would provide a safe and dry meeting point for them in a location where local residents would not be disturbed. Their ideas were then drawn up by a local council architect. The shelter was located on the edge of a recreation field some 400 yards from the supermarket where they were unlikely to come into contact with shoppers. A 'play wall' was also built next to the shelter to provide an added diversion.

In Southampton, Hampshire, on an estate where there had previously been problems with youths hanging around outside shops, the police and local authority worked together to provide a basketball/football pitch for older children, and an adventure playground for younger children. Both were situated away from the shops, but were overlooked by the flats on the estate.

In Bembridge, on the Isle of Wight, the police had been involved in consultations with young people defined as 'bored and increasingly troublesome' (Hampshire Constabulary). As a result, an action committee (comprising the local police officer, six young people and a parish councillor) had identified basketball as a suitable diversionary activity. Support for the scheme had been received from local residents, the parish council and local businesses, and a potential site was identified and cleared by young people. Planning permission was sought for the scheme and funding acquired from Hampshire Constabulary's 'Enforcing the Peace' fund

(discussed in greater detail in the following section). The level of complaints received by the police following this initiative were reported as having decreased considerably.

As the preceding examples have demonstrated, the police are involved in a range of tactics to counter anti-social behaviour. What has emerged is that there are a number of particular management issues that are of common concern; issues around resource management and allocation, multi-agency working and media handling. The following section of the report discusses these issues in greater detail.

3. Management issues

The policing of anti-social behaviour raises a number of important management issues to which the forces we visited had variably responded. In this section, we again draw on illustrative examples to discuss how they had addressed:

- managing resources;
- managing multi-agency partnerships; and
- managing the media and public relations.

Managing resources

Policing anti-social behaviour presents a number of difficulties for managing resources. Primarily, this relates to providing adequate resources to manage the routine reactive demand generated by calls for service in relation to incidents of anti-social behaviour. Traditionally, reports of these incidents would simply be given a low priority by command and control operators, over-burdened with incoming calls, and also by patrol officers, busy responding to 'more serious' incidents. Now, given increased public concern with anti-social behaviour, police forces are recognising the need actively to manage these calls for service. In the forces visited, this tended to involve allocating resources to:

- handle calls; and
- deal directly with incidents.

Call handling

Forces have previously made efforts to manage call demand in relation to crime through the development of crime desks (also known variously as Crime Management Units, Crime Service Units or Crime Bureaux). Emergency '999' calls, and crime report calls demanding an immediate response, go directly from the switchboard to the control room for dispatch. The details of these crimes are then forwarded to the crime desk. All other crime report calls are passed directly to the crime desk to decide appropriate resource allocation. A crime desk's primary function, therefore, is to process 'minor crime', such as thefts from motor vehicles, other minor thefts and criminal damage. Some forces have also set up 'help desks' to deal directly with the public, providing information and advice on issues such as the law, lost property or traffic problems. (See Jolowicz and Read, 1994.)

Wythenshawe Division, GMP, developed an approach combining elements of both crime and help desks specifically to manage anti-social behaviour calls at times of particularly high demand. This development formed one element of 'Operation Gilpin' which ran in the division on Tuesday and Friday nights between October and November 1997 (repeated in February 1998). The operation focused on areas suffering particular problems of youth nuisance.

The operation had been developed following concern about the response times to incidents of 'youths causing annoyance' and the service offered to members of the public reporting them. The divisional control room faced competing demands for service and so these nuisance calls were given a low priority. The control room operators would put these calls 'on hold' and only deal with them when they reappeared on the command and control system half an hour later. As a result, any youths involved had often dispersed by the time patrol officers responded, and callers were unhappy with the delays.

Under Operation Gilpin, a police officer was drafted into the control room and given sole responsibility for managing youth nuisance calls. The other operators then passed these calls immediately to the officer and focused their attention on other incoming calls. The Gilpin officer would contact the original caller to get more details about the incident and establish the nature of the problem, resolving it immediately if possible. The vast majority (over 90%) of calls did, however, require a response from the Gilpin patrol, according to figures in an internal report. If necessary, they would then allocate the dedicated patrol resource to the call, via the radio operator. Standardly, this comprised the appropriate Area (community beat) Officer, often with support from the Special Constabulary. If there was likely to be a delay in response, the Gilpin officer informed the caller. At that point the call would be closed, bringing down the division's call response times.

An internal report on the initiative noted a significantly improved average response time (compared to the same period the previous year) and a reduction by half in the number of anti-social behaviour calls received in the month following Gilpin. It did note, however, that the areas of the calls had been displaced to alternative locations, though no figures for this were quoted. The report concluded that the operation need not run continuously and could be effectively applied in short 'bursts'.

Divisions in Hampshire commonly have a Crime and Incident Management Unit which performs a similar function to a crime desk but with an expanded remit to cover anti-social behaviour. These units are staffed by experienced police officers (rather than civilians) who screen calls that previously would have been deployed by the control room. Greater emphasis is placed on attempting to dealing with such calls simply over the telephone.

Dedicated response units

Providing adequate resources to respond to anti-social behaviour calls is equally problematic. Shift patrol officers responding to incidents must focus on more

serious crime, dealing with more minor calls only as time allows. The work of community beat officers means they are also often unable to provide an immediate response to such calls. Such a situation is likely to cause particular difficulties in areas with high incidence of anti-social behaviour.

Some of the forces we visited had attempted to tackle this resourcing problem by developing response units dedicated to dealing with anti-social behaviour incidents. Plymouth Division, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, had identified resource difficulties associated with the level of 'nuisance' problems (primarily related to the behaviour of young people) in the city. The existing resource allocation, community teams and shift officers, was unable to deal adequately with these problems and so the division set up a 'Quality of Life' (QoL) team to deal with them.

