

Title of the project: **Repeat Caller ?**

Name of force/agency/CDRP/CSP: **Cleveland Police STWC Neighbourhood Police Team**

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## Summary of application

### Repeat Caller ?

'A' is an elderly male, who lives alone, in first floor flat, which he rents from the Local Authority Housing Provider. He is retired, a widower and has little contact with family members. Although he is a relatively social man, he does not have a close circle of friends, nor is he a member of any community groups.

The estate on which he lives is predominantly made up of family orientated accommodation which is owned by Housing Providers. The Estate neighbours other residential areas and form part of the Town Centre Ward. There is significant deprivation in the ward.

'A' became the focus of Police attention when it came to notice that he was contacting Police on a significant number of occasions. He was reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour which included youths riding motor cycles and driving cars around the estate. Although 'A' had been in regular contact with Police during late 2004 (8 calls in a three month period), his calls increased significantly during 2005 (67 calls) and through 2006 (62 by June 2006).

During 2006, the majority of calls from 'A' were recorded with a low priority grading and therefore were suitable for attendance by the local Neighbourhood Officer. He was highlighted as a repeat caller by the Control Room, and a scanning analysis was requested in June 2006, as a result the issue was recorded as a POP in July 2006.

An action plan was created by Sgt Stephenson and ownership for resolution was given to the Neighbourhood Officer, who was to work in conjunction with 'A' and Police Partners to resolve the issues. In August 2006 a multi agency meeting was held and as a result of the meeting significant effort was put in to resolving the issues.

Calls made by 'A' to police had reduced to such an extent that in October it was recommended that an assessment of the POP should be completed and consideration be given to finalising it. 'A' was monitored for a further 2 months until December 2006, by which time calls to Police had all but ceased.

'A' sent a Christmas card specifically thanking the Neighbourhood and Housing staff for their help. Sgt Stephenson visited him in early January 2007 and he reported a significant improvement in the quality of his life.

## **Description of project**

### **Background**

'A' is 73 year old retired widower living alone in first floor flat rented from the local authority housing provider. He has little contact with family members. Although he is a relatively sociable person, he has no close friends, nor does he belong to any community groups. He is a keen gardener and previously enjoyed 'caravanning' however, with advancing years, failing health and concerns about leaving his premises unoccupied, he has virtually given this up. He has two dogs, on which he focuses his affections, and regularly walks them around the estate in which he lives.

The estate is predominantly a housing estate, with accommodation suited to all age groups with family housing, single occupancy flats and adapted housing for the less able bodied. There is a primary school, a sports centre and children's park, a community centre and a small parade of shops. There are a number of public houses accessible to the residents but not actually on the housing estate.

Whilst it is a relatively small estate, it is adjacent to other similar estates, all of which form part of a large council ward that incorporates the town's shopping centres (High Street) and a large area of industrial, business and retail premises.

*'The Borough (of Stockton on Tees) has huge contrasts between affluence and deprivation and 5 wards in particular score high on the index of deprivation putting them in the worst 10% in the country. In April 2005 unemployment in the Town Centre Ward stood at 8.4 % against a Borough average of 2.9%' (LSC Strategic Plan 2005-2006)*

There is a large expanse of land next to the estate which is virtually unmanaged, that has become an attraction to off road motorcyclists.

### **The Problem**

In June 2006 the Force Control Room notified Stockton District that 'A' had been highlighted as a repeat caller. The majority of calls related to anti social behaviour. The fact that 'A' repeatedly reported similar incidents involving the same issues and suspects, suggested that no long term resolution was being found. The Police Service had committed to improving public confidence, providing reassurance and reducing the fear of crime and yet it was apparent from the calls, that we were not achieving this in the eyes of 'A'. Also the volume of calls was placing considerable demands on Control Room staff, and the Officers being required to respond to them.

