

**GOLDSTEIN AWARDS 2011****Details of application**Title of the project: **Newham Borough - Focus Building****Contact Information****Agency and Officer Information:** Newham Borough- Metropolitan Police Service, UK**Key Project Team Members:** MPS DI John CUSHION; MPS Higher Intelligence Analyst Jonathan WEST; MPS Intelligence Analyst Keely REEVES; Tracey McURL (East London Housing); Paul BENNETT (Head of Surrounding Residents Association); Jim GREENWOOD (Head of Meteor Security); Richard CRAWFORD (Newham Councillor); Stratford Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team**Project Contact Person-****Name:** John CUSHION**Position/Rank:** Detective Inspector**Address :** Stratford Police station 18 West ham Lane Stratford E15 4SG**City/State:** London**Phone:** 02082175069**Fax:****Email:** john.cushion@met.police.uk**Please tick box to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry** (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project): **Section 1: Summary of Application** What is the Problem you have identified and are trying to solve? Describe in no more than 400 words.

The UK foyer initiative attempts to help vulnerable young people find work and long term accommodation through short term support. The Focus E15 building in Newham is the largest foyer in the UK, accommodating 210 local people aged between 16-24. The size and location of the premises coupled with the vulnerability and offending potential of the residents and visitors generated a hot-spot. Surrounding Residents provided evidence that their lifestyle had been adversely affected by Anti Social behavior associated with visitors and residents. Placing residents at Focus also created difficulties, as Perception of Fear of crime meant a number vulnerable young people did not want to be allocated this accommodation. The high incidents of crime and ASB and low standards of security resulted in a strained relationship between police and Staff at Focus. The Building was perceived as a Crime generator by Newhams Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and was in danger of losing substantial funding and potentially resulting in closure. To highlight the problem during the period assessed in 2009, on average each month from these premises alone 24 incidents and 11 crimes were reported, and 10 people were arrested.

A partnership approach between the police, social landlord, local authority, Focus building staff and local residents generated a plethora of environmental and management changes. When a similar period in 2010 was assessed it was discovered the averages each month reduced to 13 calls, 6 crimes,

and 4 people arrested. This reduction has not only been sustained but has accelerated during the 5 months immediately preceding the submission of this initiative. The innovative Design out Crime Process proved very successful in reducing crime and ASB and improving the perception of the Foyer. The building manager provides qualitative evidence as to the improved living and working conditions of the building as well as the overall effectiveness of the partnership arrangements. The Focus project provides an example of the benefits can be achieved with teamwork and effective partnership problem solving.

Section 2: The SARA Process Describe in no more than 4000 words over all 4 sections.

Scanning:

The Focus E15 building is a foyer, providing accommodation & support services to young people aged 16 – 24 in Newham. Foyers emerged in 1992 as an innovative way to tackle homelessness and unemployment amongst young people. Since their introduction more than 130 foyers have opened across the UK providing accommodation, education, employment and training (ETE programmes), to more than 10,000 people. Foyers also work with non-residents. In addition to providing a supported housing service foyers offer holistic support to young people to assist them to break the 'no home – no job – no home cycle' that many find themselves in.

The Focus E15 building is the largest foyer built, opening in 1996 to accommodate 210 young people of mixed needs, in self contained accommodation, for up to 2 years. The foyer journey requires hard work and commitment from the young person.

Referrals generally come from Housing Departments, Connexions, Young People's Support & Prevention services (YPSPS), and Probation. By definition the residents within the building are amongst the most vulnerable young people in Newham. They are not in Employment, Education of Training (NEET) and many have experienced a range of other difficulties including problematic family relationships, been victims of abuse, or been involved in crime or substance abuse. On securing a place at the foyer, each resident agrees an individually tailored support service addressing personal, education, training and employment needs. The aim is for residents to secure permanent accommodation, employment and/or training within the 2 year placement. Overall over 70% of foyer residents achieve a positive outcome (achieve a qualification, employment, find a new home, reconcile with their family or end their involvement with crime). However the size of the foyer in Newham was seen to create unintended consequences that put these aspirations in jeopardy

In 2008 the Police and local authority became aware of a number of problems associated with the Focus E15 building. Focus E15 management also became aware of many negative perceptions of Focus E15. These perceptions included young people not wanting to be referred as they feared some of the gangs residing in the building. Management also began receiving complaints from Focus E15 residents who were becoming increasingly fed up with some visitors to the building who were consistently engaging in ASB and intimidating other residents and their visitors.