Since reorganisation in 1994, the division had emphasised a 'Partnership Policing' approach based on community 'ward' teams, each covering specific electoral wards, and a 'response section' providing mobile cover throughout the city. Ward teams were responsible for managing ongoing, long-term problems in their area in partnership with the local authority and other local agencies. Unfortunately, the division found these teams had been unable to cope with the level of anti-social behaviour. Response officers, focusing on crime calls, tended to give such incidents a low priority, arriving at an incident too late, if they got there at all. This situation meant different officers would respond to repeat incidents, leading to an inconsistent response and little 'ownership' of the problem by individual officers. There had been resultant complaints about this from the public.

To counter these difficulties, the division decided to reallocate resources and establish a dedicated unit to tackle anti-social behaviour: the QoL team. The team comprises a sergeant and four constables; two seconded from ward teams and two seconded from Special Operations, with additional support from the Special Constabulary. The team's work involves both proactive and reactive elements. On the proactive side, the team initiates high visibility patrol against 'hot spots' it has identified (via complaints and incident logs) but also acts as a support resource for the ward teams. Ward sergeants can 'bid' for assistance from the QoL team to tackle particular ward problems. The team also acts as an additional reactive resource available to cover anti-social behaviour incidents that response officers cannot. The division hoped that the development of the QoL team would lead to a reduction in the number of complaints, an improvement in the quality of life in Plymouth and improved response times."

[13] *As part of the force's subsequent adoption of a problem solving approach, the Plymouth Ward teams were restructured with Special Constables attached to them. As a result, the QoL team has been disbanded.*

A similar approach informed the development of the Townsafe team in the Central Wirral Area of Merseyside Police. The team was set up in 1997 with specific responsibility for tackling crime and disorder in central Birkenhead, an area which had historically suffered from high unemployment, lack of investment and high crime rates. In the past few years the area had seen a period of steady growth and regeneration based on substantial inward investment. The police were keen to support this regenerative effort but did not have the patrol resources to devote specifically to tackling the problems of the area.

The development of the Townsafe team using reallocated central funds provided this additional resource. Members of the team work alongside the shift officers, and two community beat officers whose beats cover the central Birkenhead area. Any calls for service within this area are sent first to the Townsafe team to deal with, freeing the shift to concentrate on covering calls from the rest of Central Wirral. The community beat officers concentrate on traditional community 'bridge - building' work. In this way, the team has developed an intimate knowledge of the problems of its area which the working patterns of a traditional shift resource would preclude.

The team is also responsible for planning and coordinating specific operations in its area. This includes planning the operational logistics and identifying additional resource demands, media relations and drafting operational orders. The plan goes direct to the area superintendent for agreement. The team comprises two sergeants and 12 constables working in shifts. To cope with the variety of their work demands, the team have developed their own shift arrangements which cover from 6am to 12 midnight.

Funding

The approaches outlined above were used to provide resources for immediate response to anti-social behaviour problems. But there is also a need for resources to support longer-term police action, particularly for multi-agency diversion work. Often this will involve the police in securing financial resources, such as funding for particular community-based initiatives. Clearly at a time of continued resource constraint this can prove very difficult. Nonetheless, many of the forces we visited had successfully managed resources, in some quite innovative ways, to provide such funding. Both Merseyside and Hampshire, for example, had 'ring-fenced' money centrally, for which divisions could bid, to ensure it was used in a targeted fashion.

In the first year of Hampshire's Enforcing the Peace initiative (which began in January 1996) £150,000 was set aside to fund primarily locally based multi-agency

community projects. Although developed by Hampshire Constabulary, ETP was intended to be 'owned' by all the local agencies not just the police. (Local experience suggested, however, that the police were still perceived as the main 'drivers'.) Its focus was to identify nuisance issues causing local concern and attempt to resolve them locally by adopting a partnership approach, where appropriate. This thus placed an emphasis on local commanders to work with others in the community to find long-term solutions.

The force had recognised that long-term solutions to many problems of anti-social behaviour would involve a financial implication. It was felt that a degree of 'pump priming' of projects under ETP might encourage other agencies and organisations similarly to commit funds. The ETP funding is set aside for this purpose and local commanders are encouraged to put forward bids to help with local projects. These bids are considered according to a clear set of criteria. For example, ETP money is to be used to 'kick-start' initiatives but not to fund rolling programmes, and cannot be used to cover other agencies' staff costs. Roughly 40 projects are funded annually involving sums from £100 to £20,000.

Lessons from the first year of ETP have led Hampshire to improve aspects of the funding process. A similar funding scheme run by the local Crime Prevention Panel had led to bids being submitted to both it and ETR Hampshire have now introduced stricter criteria for ETP funding applications to ensure that this can no longer occur. The force has also introduced headquarters-based Project Managers who are responsible for more formally tracking how funds are used in individual projects. The aim is for this arrangement to function in a similar way to a Service Level Agreement between headquarters and local divisions.

Merseyside Police have also 'ringfenced' money generated by 'top-slicing' 10% off each area's budget. Areas are then encouraged to develop costed innovative proposals to apply for the reallocation of those funds. This process occurs annually requiring areas to reapply for any funding, providing evidence of the effectiveness to which it has been put. The development of the Townsafe team in Birkenhead was funded through this process. Central Wirral had successfully been through this reapplication procedure for 1998/99, and had not only secured funding for the continuation of the Townsafe team, but also for additional increased resources for the team to cover a wider geographical area.

In some of the other forces visited, without a central 'pool' of money, local officers had often displayed admirable initiative and innovation in obtaining funds for diversionary activities. This often involved them in 'entrepreneurial' activities to identify and secure funding from a range of sources. For example, the Community

Policing Teams in Hartlepool had identified both the European Fund and the Single Regeneration Budget as sources of funding for local community initiatives. The police, however, are not allowed to make applications to either of these, so officers had enlisted the support of local voluntary groups to take on the responsibility for formally submitting funding applications.

The Community Support Sergeant in Burnley had managed to put together a funding 'package' from a variety of sources to support the construction of a youth shelter (see page 18). He had initially secured £5,000 for materials from a one-off community safety funding initiative organised by the Chief Constable. On the basis of this, local businesses were approached and a further couple of thousand pounds raised. The remaining money was raised by the local parish council. The council agreed to provide architectural, legal, planning and building services in proportion to the police funding. A 'play wall' next to the shelter was constructed by students on a local college building course using bricks donated by a local building firm.