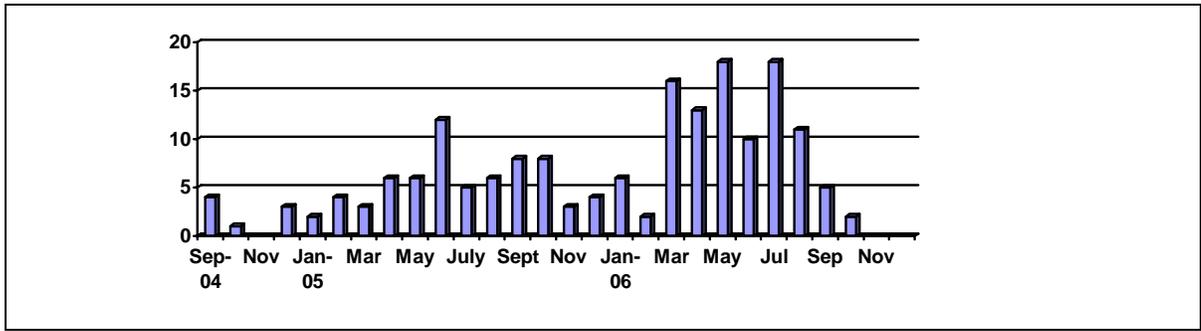
### **Scanning**

It was apparent from the nature and number of calls being made by 'A' that he was witness to many incidents of anti social behaviour, with the same people involved in similar types of incidents. The incidents described would impact on the quality of life of the whole community, which would likely impact on their fear of crime within the neighbourhood.

In 'A's case, there are few reports that he had been the actual victim of crimes, usually calling to report anti social behaviour and youths riding off road motor cycles in nearby green field areas and around the streets. He had witnessed many of the incidents himself and had recorded some of them using a hand held video recorder.

It was also ascertained that, as different response officers and neighbourhood officers were attending separate incidents, there was no focus to resolving the issues.

Fig.1 Calls per month Sept 04 – Dec 06



The graph in fig 1 shows that during the period 01/06/2004 to 31/05/2005 'A' called Police 29 times, although only in September, October and December during 2004. During the period 01/06/2005 to 31/05/2006 'A' called police 101 times. Calls were made on all days of the week with little variation through the week and mostly in the late afternoon to mid evening with 55% of the calls made between 2.00 pm and 7.00 pm.

The calls related mostly to youths on motor cycles or in cars driving around the estate and causing anti social behaviour. The chart in Fig 2 displays the incident types reported by 'A' in the 2 year period, based on their closure codes.

Fig. 2

Closure Code	Total
666	1
ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – NUISANCE - NEIGHBOURS	2
ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – NUISANCE - ROWDY INCONSIDERATE	1
ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – NUISANCE - VEHICULAR NUISANCE	15
CRIME – BURGLARY DWELLING	1
CRIME – CRIMINAL DAMAGE	4
DISORDER – DISTURBANCE IN PUBLIC / PRIVATE/ COMMUNITY	19
EXCLUSIONS / DUPLICATES	4
GENERAL OTHER UNLISTED / SUSPICIOUS CIRCS	7
NK	1
OTHER NON INCIDENT - OTHER	2
OTHER NON INCIDENT TASK RELATED	2
OTHER RESPONSE ACTION – ADVICE GIVEN	1
OTHER REPSONSE ACTION - INFORMED	1
PUBLIC SAFETY / WELFARE	4
TRAFFIC	60
TRANSPORT – OTHER INCIDENT/ACCIDENT/TRAFFIC OFFENCE	5

Calls made relating to the anti social use of motorcycles

Data relating to the anti social use of motorcycles was collected and analysed. Fig 3 shows the number of calls recorded between December 2005 and November 2006.

Fig 3

Current Ward	Total
Ayresome	3
Bishopsgarth_and_Elm_Tree	30
Eaglescliffe	1
Fairfield	32
Grangefield	67
Hardwick	117
Hartburn	34
Mandale_and_Victoria	12
Newtown	155
Northern_Parishes	2
Norton_North	38
Norton_South	62
Norton_West	9
Parkfield_and_Oxbridge	47
Roseworth	100
Stockton_Town_Centre	164
Western_Parishes	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>879</b>

## Analysis

### Analysis of calls:

In the 2 years researched period, 'A' made 130 calls, residents in his road made 337 in total. (This figure includes 'A's calls.) 57 of those incidents reported by 'A' related to incidents which occurred within his road and 73 incidents occurred elsewhere.

Of the 130 calls, 80 were vehicle related. 'A's reports were predominantly made during the afternoon and related in the majority of cases to nuisance and anti social behaviour specific to a number of local youths who 'A' often named, and incorporated some form of traffic contravention.

Further analysis of the calls revealed that a significant number of the calls were made after the event, and not as they were on going. This meant that the opportunity for Police to attend and either witness an incident or identify the offenders themselves, were limited. The content of the calls were often vague and 'A' would often refer to offenders as 'the usual lot' or the gang from a named road.

'A' reported in many of his calls that he had video evidence of the incidents.