There was no doubt that the behavior of some of the residents and their visitors was having a detrimental impact on the reputation of the foyer and the organisation. Complaints were also being received from Focus E15 residents concerning the level of noise and antisocial behavior as well as the level of intimidation from other residents and visitors. These complaints were also extended to neighbours (sometimes on a daily basis) on the surrounding estate who were kept awake into the early hours of the morning by groups congregating outside the building making noise. When staff or security approached these young people to ask them to move on they were often met with verbal abuse and violence or threats of physical violence.

In essence calls to the police were initiated by a wide variety of people including Focus building residents and staff, residents from the neighboring estate, as well as other public agencies who were called to the premises. In summary for the 5 months, between May-Sept 2009 there were 94 calls for police assistance, 56 reported crimes, and 24 calls to the local authority mainly for noise related issues and 'problematic congregation' of people. The following provides further details of calls to the police:

INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION	TOTAL	% TOTAL
Assistance requested	9	10%
Burglary	6	6%
Criminal Damage	6	6%
Domestic incident	6	6%
Go to meet / contact	9	10%
Missing persons	4	4%
Robbery	1	1%
Rowdy / inconsiderate behavior	21	22%
Violence against the person	13	14%
TOTAL	94	

A further indication of the intense police activity was shown in the fact that during this same period 51 people were arrested at the location, some of which were residents, and some were visitors.

Of course this doesn't explain the impact to the law abiding citizens of the Focus building, or in the immediate environment surrounding the building. In order to establish this number of statements were obtained from these residents. These residents painted a concerning picture involving groups of youths between 30 -70 strong congregating and intimidating others within the area. They spoke of drug dealers openly dealing to people from the Focus building and visitors urinating in doorways and other resident's properties.. They spoke of being kept awake during the early hours of the morning due to shouting, swearing and the smashing of bottles. Further noise was generated through scooters driving around the car-park area outside the building apparently using it as a circuit. Similarly residents also described large scale fighting taking place with apparently arranged fights taking place in the basketball court and being filmed on mobile 'phones by those present. Residents spoke of their disorientation through lack of sleep, and the fear which caused some to stay away from their homes as much as they could.

Analysis:

Information was obtained from the following: Police systems (CAD, Custody, Crime); Newham local authority systems (FLARE); discussions with Focus E15 staff at the Focus Building (particularly the manager - Tracy McGurl); East Thames (a registered social landlord and social regeneration charity) as well as other local charities and stakeholders. The following analysis emerged from this information which for ease of understanding will be categorised into Victim, Offender, Location and Time.

Victim: The residents of the focus building are in no doubt by definition vulnerable. They are young, have experienced difficulty in maintaining supportive relationships, are living alone (albeit in a managed facility), and a significant number were abusing alcohol or other substances. As such their routine lifestyle means associating in premises with a high concentration of other young and vulnerable people, living in close proximity to high number of offenders which provided the further potential for being victimised. There was no vetting of the people allowed into the building either as residents or visitors. There was no vetting of the people allowed entry into the building whether residents or visitors.

Offender: The offender shared similar characteristics to the victim and due to the lack of vetting the propensity for offending amongst residents could not be effectively assessed. It was known anecdotally however that a significant number of residents had previous convictions, and had poorly developed social skills. They often moved anonymously around the premises and were in an environment which had multiple opportunities for acquisitive crime. The self contained rooms had property within them that was desirable, easily concealable, and quickly disposable. Similarly the high concentration of people in the building often resulted in confrontations amongst residents and others who visited the premises. Similarly the high number of rooms in the premises allowed for groups of offenders to work together thereby enabling them to intimidate staff or victims. Finally, as with the victims, drugs and alcohol were often seen as facilitators for offences to take place.

Location: The location was seen a major issue causing the high concentration of crime and other incidents to occur. At a macro level the physical size of the premises brought together a high concentration of vulnerable victims and potential offenders. Similarly its good access to public transport meant that the residents were often visited by other similar individuals. However at a micro level the design of the premises appeared to exacerbate the problem. Most importantly the building had little security and the layout of the building meant that people could come and go anonymously. Similarly the premises had a number of obvious congregation areas, inside and outside, which generated large groups who intimidated and annoyed other residents. Specifically these were the stairwells and flowerbeds / waste bins that served as informal seats. Further these areas had no guardianship as they enjoyed no formal or informal surveillance. Indeed the leisure facilities, such as the basketball court, were used inappropriately as a meeting place as well as an arena for fighting.