The Government has made £250 million available over three years to fund the development of a Crime Reduction Programme (Home Office, 1998d). Forces, in partnership with other agencies, have already been encouraged to submit bids in a variety of specific areas, for example burglary reduction and targeted policing. As an extension to this programme, £153 million has been made available for England and Wales to fund a CCTV initiative to help local crime and disorder reduction partnerships deploy CCTV in areas identified in local crime audits as having significant crime and disorder problems. As a result of these developments, forces and other agencies may increasingly be involved in submitting bids for funding. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate for forces to identify and train certain individuals to prepare such bids.

Managing resources force-wide

Strathclyde Police Spotlight Initiative

This long-term strategy merits particular attention because its success requires the effective management and deployment of resources on a force-wide basis. The essence of the 'spotlight' is to focus police resources on a particular problem, over a particular period, in a highly resource intensive fashion maximising the high-profile presence of uniformed officers on the street. In the initial three months of the initiative this was achieved without additional funding through a range of 'extraordinary' measures:

• all non-mandatory training was suspended;
• budgets were controlled to make funds available for Spotlight overtime;

- Special Constables were encouraged to increase attendance at Spotlight operations;
- officers in training and administration posts were deployed operationally during Spotlights; and
- resources were also made available from other departments including traffic and CID.

Although these measures were in place only temporarily, the principle of maximising police resources in targeted 'bursts' against specific problems has been maintained in the longer term. The development of multi-agency partnerships are an essential part of this. In the three years since Spotlight began over 500 short and long term partnerships have been formed with groups and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

An important distinguishing feature of the strategy is the role played by a 'Consultancy Unit' (CU) established at force headquarters. This unit, comprising seven members of staff, four key staff and three support, plays a crucial role in planning and coordinating force spotlights, and monitoring the operation of divisional and sub-divisional spotlights. The unit is managed by a Superintendent, with a Chief Inspector as deputy, and is split into two wings, each led by an Inspector:

- Operations & Administration: which looks at issues of administration, resource allocation, and training; and

- Media & Marketing: this handles media relations and internal publicity. Marketing is a key function of the unit.

Planning for projects at a force level is time consuming and requires the CU to work three months in advance of specific spotlight operations. Details of the proposed initiatives are sent to the divisions, who are expected to comment on the local feasibility of the proposal (or suggest alternative dates, for example). What follows is a process of negotiation between the CU, the divisions and specialist units within the force.

An important link between divisions and the CU is provided by a network of divisional Spotlight Coordinators. Each division has such a coordinator, generally at Inspector or Chief Inspector rank,[14] whose role is to liaise between their division and the unit. Coordinators hold regular, informal meetings to maintain communication and share local lessons and good practice. Members of the CU will

[14] *Subsequent to our research, this role now tends to be carried out by either an Inspector or Sergeant.*

also sometimes visit divisions to discuss spotlight issues. At the time of the research, one division had just appointed the first full-time Spotlight coordinator. The head of the CU had subsequently made a point of visiting the division to support this development.

As well as undertaking force spotlight operations, divisions also undertake their own spotlights, based on an assessment of local problems. Before undertaking divisional spotlights, divisions are required to provide the CU with action plans detailing their proposals. This enables coordination across the force, and provides the unit with new ideas and good practice examples. Good practice, and more general recommendations for Spotlights, are communicated by the Unit to divisions through occasional circulars. A recent example we encountered at the time of the research had made recommendations about the role of Spotlight Coordinators, aimed at ensuring consistency across divisions. The CU also produces weekly briefing sheets for senior officers to keep them informed of progress on spotlights and related areas of interest.

The Consultancy Unit also requires divisions to produce a proforma 'return' including data on the resources deployed and the results, after each spotlight operation. This ensures that data are collected in a comparable form. However, the CU does not tell divisions what actions to take to support spotlights (either at a force or divisional level); these operational decisions are taken locally.

Another role played by the Consultancy Unit is to 'protect the good name' of the Spotlight Initiative by ensuring that local initiatives fit with the force's stated aims. The Traffic Department had run one spotlight in the past focusing on the dangers of deficient eyesight and driving, with drivers being given impromptu roadside eye-tests. This resulted in widespread media criticism of the police for wasting resources, at a time when they should have been concentrating on crime issues. Although a rare example, the unit aims to prevent such examples.

In a further related development, the Spotlight Initiative name and logo have been registered as a trademark of the Strathclyde Joint Police Board. Divisions wishing to use the term to describe local operations are required to clear this in advance with the CU.

Managing multi-agency partnerships

The Crime and Disorder Act for the first time places multi-agency working on local crime and disorder problems on a statutory basis. The local police commanders we spoke to at the time of this research (prior to the introduction of

the Act) generally reported that they already had good relationships with local authority chief executives and other local agency heads. They regarded the requirements of much of the act as a formalisation of already existing relationships, though acknowledged the requirement to produce local audits and strategies on crime and disorder was a 'big stick' in the formation of multi-agency working. One local commander also highlighted the need to remember the importance of local voluntary groups when the 'key people' became statutorily involved.

The Crime and Disorder Act seeks to encourage a coordinated approach to local crime and disorder problems at the strategic level. But it is also essential that this feeds down to encourage and support effective multi-agency partnerships working 'on the ground' to tackle local problems. Research has shown that in partnership arrangements, agreements and policies formed at the managerial level can be difficult to implement at the service delivery level (Crawford, 1997). In the previous section, we highlighted the importance of multi-agency working on both enforcement against, and diversion from, anti-social behaviour. And we found many examples where this had worked extremely effectively. But our research also found some examples where the police had encountered difficulties working with other agencies. The issues these raised merit some discussion to draw more generally applicable lessons.