Police Officers attending the reports would feedback that 'A' was not able to give sufficient detail of an incident and it had been pointed out that he did not fully appreciate the importance of accuracy of information. In some of his reports he was mixed up with various nicknames of the group and who was related to who and this caused problems in relation to the accurate identification of offenders.

### Analysis of 'A' :

'A' was living in appropriate accommodation for his needs. The premises are part of a number of purpose-built flats in groups of four. The majority were occupied by the older generation. There was a small garden area around the properties, which 'A' had tended and improved despite it being the responsibility of the local authority. 'A' had much pride in the garden and enjoyed watching and feeding wild birds.

'A' appeared to be fairly isolated and although he had a friendly relationship within the community he spent a lot of time alone, tending his garden and feeding birds. He would often visit the grassed field areas which were more likely to be subject of incidents of off road bike use. His home gave a direct view of a nearby property where a number of youths would congregate with their friends address. He would monitor the behaviour and invariably witness them doing something he considered anti social. On very few occasions has the behaviour been directed to 'A', he had simply been a witness to incidents occurring amongst the group.

### Other information

In January of 2006 a local youth was allowed to occupy a recently vacated property opposite 'A'. The youth was one of a large group who tended to congregate in the nearby street and was involved in anti social behaviour. This action caused the problems of noise nuisance and anti social behaviour to be brought even closer to 'A's door.

The youth had been housed in the first floor flat, above a ground floor flat, which at the time was occupied by an 80 year old infirm female.

The analysis of the calls made specifically in relation to the anti social use of motorcycles provided support for the information provided by 'A.' The analysis in fig 3 shows the Town Centre Ward as recording the highest number of reports.

### Response

The initial recommendations from the analysis were:

1. 'A' often referred to video evidence.
  - How many videos have been seized by police
  - How much is evidential or useable
  - Has any video evidence, from 'A', ever been used to support a prosecution
2. A report on 'A' should be compiled by officers who have met him or dealt with his complaints. This report should include factual evidence as well as officers' impressions of him. It was to be submitted to the Inspector to assist in identifying if possible, what motivates 'A' to call the police so often and whether he should be subject of a POP.
3. If there is a real problem with anti-social behaviour and off road motor cycle use on the estate, 'A' may simply be a symptom of the problem and consideration should be given to raising the estate and the activities of the youths as a POP.

This was carried out as a primary action to ascertain exactly what problems existed.

'A' was visited and it was established that no videos had been seized from 'A' because he unwilling to give them to Officers, as he would have to replace them at his own expense. It was also established that the quality of the footage was quite poor, due to the distance away of incidents he had captured. However it was clear from the footage, that he had captured evidence of anti social behaviour, fights and general disorder in the street and the anti social and illegal use of motorcycles on the highways. None of the footage was suitable for identification purposes and was not suitable for use to support a prosecution, or had ever been used for this purpose, due to a number of reasons.

- The footage was not timed or dated.
- Incidents had been taped in the middle of other incidents and as the footage related to the same group of people, and the camera directed to the same area, there was significant confusion.
- 'A's use of the equipment was often inappropriate. He would give a running commentary throughout his observations with his opinions of what was going

on and who was responsible, and giving his personal opinion of the people involved. The actual accounts were often inaccurate and he would mix up the names of the persons present. This would clearly impact on his credibility as a witness if the evidence were to be used in any Court proceedings. In addition he did not appreciate the need for information to be accurate.

Sgt Stephenson developed an action plan specifically relating to the Police management of issues reported by 'A'. The plan required the following actions to be considered and completed:

- Review current intelligence / information relating to the area to establish what the current problems are
- Identify offenders and targets
- Issue and explain diary sheets to 'A'
- Analyse the off road motor cycle nuisance within the Ward and look at long term reduction initiatives.
- Seek support from the forces' off road motorcycle section to deal with the motorcycle nuisance and follow up all complaints using powers under Sect 59 Police Reform Act
- Require more robust response against the target offenders, who needed to be held responsible for their behaviour and require that ASB 13 notices be completed in response to Anti Social Behaviour, which would in turn support the process towards Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti Social Behaviour Orders
- Deal with Offenders appropriately for any offences they committed Involving other agencies by
- Liaise with other agencies to seek support, co-operation and co-ordination of action and encourage the housing provider to use their powers to address the behaviour of occupants of their homes.
- Seek support and funding for installation of CCTV (temporary and permanent)
- Consider use of powers under Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 (Power to Disperse Groups)

As a result of the action plan 'A' was **given guidance on how best to use his camera** and what type of commentary would be useful and appropriate to use in court.