Time: Incidents at the focus building were occurring throughout the day, although there was a heavier concentration at night and during the early hours of the morning. In essence this followed the routine activity of those involved who would spend their time socialising in public areas during this time. Further many of the areas used had poor lighting and little surveillance which helped increase the level of anonymity of offenders.

Response:

The responses matched the vulnerabilities flagged up by the analysis.

Victim: Efforts have been made to reduce the level of vulnerability to the victim through a number of initiatives. This included the victim's awareness as to the security of themselves and their property. However the majority of the emphasis can be seen in the categories of offender and location.

Offender: Although not used initially it has become clear that the offender responses have revolved around 'Rational choice theory' to reduce the level of crime and other incidents. In essence since November 2009, as a result of meetings between the police Focus E15 management Meteor Security Newham Council, residents and other stakeholders, there has been an increase in security systems at Focus E15. This in turn has made it more difficult for any potential offenders or unwanted visitors to gain access to the building. All residents now have Focus E15 photographic ID cards. Visitor's too have photographic ID cards which must be shown at a security hatch outside the building prior to them being given access to the building itself. Once they are given access, they are channeled into the reception area and held in a sterile area before being allowed into the main accommodation section of the building. Under this new Visitor management system photos of the visitors are uploaded on to the computer system and they can be tracked to the flats to which they are visiting. Further to this if there are any incidents relating to ASB troublemakers can be identified, information put on to the computer system which provides evidence to refuse access to the building. If a visitor loses their ID card they would not be given access to the building until they have paid for a replacement.

Closer working relations ensured Police supported focus management in obtaining injunctions against those who were Identified as the worst offenders .Such action was taken against 9 visitors and 1 resident in a 6 month period).

Finally since May 2010 a data sharing protocol has been in place between Newham police and the social landlord East Thames. This means all new applicants to Focus E15 are vetted to see if they are able to conform to a good standard of behavior. Once the information is received back from the police a decision is made on whether the foyer is the appropriate place for the young person at that current time. If the young person is accepted the young person will receive the appropriate support at that very initial point of their foyer journey. This approach enables Focus to set very clear rules to new residents and removes any excuse for poor behavior. Similarly it prevents any new residents being selected who have a history of confrontation with other residents or are involved in violent crime, sexual offences or gang activities etc. This is the first time such a process (Suitability to Reside Scheme) has been officially used in London, passed by the Metropolitan Police data sharing team as necessary and proportionate.

Location: As well as the general increases to building security there were a number of other environmental changes to the premises This was in order to reduce complaints around ASB which included people loitering in the area outside of the Focus E15 building and making noise which impacted on residents in the surrounding area. Many young people (especially young women).felt intimidated when approaching the building because of the large crowds of young men who would sit around on flower bed walls, stairwells and bin areas. By removing the flowerbeds, caging off the stairwells the environment became far less of a congregation point. The Police Crime prevention Officer a qualified crime designer expertise contributed to this "design out crime" process.

Further behavioral changes followed a dispersal order being put in place which resulted in groups moving away from the area. The problem solving group was also established and meant that partners from across the borough which consisting of a Detective Inspector Foyer management, Newham Safer Neighborhood Team, Newham Councilor East Thames Neighborhood Management and residents from the local estate. All would meet up monthly to discuss any specific issues. It was at this meeting where the ideas for improvements were first initiated. A police room was also allocated within the reception area as a means of increasing staff and resident confidence as well as improving relations with the police.

Time: - New surveillance cameras have been introduced in the reception area and in the areas outside the building where groups congregated and caused annoyance during the periods of darkness. This includes overlooking the basketball area. These cameras are monitored by staff in reception area so require no extra resources. They also provide re-assurance however to residents, visitors who have to walk through that area.

Assessment:

The systems in place have been funded by East Thames the social landlord and have been supported by other charity groups. The processes appear to be sustainable and the management of the building is much more clearly controlled with a clear partnership at work Also all partners now share information. An update in December 2010 established that the Focus building had received 131 applications, 24 of which had been rejected as a result of information being received through the data sharing protocol. A further 6 applications were suspended whilst the applicants awaited outcomes of pending court cases.