Most of the examples we encountered, in discussions with police officers, where difficulties had arisen concerned dealing with young people. They provide further evidence of the difficulties faced by the police, and local agencies, when seeking to deal with 'youth disorder'. Difficulties tended to focus on apparently conflicting aims between police officers and other agency workers in handling young people and occurred with examples of both enforcement and diversion approaches by the police.

For example, in one force division we visited, the police had attempted to organise a regular Friday night disco for young people. The aim had been to offer an attractive alternative to simply hanging around on the streets, particularly on a night traditionally associated with drunkenness and increased levels of disorder. Support for this initiative in the form of funding and providing youth workers was requested from the local authority. The police reported that the council failed to provide that support, based on a refusal to act simply as 'babysitters', and youth leaders wanting structured youth work not 'disco, drink and copping off'.

In another force, a local commander reported that the use of enforcement against young people in his division had led to criticisms from the head of community education and youth workers who thought that police were harassing local youth.

The police were aware of this perception and were attempting to resolve the situation but highlighted the need to balance these criticisms with demands for action by callers complaining about problem youths.

There were some examples where police and youth workers had managed to work together effectively and successfully, which point some way to resolutions of the above difficulties. In Hartlepool, the Community Policing Team highlighted the need to liaise with youth workers so that police knew when any youth worker was involved in street-based out-reach work. Officers knew the workers personally and would make a point of not stopping to talk to youths if the worker was there. This prevented a clash of interests and served to maintain the independence of the youth worker's role and de -emphasise their links with the police, which otherwise could potentially have damaged the worker's relations with the young people.

Another example involved police officers again liaising with youth workers to provide a coordinated approach to dealing with 'youth nuisance' calls. The police had agreed that if an out-reach worker was present with a group of youths then they would visit the caller and explain how things were being dealt with. In this way, it was hoped to mediate between the demands and expectations of local residents and young people.

Research on a number of inter-agency crime prevention partnerships points to a number of important lessons for partnership working:

1. There is a place for constructive debate between agencies about any competing contributions, priorities and aims.
2. Fundamental causes of conflict should be addressed openly, negotiated or resolved, not avoided simply to maintain a formal 'consensus'. Failure to do so will impact on the effectiveness of the partnership in the longer term.
3. Resolution of problematic issues are often managed informally. It is wrong, however, to assume that 'formality' hinders efficient inter-agency working. Formal processes may be highly important for the achievement of certain tasks, and a requirement of communication and negotiation between agencies. (Crawford, 1997)

Issues such as these will need to be carefully considered when establishing the multi-agency youth offending teams proposed in the Crime and Disorder Act. The principal aim of these teams is to tackle offending behaviour and the risk factors associated with it. Hopefully, this will help ensure that agencies pull in the same direction, reducing incidences of conflicting aims. Piloting of the teams continues with the aim of bringing them into formal nationwide operation in April 2000.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Managing the media and public relations

All the forces we visited had, to some degree, sought to publicise their efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour. In this section, we describe some of the methods they employed and draw some general lessons.

Publicity was generally aimed at two constituencies:

• internally, with police personnel, to explain the aims and objectives of operations and initiatives, and the role individual staff played within them; and
• externally, at the public to explain initiatives, and generate public support.

Longer-term aims of external publicity were also focused on increasing public confidence in their local police and reducing fear of crime and disorder. The aim of increasing public confidence was particularly important in relation to police action to tackle long-term historical problems of disorder and anti-social behaviour. These had often been the source of much public concern and historical dissatisfaction with the police response. Forces were thus keen to ensure that police efforts to remedy such situations were clearly and broadly communicated. Local newspapers can provide a useful vehicle for the communication of such messages to local communities. In a number of forces visited, local newspapers had given police officers a weekly column in which to raise awareness of local problems and publicise police efforts to tackle them.

Reducing public fear of crime and disorder was a particular concern of Strathclyde Police as part of their Spotlight Initiative. Despite significant reductions in reported crime and disorder across the force area, and the associated publicity given to particular spotlights, there had been little impact on public fear of crime. So Strathclyde bought in a marketing consultant to advise on an advertising campaign aimed directly at publicising the crime reductions and emphasising Strathclyde as a safer place to live. The campaign deliberately took a public information style and was used on posters and in television and radio advertisements. A subsequent survey conducted for the force indicated some reduction in the public's fear of crime.

Hampshire had paid a great deal of attention to how it publicised the Enforcing The Peace (ETP) initiative, both internally to police personnel and externally to the broader community. It had developed an 'Enforcing the Peace' logo. This was used on all documentation and publicity material associated with the strategy. The logo deliberately makes no mention of the police nor uses any police symbol in order to symbolise the multi-agency approach and minimise any sense that the

initiative is 'police-owned'. Every bit of force mail also shows the logo through the use of an adapted postage franking machine.

The internal 'marketing' of the initiative was also taken very seriously. Every local commander was given a briefing pack to use with staff which outlined the aims and objectives of the initiative. Other materials developed included an explanatory video, a leaflet with a foreword by the Chief Constable, a poster campaign, a booklet of 'good practice', and 'stick on' ETP labels. The use of these materials formed a concerted attempt to gain the 'hearts and minds' of all staff focused on the success of the initiative.

The use of publicity was also an integral part of some specific force initiatives. For example, a publicity campaign formed the initial phase of a Hampshire ETP enforcement initiative against inconsiderate and illegal cycling in Andover town centre and the surrounding areas. The initiative involved officers taking a 'tougher' approach and stopping all cyclists seen offending. The campaign aimed to publicise the aims of the initiative through the local media, and by liaising with local schools, newsagents and post offices. This ensured that both young people and adults (particularly those using bicycles for their work) were informed of the initiative before it began. The police hoped this would generate public support and, by giving an early warning of the tougher approach to come, minimise possible subsequent complaints.

Following the campaign phase, the police then stopped all cyclists seen offending, took their details, and issued a letter of caution. Cycle safety brochures, obtained from local cycling organisations, were also handed out. Second and subsequent offences were dealt with by official caution or prosecution. Alongside the enforcement element, officers developed a mountain bike project in local schools to educate pupils about cycle safety, maintenance, the law in relation to cycling, 'off-road' cycling and map reading.