An **agreement was reached** to allow footage to be seized, and tapes would be replaced on a one for one basis. Tapes seized and not used would be returned quickly to allow 'A' to keep or reuse.

Police were satisfied the **calls being made by 'A' were justified** and that there was no ulterior motive. The video evidence supported 'A' in his allegations of significant anti social behaviour taking place in a nearby road, outside a specific address. The **emphasis of the POP needed to be changed** to ensure that 'A' **was seen as the victim** and witness and **not the problem**.

'A' was **provided with diary sheets** and provided with **guidance on the appropriate use** of them.

Fig 4 shows a sample of a diary sheet.

Date	Time	Location	What happened	Who was involved	What were they wearing / what vehicles were involved	Video no. or title

**Guidance** was also provided to ensure that 'A' was capable of making an informed choice about **when he should contact Police and how**, i.e. 999, Force Control Room, Neighbourhood Office or was the incident suitable for placing on the diary sheet.

'A' managed this system very well. He was contacted at least once a week for an update on any incidents and would read from his sheet, and would be visited at least once a fortnight for sheets to be collected. It was acknowledged that it would be difficult to use 'A' as a witness in Court proceedings, however, we decided that we would cross that bridge if and when we came to it.

It was decided that **one officer would have ownership of the problem** and the estate. Ownership of the problem would lead to personal responsibility.

The identified Officer was tasked with identifying the target group and monitoring and submitting intelligence in relation to them. **The offenders were identified as local residents** living in housing provided by a **local authority housing provider**.

As part of the action plan, Sgt Stephenson called a **multi agency meeting** to gather support for the action plan and its' contents.

The meeting was attended by members of staff from the CDRP:

Stockton Borough Council Enforcement Representative  
Sergeant, Neighbourhood Police Team, Cleveland Police  
Stockton Borough Council Anti Social Behaviour Team  
Patch Officer, Housing Provider  
Patch Manager Housing Provider

All the agencies in attendance shared their knowledge of incidents and further actions were agreed:

- Provision of extra patrols in the area by Police and Borough Council Enforcement
- Police and ASB team to visit 'A' to collect diary sheets and video evidence and for those staff members to share information.
- Consider action against tenant in neighbouring flat, due to anti social behaviour at premises
- Consider what action can be taken to protect 'A' from intimidation and harassment.
- Discussion took place regarding a Dispersal Order, however it was felt that this was not an appropriate response at the time,

The issue of CCTV was taken to the Area Liaison Meeting (JAG) to discuss and consider for funding as was the Dispersal Order.

As a result of the instruction to **respond more robustly to reports** received regarding anti social behaviour a number of successes were achieved.

### **Positive Action**

Information was received that one of the target group was using a moped. The neighbourhood Officer witnessed the suspect on the moped, and subsequently interviewed both the rider and the owner for road traffic offences and the two were summoned to Court. The moped was disposed of by the owner, prior to the attendance of the Officer who intended to seize the vehicle using sect 59 powers.

As a result of footage obtained by 'A' regarding the behaviour of the occupier of the neighbouring flat and a number of his friends, the Housing Provider, began eviction proceedings against the tenant.

On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2006, Sgt Stephenson contacted 'A' for a routine update. 'A' reported back as usual and a record was made in relation to noise nuisance which had occurred the previous night. 'A' reported he had been kept awake through the early hours due to a party and disturbance in the street. Later the same day, at around mid day 'A' contacted Police reporting that he had been threatened and abused by a group of males outside his home address. This was the first incident of personal threats and intimidation directly at 'A'. Sgt Stephenson and the Neighbourhood Officer attended the address and a statement of complaint was obtained. The suspect was a regular visitor to the address opposite and he blamed 'A' for the fact that the occupier was being evicted, he had therefore threatened and abused him. Police left 'A's address, located the suspect nearby and arrested him. He was interviewed that afternoon about the offence, which he admitted.

The suspect was dealt with by issuing a Penalty Notice for Disorder for Sect 5 Public Order Act.

As a result of this action and information regarding the disorder the previous evening, it was stressed to the Housing Provider that there were now raised concerns for the safety of their tenant.

The Housing Provider agreed to obtain an injunction preventing the offender approaching the address which 'A' occupied and the neighbouring property which had been the source of the disorder. By 31<sup>st</sup> August the occupier of the address where the noise nuisance had occurred had been formally evicted and had vacated the premises.