In terms of police systems there was a clear reduction in calls to the premises. During May - September there were 63 calls for the police to attend the premises compared with the 94 during the similar period the previous year - a reduction of 33%. This was mirrored by a significant reduction in calls by the staff to the police, from 33 calls to 11 calls during this period.

Indeed as will be seen the lack of anonymity in residents and visitors has established a much more positive relationship with staff.

In relation to crime this fell from 56 incidents during the 5 months in 2009 to 32 crimes in 2010, a decrease of 43%. The most notable reductions were in burglary that reduced from 9 offences to 1 (an 89% reduction) and criminal damage that reduced from 16 offences to 4 offences (75% reduction).

In relation to arrests again there has been a significant reduction from 60 arrests in May - September 2009 to 22 during the same period in 2010 (63% reduction).

Perhaps the most significant difference has been to Newham Council showing a reduction from 24 calls during the 2009 period to 2 calls in 2010 (92% reduction), both calls occurring within the first month.

Further analysis was undertaken to establish whether these results have been sustained. Although it is accepted this latest evaluation is not covering the same season as the initial analysis it was felt the results may prove indicative. When observing the 5 months following the last evaluation (October 2010 until February 2011) it can be observed that the level of incidents and crime has not only been sustained, it has accelerated. Specifically it can be seen that there were a total of 53 incidents reported (a 41% reduction on the initial 5 month period) with recorded crimes reduced to 23 (a 59% reduction on the initial period). In essence these reductions have been sustained due to the changes made in relation to the focus building and do not rely on police activity.

These findings are supported by the Foyer manager, who in December 2010 said, "I have worked as Foyer Manager at Focus E15 since March 2007 and have to say that the last 6 months have been the quietest 6 months we have ever had. I also have staff that are still working here and have done for the last 5 - 6 years, who also state they have never noticed the building to be so quiet... Our daily log book has very few incidents relating to ASB. I have received much positive feedback from Focus E15 residents who feel safer in the building. I have also met estate residents who have stated the atmosphere has changed for the better and they no longer see people hanging about causing problems. Police whom also regularly visit the building have stated how different Focus E15 is. All in all it seems the hard work has paid off. Although I am not able to quote exact figures Positive outcomes from Focus in terms of Numbers in Employment Training and education are at their highest levels they have ever been. The improvements made means Focus is attracting the right people for the right reasons. It also shows what results can come out of partnership working. Focus E15 staff ,local police Newham council and residents by working closely together has been a positive experience and resulted in us providing a better environment for all residents, staff and those who live close by".

The problem solving group and management of East Thames are working on initiatives to utilize the Focus building as a Community Hub. This would enable residents throughout Newham to participate in Work shops and other educational and training facilities provided by residents and staff. Focus E15 is now seen as best practice around problem solving for other Foyers throughout London. The Focus Partnership team are currently looking to replicate their success at a Foyer in a neighboring borough.



Appendix 1- Examples of press coverage

From Newham Mag October 2009

No-go zone for troublemakers

Stratford Safer Neighbourhoods Team has joined forces with Newham Council to crack down on anti-social behaviour around the Focus Building in Doran Walk by creating a dispersal zone.

The move follows complaints about large groups of young adults congregating in the area, drinking in the street and general anti-social behaviour late at night and early morning.

A dispersal zone can disperse groups of more than two people and tell those who do not live in the area to leave and not return for up to 24 hours. Anyone who refuses or breaches the notice can be arrested, and if convicted, face up to three months in prison or pay a fine of up to £2,500.

The zone, which came into affect this month and will last until 7 April 2010, covers West Ham Lane, Aldworth Road, Elliot Close, Hyderabad Way, Elderflower Way, Mandrake Way, Seer Green Lane and Victoria Street. It bans young adults aged 16-21 who have been making life a misery for residents and businesses in the area.

Action against yobs around Stratford's Focus Building **October 13, 2009**

A no-go zone has been declared on yobs in Stratford around the Focus Building. Newham Police has joined forces with Newham Council to crack down on anti-social behaviour around the Focus Building. The dispersal zone bans groups of young adults aged 16-21 from the vicinity who have been making life a misery for residents and businesses in the area.

The move follows complaints about large groups of young adults congregating in the area, drinking in the street and general anti-social behaviour late at night and early morning.