The above provides a useful example of how early publicising of a potentially 'sensitive' initiative (the police taking a tough line on a 'soft' offence) can usefully 'prepare the ground' with the public to generate support and minimise any subsequent controversy. The inclusion of non-enforcement elements in the initiative clearly helped emphasise that the police action should not simply be perceived as 'heavy handed' enforcement.

There were a number of examples where the publicising of particular force approaches had been quite controversial. This was particularly the case for the 'zero

tolerance' strategy employed in Cleveland and for the Hamilton Child Safety Initiative in Strathclyde.

The use of the term 'zero tolerance' by Cleveland Police to describe their enforcement approach to anti-social behaviour sparked a long and national debate to which the media and academics, as well as senior police officers and politicians contributed. We do not wish to add further commentary to this debate in the context of the current discussion. It is important to note, however, that the profile that this particular approach received served to obscure much of Cleveland's other work to tackle anti-social behaviour, particularly the application of problem-oriented policing, primarily by community beat officers to local problems. As a result, Cleveland were wrongly perceived, at least nationally, if not also locally, as simply applying a blanket 'get tough' approach to minor disorder and anti-social behaviour.

From the outset Strathclyde Police were clearly aware of the sensitivity of the Hamilton Child Safety Initiative (HCSI). Press releases and flyers stressed local residents' support for the scheme, and that the police were working in partnership with the local council. One particular press release emphasised that the officers involved had been selected for their 'experience, skill and empathy when it comes to dealing with young people. Some of the officers are parents themselves' (Strathclyde Police and South Lanarkshire Council, 1997b). The police described the initiative as being 'not to force young people off the streets; rather it is to make sure that our communities are safe for everyone' (Straythclyde Police and South Lanarkshire Council, 1997a). A press release from the council emphasised that the patrols were only part of a wider programme which would provide 'an integrated youth facility' run by young people, set up in four sites, providing Internet access, health advice, and venues for evening entertainment, 'We are not getting at the youth of South Lanarkshire; we are looking at their safety' (South Lanarkshire Council, 1997). In addition, prior to the introduction of the HCSI a police sergeant had spoken to pupils about the scheme at every primary and secondary school that covered the three estates.

Despite this, much of the coverage in local and national media described the scheme as a curfew. Such a description was first used by a local paper which had been contacted to publicise the initiative prior to its introduction. This was not a term the police had used, but was picked up by the national media, particularly as the timing of the initiative coincided with wider public debate about youth disorder and parental control. As a result, the police and council were inundated by requests for interviews with national, and international, media. The management of this level of interest was quite resource intensive.

The main lesson to be drawn from the above is that there is, perhaps, a particular danger that certain police messages with regards to anti-social behaviour may be skewed by the media. And this may especially be the case where police approaches could be characterised as 'getting tough' on 'soft' non-crime issues. It is, perhaps, less contentious for the police to publicise a tough approach to serious crime, burglary or violent crime, than it is against, for example, nuisance youth.

The difficulty is that the media may well simplify police messages or disagree with them so that the result is counter-productive, e.g. press reports might reduce local public support for schemes when local police had hoped to increase public confidence and support. Nonetheless, there are many advantages to publicising police action, not least the simple principle of openness and accountability, and the media are likely to support this. But the experience of Cleveland and Strathclyde suggests that forces employing a similar approach need to think carefully about how such publicity is used and managed, probably as part of a more general media strategy.

4. Measuring the problem

The previous sections of this report have examined the tactics used to police anti-social behaviour, and the management issues that arise. In addition, police forces are likely to be concerned with the measurement of anti-social behaviour, not least because of the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act, and particularly the statutory requirement under the act to produce local crime and disorder audits and strategies. It is likely that police forces will be interested in the measurement of two dimensions of anti-social behaviour; initially establishing the nature and size of the problem itself, and subsequently assessing the impact of police actions taken to counter the problem.

Problem definition

The nearest example we found to a formal definition was the work undertaken by Surrey and the Metropolitan Police to describe the extent of public disorder in their forces. These two police forces, in consultation with ACPO Public Order Sub-Committee, have developed a formal definition of 'disorder', as part of a pilot project to develop a performance indicator (PI) for public disorder.

The definition they developed was *'a breach of the peace of which police are aware, which may require police intervention or action in partnership with others'.* This definition establishes the grounds for police intervention for incidents of disorder as a breach of the peace, the legal definition of which is based on the notion of actual or likely harm to person or property.

Such a definition, however, would exclude many of the incidents of anti-social behaviour dealt with by the forces we visited. In our discussions with officers, the term 'disorder' was clearly linked to more serious incidents of actual or threatened harm to people or property, more often associated with groups than individuals, with a riot as the most serious case. The Crime and Disorder Act does not define disorder, but the use of the term within the Act points to a wider meaning than the traditional focus upon public order situations to include other areas of concern to local communities.

Strathclyde Police, as part of their Spotlight Initiative, had developed a similar list of problem areas of public concern, some focused on more serious crime such as street robbery and carrying of weapons. Despite the lack of formal definition or a specific list of incidents, the other forces we visited did attempt to differentiate anti-social behaviour incidents from other calls for service. This process, however, was informed by officers' 'common sense' understanding of what distinguished anti-social behaviour. Clearly, however, there is a danger of a lack of consistency in such an approach.

Quantifying the problem

Notwithstanding the variety of methods used to classify incidents of anti-social behaviour, forces we visited during our research had begun to develop systems capable of identifying and quantifying such problems. These were invariably based on information drawn from incident data, but were used in a number of different ways, often focused on aspects of repeat victimisation (for a discussion of the phenomenon of repeat victimisation, see Pease, 1998). Some forces focused on repeat offenders. The Juvenile Nuisance Register established by the police in Burnley, Lancashire, for example, recorded brief details of young people involved in incidents of anti-social behaviour. This provided a quick and simple method of identifying local individuals repeatedly involved in such behaviour.