**Operations Iris and Scooter.** These were targeted operations utilising the support of the forces' off road motorcycle section, which specialises in the pursuit and stopping of motorcycles involved in antisocial or off road motorcycle nuisance.

As the Police motorcycle section is a Force resource, and in high demand, the service provided was limited, however a mechanism was put in place to ensure that all calls reporting such incidents would be followed up, even if the motorcyclists were not available to attend at the time of occurrence. This ensured that where persons had been identified as committing offences, the complaints were followed up and Officers were able to use their powers under Sect 59 Police Reform Act 2002.

### Assessment

#### **Management and Response to calls**

During initial interview with 'A' Sgt, Stephenson ascertained that 'A' was confused about who, how and when he should contact the various services. 'A' reported he had also made a significant number of calls to his housing provider, specifically in relation to noise and disorder which was occurring inside a nearby address. He was reporting what he considered to be anti-social behaviour to the Council Anti Social Behaviour Team and to Council Enforcement Officers. 'A' considered fighting in the street, youths urinating in his garden, use of abusive language and drinking in the street, as anti social behaviour and would only report these matters to the Police if none of the other services were available. The antisocial use of motorcycles and other driving offences he saw as the Polices' role as none of the other services were able to deal with this.

This raised questions about the importance of educating the public about who they should report matters to and emphasises the need to ensure a strong and sharing relationship amongst the partner agencies to ensure that the best service is provided to the public.

As a result of these issues, it has been agreed that a smaller local problem solving group will be held, which will sit above the residents meetings, and below the Joint Action Groups, which will allow for the discussion and sharing of information in relation to problems as they arise, rather than responding when matters have already reached crisis point.

## **Offenders**

The group involved in the anti social behaviour were identified. Action was taken on an individual basis against those who committed specific offences. The positive action taken appeared to have the desired effect on the whole group. The success of eviction proceedings against one of the group, removed a significant part of the problem. The youths are now socialising in their parents' homes and as relevant warnings were given to the tenancy holders regarding breaches of agreement the multi agency approach has been shown to be a powerful tool which gets results.

## **Anti social use of motorcycles**

The use of the Forces' off road motorcycles to tackle the anti social use of such vehicles had a positive effect and continues to do so. In December 2006 the local management development partnership agreed to provide funding for additional patrols within the area, which appears to have had an impact.

A District Steering Group is being set up to ensure long term problem solving resolution using educational, environmental and engineering resolutions.

The green field area referred to is now being targeted for funding and upgrade, with a Park Ranger being financed by the Neighbourhood Management Group.

## **CCTV**

The request for CCTV was taken to the ALM for support and consideration by the CDRP. There was no funding available at the time to place a permanent camera in the area. Consideration was given to the sighting of a temporary camera, however due to the height of the lamp post in situ, this was not possible. The location was to be considered when further funding became available. (It is planned that the camera will be sighted by May 2007)

## **Dispersal Order**

Dispersal Order – it was agreed that a dispersal order was not an appropriate response to the problems and that as much of the anti social behaviour stemmed from a relatively small group associated to a particular premise, it would be disproportionate to seek a dispersal order at that time.

## **'A'**

It was an essential part of the problem solving process to take the focus away from 'A' as the problem and ensure it was placed on the Anti Social Behaviour he was reporting.

The guidance provided to 'A' in relation to when he should ring Police and what information was suitable to record on his diary sheets was important, to ensure that 'A' did not feel he was unable to ring the Police should he feel it necessary. In the initial stages 'A' would contact the local office to ask if he should ring something in or put it on the diary sheet, however in a matter of weeks, this was resolved and 'A' used his own judgement.

The guidance 'A' was given in relation to the best use of his CCTV and appropriate commentary to give, enabled Police to have the opportunity to use the evidence if a case went to court.

'A' has been encouraged to become Involved in community groups and residents meetings, which on a personal basis will provide him with a support network but has the advantage of involving him in the bigger picture of Neighbourhood Policing and the decision making process.

'A' is now a satisfied resident who has improved confidence in his Police Service and housing provider together with all the agencies who supported him. He continues to keep in touch

with the local Police Office, but rings for a general chat or update about what is going on locally.

It has recently been decided amongst the partners involved in the resolution of the POP that 'A' be contacted and asked to talk to other residents in similar situations to provide encouragement, support and reassurance.

A is considered to be a key contact within the community. It is felt that he would have a lot to give the community as agencies strive to improve the whole area.

Since the resolution of this problem in October 2006 'A' has made no calls in relation to the problems for which the POP was activated.