A dispersal notice has been introduced to all roads contained within the area of West Ham Lane, Aldworth Road, Elliot Close, Hyderabad Way, Elderflower Way, Mandrake Way, Seer Green Lane and Victoria Street.

The order will run from 8 October 2009 until 7 April 2010. Officers and Police Community Support Officers can disperse groups of more than two people and tell those who do not live in the area to leave and not return for up to 24 hours.

Anyone who refuses or breaches the notice can be arrested. It is punishable on conviction of a custodial sentence of up to three months and/or a fine of up to £2,500.

Newham Mayor Sir Robin Wales said: "The police have acted swiftly to address residents' concerns and we are backing them 100 per cent. Safety remains our residents' number one concern and so we are investing more in making Newham safer. Crime and anti-social behaviour is unacceptable and we will never apologise for being tough on the yobs and vandals who make the lives of the hard-working majority a misery."

Sgt Chris Mullin from Stratford Safer Neighbourhoods Team said: "We have been working very closely with residents and East Thames Housing in a new initiative to reduce crime and disorder around the Victoria Road and Focus Building.

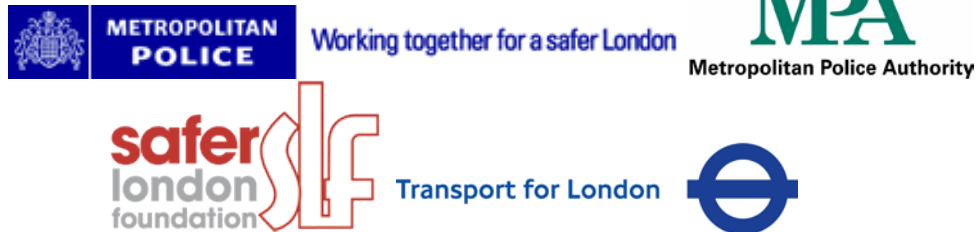
"Dispersal orders have proven very effective in the past, so I am confident that it will have some positive effects in the area. We're responding to what residents have told us and hope this pro-active approach reassures the community that we are not willing to tolerate anti-social or violent behaviour.

"Preventing the public feeling intimidated or harassed in their neighbourhoods is our main priority."

Article 1 - http://www.newham.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/52A88390-0B5E-4489-829D-00D10F8AF6AB/0/Supp_StratandWH182.pdf

Article 2 -

<http://www.newham.gov.uk/News/2009/October/ActionagainstyobsaroundStratfordsFocusBuilding.htm>



East Thames Housing Intranet

An East Thames foyer manager has been awarded a commendation by the Metropolitan Police in recognition of her hard work to reduce anti social behaviour.

Tracey McGurl manages Focus E15 Foyer which provides support and accommodation to around 200 young people aged 16-24 who are at risk of becoming homeless. The area around the foyer in Stratford, east London had a history of anti social behaviour, causing concern for neighbouring residents, the police and even some foyer residents.

Tracey successfully turned the situation around through joint working with local police and residents to improve relationships and look at ways to make the neighbourhood safer. Tracey has even provided the police with a dedicated office at the foyer. Her efforts have seen overall crime fall by 43%, foyer resident arrests fall by 62% and police call outs to the foyer down by 77%.

Tracey has also been working with the local police to share more information on the offending history of potential foyer residents before they move in. This has enabled the foyer team to provide new residents with the right support from the very beginning, such as East Thames' Time for Youth programme. Time for Youth works with young people at risk of offending, providing mentoring support to keep them out of trouble.

Another measure which has helped alleviate the concerns of the local community has been the introduction of a problem solving group. Representatives from the police's local safer neighbourhoods team, residents who live near the foyer and members of East Thames' neighbourhood management team come together to discuss anti social behaviour and to develop an action plan. Foyer residents are now encouraged to spend time with their friends inside the foyer, rather than outside; a dispersal zone has been created to stop large groups of young people from congregating in front of the foyer building; and a newsletter has been introduced to keep neighbouring residents informed of local developments and help build a sense of community.

Tracey said: "I'm really proud that the foyer team's hard work has been recognised. All the staff here have worked so hard and I think they have really made a difference to the lives of both our foyer residents and the local community. Our foyer residents are safer now so it's all been worthwhile."

The project has also been nominated for the Home Office's national [Tilley Award](#) for projects which tackle crime.