Other forces focused on identifying repeat locations. Shirley Division in Hampshire used a spreadsheet to identify where problems were concentrated on particular streets or areas, and the Quality of Life team in Plymouth analysed incident data to identify 'hot spot' locations for high visibility patrol. Nevertheless, the focus of forces' activity has clearly been more to develop systems that provide operationally relevant information rather than systems of performance measurement. There are two possible ways to measure the results of police activities, measures of output and measures of outcome. We found that while a number of forces we visited had developed systems to measure the first, outcome measures were far rarer.

Measuring police actions: outputs versus outcomes

Output measures

Table 2 shows a selection of the output measures operated by the forces we visited:

Table 2: Examples of output measures employed by sample forces	
Measure	Force
Number of stops and searches	Cleveland/Merseyside
Number of high visibility patrols	Cleveland/Hampshire
Number of rubbish sacks collected	Strathclyde
Number of vehicles stop/checked (breath tests and road traffic checks)	Strathclyde
Number of knives confiscated	Strathclyde
Number of persons charged with drinking in a public place	Strathclyde
Response times for answering calls from public	Greater Manchester
Numbers of calls from public	Greater Manchester

It is important to remember that much anti-social behaviour is not necessarily criminal and the sanctions available to the police to tackle it are unclear. This makes it difficult to select an appropriate output, let alone an output that relates closely to a desired outcome of reduced anti-social behaviour.

Two measures used and suggested by forces illustrate this difficulty. 'Number of stop searches' and 'number of high visibility patrols' were used by forces employing street-level enforcement tactics to tackle anti-social behaviour. These measures provide an indication of what the police were doing. They do not, however, relate directly or accurately to the desired result of the action reduced anti-social behaviour.

There are clearly additional difficulties with these two measures. Police efforts to attain success as measured by these indicators might encourage a focus on street-level enforcement and divert efforts from other desirable strategies involving multi-agency problem-solving approaches. An indicator based simply on the number of stop/searches conducted is likely simply to produce an increased use of the tactic. This could potentially impact negatively on local community relations, particularly in relation to ethnic minorities who tend to experience disproportionate levels of stop/searches. A point recently re -emphasised by the Macpherson Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Using the number of stop/searches as an indicator could also encounter problems of definition and measurement in relation to formal PACE stop/searches and less formal 'voluntary' searches.

Even where there are legal powers appropriate for instances of anti-social behaviour, the desirability of output measures is questionable. An output measure based on the 'number of reports/cautions/arrests for anti-social behaviour' might encourage the criminalisation of anti-social behaviour. Many officers we spoke to were very keen to avoid such a move, particularly in relation to young people for whom anti-social behaviour might be a 'first offence'.

An alternative might be an approach cast in similar terms to the Home Office's 1998/99 Key Performance Indicator 2(i), where forces are asked to demonstrate they have *'established local mechanisms in partnership with other agencies to measure activity on and success in tackling problems of crime and disorder with local targets for performance . A* measure like this, but relating specifically to anti-social behaviour, could yield a number of advantages. It would avoid a Home Office prescribed definition of anti-social behaviour and allow forces the flexibility to focus on local problems. It would also encourage a partnership-based approach to tackling problems which would sit well with the aims of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Outcome measures

In their evaluation of the Hamilton Child Safety Initiative, undertaken in conjunction with researchers from the University of Stirling, Strathclyde Police used a number of output and outcome measures for the scheme. The outcome measures included:

- analysis of crime and incident data (for the intervention sites and control sites, covering a period six months before the initiative, six months during its operation, and the comparable six months of the previous year);
- analysis of road accident data (for the intervention sites and control sites, covering a period six months before the initiative, six months during its operation, and the comparable six months of the previous year);
- a survey of shopkeepers, to obtain the views of local business people about the initiative;
- interviews with children in contact with HCSI and their parents to obtain their views about the initiative;
- a questionnaire to school children in the Hamilton area to obtain their perceptions about the HCSI, and the police more generally;
- community surveys conducted before and after the introduction of the HCSI; and
- semi-structured interviews with police officers involved in the initiative.

The use of these measures by Strathclyde Police, however, was unusual, and was the result of a formal evaluation of the HCSI. It may not be feasible for forces to produce such an exhaustive basket of measures as a matter of routine performance measurement, although Strathclyde (and Merseyside) have had reduction in fear of crime as an outcome measure of the force's overall performance. Strathclyde, for example, undertake an annual public survey that includes a question on fear of crime.

Interestingly, however, despite a substantial decrease in the level of recorded crime, fear of crime in the force area had not fallen correspondingly. As a result Strathclyde spent £250,000 on television adverts publicising the level of crime reduction. This illustrates possible difficulties in linking this particular outcome directly to police actions. Nevertheless, the examples cited above were the only ones we found to use outcome measures. As a result we can conclude that forces, if measuring anything, were more focused on output rather than outcome measures.

The exception to the above is the work undertaken by the Metropolitan Police and Surrey Police on 'disorder', which provides an illustration of how an outcome-based

performance measure for anti-social behaviour might be developed. The PI developed by the two forces was *'public disorder incidents per 1,000 population'*. This PI was calculated by combining nine broad incident codes felt by the forces to cover 'disorder' incidents. Analysis was undertaken at a divisional level, identifying monthly trends for disorder over a 12 month period. The following codes were used:

- disturbance in a public place;
- disturbance in licensed premises;
- disturbance in private property;
- drunkenness;
- domestic incident;
- civil dispute;
- racial/ethnic/homophobic;
- neighbour dispute; and
- other unlisted disorder/nuisance.

These codes are derived from those developed by HMIC in relation to disorder. They form part of a new set of Standard Incident Classification (SIC) codes (which cover all incidents, not just disorder) that forces have used since April 1998 for recording calls for service, and subsequently reporting in HMIC annual returns. In this case, the *initial* incident classification is used (the code first applied by the police to an incident based solely on the information provided by the caller) rather than the *final* classification (the code subsequently applied by the police based on information received from officers attending the incident). This classification thus reflects the public perception of incidents rather than that of the police.

The nine general codes used by the Metropolitan and Surrey Police for 'disorder' thus cover some incidents that would be inappropriate for a measure of 'anti-social behaviour' and do not cover others that would be appropriate. (For example, the inclusion of the 'racial/ethnic/homophobic' code would arguably not be used in a measure of anti-social behaviour.) But this work does illustrate the potential to use incident data and codes for measuring anti-social behaviour.

Amongst the advantages of this approach are that it is:

- easily understood;
- easily used as a management tool;
- quantitative; and
- allows the establishment of trends/comparisons over time.

An important difficulty associated with this approach is that the SIC codes used by forces in their annual HMIC returns cover too broad a range of incidents to capture accurately only those incidents relating to anti-social behaviour. For example, in one force we visited, the broad 'civil dispute' code covered a range of incidents including those classified as 'public health', 'health and safety' and 'trade description'. So, while in theory the 'civil dispute' code would form an appropriate part of a measure of anti-social behaviour, in practice it would include incidents which should not be included.

A potential solution to this problem is that the broad SIC codes are broken down into more detailed incident codes (the three classifications described above are examples of these). At this level of detail, selecting the appropriate incident codes to include in a measure of anti-social behaviour would be easier and more accurate. However, our research suggests that incidents are not always recorded at this level of detail in forces and are often simply classified according to the appropriate broad code.

It is also important to be aware of more general difficulties related to incident reporting and recording practices:

- Incident reporting is variable. In many of the forces we visited officers highlighted that some areas were more 'tolerant' than others of anti-social behaviour and so did not report incidents to the police. The concern then is that police incident data is not an accurate measure of the 'real' incidence of anti-social behaviour. However, it is highly questionable whether any method could capture this 'reality'. A public 'victimisation' survey of anti-social behaviour might be regarded as an alternative, but there are many difficulties with this, not least of which would be the (prohibitive) cost implications for forces. As a result, such a method is probably not a viable alternative.

- Incident reporting can be manipulated. Simply encouraging the public not to report minor incidents could reduce incident rates of anti-social behaviour.

Requirements on forces, particularly those arising out of the Crime and Disorder Act, suggest that they will have to pay greater attention in the future to the formal identification and measurement of anti-social behaviour, and the evaluation of efforts to tackle it.

5. Conclusions

Our research identified a range of approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour in the forces we visited:

- Street-level police enforcement
  - As part of 'every-day' policing
  - Short term targeting of problems
  - Use of dedicated units

- Multi-agency enforcement
  - Police taking the lead
  - Police supporting other agencies' actions

- Particular approaches to policing young people
  - Partnerships with youth agencies
  - Supporting/encouraging parental enforcement
  - Hamilton Child Safety Initiative

- Diversionary schemes
  - Provision of recreational facilities
  - Organisation/facilitation of recreational activities.

None of the forces we visited restricted themselves to a single response to anti-social behaviour but typically used a number of responses to address different problems. It is, however, important for forces to consider the overall impact of such a mix. Although any single response may appear reasonable, they may not be complementary in combination. There is also a need to consider whether and how these approaches support force efforts against crime because problems with anti-social behaviour rarely occur in isolation.

There is a need for a strategic approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, which also takes account of, and complements, crime. The HMIC thematic inspection report *Keeping the Peace: Policing Disorder* (HMIC, 1999b) highlights the link between disorder and crime and recommends a coordinated response. Some, but not all, of the forces we visited had begun to tackle this issue. The development by Strathclyde Police of a Consultancy Unit specifically to plan, organise and coordinate force and divisional Spotlight operations against crime and disorder problems was perhaps the best example we encountered of such a strategic approach.

Community relations

The application of particular approaches to policing anti-social behaviour can have important implications, particularly for relationships with diverse communities. An approach that involves 'getting tough' on minor crime or incivilities sends a different message to the public than one involving work with the local community providing activities/ diversions for local youths.

This is not to suggest that these approaches cannot be undertaken in tandem. But it is important that the reasons for applying these approaches are communicated clearly, both to the communities they affect, and to the officers involved. There is a danger that officers fulfilling different functions (response and community beat officers, for example) employ contradictory working styles, and there is evidence to support this from previous research (e.g. McConville and Shepard, 1992).

It is also important that the police recognise that their actions may be interpreted differently by different sections of the community. There may, for example, be general public support for street level enforcement against anti-social acts by young people, particularly from the 'victims' of such acts. But the young people involved, and/or their parents, may also have legitimate concerns that their actions do not merit such police attention. This difficulty had been recognised in some of the forces we visited. Officers we spoke to were sympathetic to the needs of young people and understanding of their situation. Attempts at mediating between complainants and young people were one method we encountered to try to resolve this.

The police need to consider the context in which certain approaches are applied, and resist the temptation to 'borrow' approaches and apply them without considering contextual factors. For example, the use of stop and search powers by the police to confront anti-social behaviour may be less problematic when employed in a racially homogeneous rather than a racially heterogeneous area.

Media handling

The issues above are clearly linked to the need for police forces to consider how their actions are going to be depicted by the media. Section 3 of this report demonstrates how easily the police can lose control over the way activities they are involved with are described. In addition, there is a need to consider the varied impacts descriptions of police actions in the media may have on the public. Media coverage of initiatives designed to tackle crime or anti-social behaviour may be designed to reassure the public that the police are taking action, but may have the

effect of increasing fear of crime. Increasingly police forces are becoming more sophisticated in their dealings with the media, for example, Strathclyde Police's use of television adverts to tackle fear of crime.

Measurement of anti-social behaviour

Clearly there are problems in assessing the impact of methods of tackling anti-social behaviour. In part this stems from the issues identified in section 4- There are problems in defining what constitutes 'anti-social' behaviour. It has only been comparatively recently that forces have begun to address precisely which incidents fall under the umbrella of anti-social behaviour. What work had been done tended to focus upon output rather than outcome measures. Under the Crime and Disorder Act, forces will need to develop clear outcome measures.

The work of the Metropolitan and Surrey forces on disorder usefully indicates a starting point for the development of an outcome-based measure on anti-social behaviour. Such a measure might involve calculating the reduction/increase in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population over a specified period (quarterly/annually). This could be calculated according to a defined list of detailed incident codes covering 'anti-social behaviour'. The successful functioning of such a measure would require:

• a defined list of force incident codes sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to cover the range of anti-social behaviour being tackled. Such a list should focus on local problems, i.e. those that generate most repeat calls for service and are thus the greatest drain on police time and resources; and

• that forces consistently and standardly recorded reported incidents of anti-social behaviour using this list.

A defined subset of the current HMIC SIC detailed codes could provide such a list. If this proved not to be the case, work to create the necessary codes should be possible. However, our research suggests that forces do not consistently and standardly use HMIC detailed incident codes to record reported incidents. For such a measure to function successfully, forces will need to be encouraged and supported to change their incident recording practices accordingly.

Tilley (1995) sets out the characteristics of an 'ideal' crime prevention PI. The characteristics he lists provide a standard against which possible measures can be assessed and the list could be usefully developed to relate to an 'ideal' anti-social behaviour performance measure:

- relate as directly/accurately as possible to priority intended outcomes;

- not divert police efforts from the main task of tackling [problems of anti-social behaviour]. The PI should help focus attention on effective police activity;

- be quantitative, and ratio measurements are to be preferred;

- be easily understood;

- require collectable data at minimal cost. If not already available, the work in their assembly should also yield some benefit to policing practices;

- relate specifically to police contributions to [tackling anti-social behaviour];

- should be credible to the police and the public; and

- should be unambiguous in their calculation.

Recommendations

- Forces should carefully consider the range of available tactics to tackle anti-social behaviour and select those best suited to provide a coordinated and coherent overall response appropriate to local problems.

- In adopting such a strategic approach forces may wish to consider the benefits offered by a dedicated unit responsible for organising, coordinating and resourcing their responses.

- Forces should recognise the potential sensitivity of certain approaches to anti-social behaviour for community relations, particularly the possible impact of enforcement. Police actions may be interpreted differently by different sections of the community.

- The reasons for any particular approach need to be clearly communicated both to the communities concerned and the officers involved.

- The use of the media can play an important role in publicising police efforts and achievements. However, forces need carefully to consider how their actions and messages may be interpreted, particularly in relation to perceived 'tough' responses to 'soft' issues.

CONCLUSIONS

- Forces are likely to be interested in the measurement of two dimensions of anti-social behaviour; initially establishing the nature and size of the problem itself, and subsequently assessing the impact of actions taken to counter it. In order to do this forces require information systems that allow the analysis of crime and incident data. It is also likely that they will need to produce a consistent definition of the problem to allow accurate monitoring over time, probably based around the use of crime and incident codes.

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Appendix 1: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 received Royal Assent on 31 July 1998. It brings with it a number of important changes in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders: a new community-based order, which can be applied for by the police or local authority against an individual or group (perhaps a family) whose behaviour is anti-social (i.e. it causes alarm, distress or harassment to one or more other people). Applications are to the magistrates' court acting in its civil capacity. The minimum duration for the order is two years. The orders are preventative in nature and intended to be targeted at criminal or sub criminal behaviour, not minor disputes between neighbours, or matters which can be dealt with effectively under existing legislation. Breach of an order is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

These orders were implemented in April 1999.

Parenting Orders: a new court disposal order designed to help parents or guardians address their child's anti-social or offending behaviour. A court may impose such an order in any one of four situations:

• when a court makes a child safety order;
• where a court makes an anti-social behaviour or a sex offender order;
• where a child or young person has been convicted of an offence; or
• where a person has been convicted under sections 443 and 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The order can consist of two elements:

• a requirement on the parent or guardian to attend counselling or guidance sessions for up to three months; and
• requirements encouraging the parent or guardian to exercise a degree of control over the child (e.g. ensuring attendance at school or that the child avoids certain people or places which had adversely contributed to the child's behaviour) lasting up to 12 months.

These orders are being piloted in specified areas for 18 months from 30 September 1998, with a view to national implementation in 2000/2001.

Child Safety Orders: a new magistrates' family proceedings court disposal designed to prevent children under ten becoming involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour. The order can be imposed:

- when the child has committed an act which would have constituted an offence if the child was ten or over;
- to prevent anti-social behaviour or offending; or
- because the child had contravened a ban imposed under a local child curfew notice.

Under such an order, a child will be placed under the supervision of a social worker or a member of a youth offending team. The court may impose requirements:

- ensuring that the child receives appropriate support and is subject to proper control; or
- to prevent any repetition of the original behaviour which brought about the order.

The order will normally be for up to three months but can in exceptional circumstances be for up to 12 months.

These orders are being piloted in specified areas for 18 months from 30 September 1998, with a view to national implementation in 2000/2001.

Local Child Curfews: allows local authorities to introduce local child curfew schemes to deal with the problem of unsupervised children under ten on the streets late at night.

A curfew notice imposed under such a scheme will apply to children of specified ages under ten who are unsupervised by a responsible adult or a parent during specified hours between 9pm and 6am for a maximum of 90 days. A police officer is required to return home any child they believe has breached the conditions of such a notice. If there is nobody at the child's home, the police may take the child into police protection (under their existing powers under the Children Act 1989). The police are required to inform the local authority of any breach of a curfew notice. Social services are required to investigate any such breach.

This provision was implemented on 30 September 1998.

Power for the police to remove truants: this empowers a police officer to take a child who they believe is truanting from school back to that school, or to another place designated by the local education authority. A police officer can use this power when:

- the local education authority has designated a place or places for the purpose of the new provision;

- the local education authority has notified the Chief Officer of police for the area; and
- a police officer of superintendent rank or above has specified an area and time period in which this power can be used.

It is intended that this will underpin a joint approach by police and education authorities. The measure was implemented on 1 December 1998.

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Paper 123: Policing Anti-Social Behaviour

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