

# CUMBRIA CONSTABULARY

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To Whom it May Concern

1 July, 1999

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Safe and Sound at Heart  
A Partnership Approach to Crime Prevention and Community Safety**

I am the Area Commander for the South Cumbria Police Area, which includes within its boundaries the Borough of Barrow-in-Fumess.

Barrow stands out as a unique town, both in Cumbria and nationally. It is geographically remote, socially and culturally isolated and historically dependent upon one industry — shipbuilding, for its lifeblood. The town was built around the shipyard, which has been the major employer for nearly 140 years, during which time a stable community was established.

During the last decade 9,000 jobs have been lost in the shipyard, and 13,000 in the whole community representing 30% of all jobs in the local economy. As a result, the stability of the town has been damaged, and communities are fracturing, as bread winners seek work elsewhere. Drug use and crime are on the increase, with the absence of traditional in built social controls, the absence of a large predominant employer has depressed the entire culture within the town.

An independent Crime Survey within the inner wards of Barrow, painted a picture of the socio-economic conditions in the Central District, which suggested that crime prevention efforts would have to be multi- dimensional and flexible, if they are to be adequate to the task of reducing crime.

The Safe and Sound approach to Crime Prevention and Community Safety is one such multi-dimensional approach. The project, which involves the community, statutory and voluntary agencies, has created employment and re-vitalised the community spirit within the area where it has carried out its work. It has also fulfilled its primary role, enabling people to feel safer.

This is a project of real value, and I have nothing but admiration for the practitioners who have put it together, and the workers who deliver the refurbishment to the highest quality controlled standards.

I am indebted, to all the parties, and I commend this project to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen Murray'.

Stephen Murray  
South Cumbria Area Commander

# Safe and Sound Heart

## Abstract

During 1996, a crime audit was conducted in the Central Ward of Barrow-in-Furness that revealed that burglary; repeat victimization and the fear of crime were all higher than the national average. The audit also revealed that many people, particularly the elderly, felt unsafe in their own homes at night. Police statistics also supported these fears with reported incidents being twice the national average.

These problems required a solution that was not only long term, but when implemented was sustainable. It had to not only make the communities feel safer, but reduce crime and the associated repeat victimisation figures.

As part of the Heart of Barrow Single Regeneration Programme, the Safe and Sound Heart (SASH) project was born. It is a ground breaking and innovative approach to Community Safety in Barrow-in-Furness and is unique for its focus on a partnership approach to tackling every day crime, its emphasis being on addressing the problem at a community level.

The SASH partnership decided to address these problems by a pro-active and re-active approach to crime prevention and safety. Crime hot spots were identified utilising police statistics, whilst vulnerable people were identified by utilising data held by Age Concern and the local authority. Those homeowners who had been burgled were approached and if they agreed, security work was carried out on their home, free of charge. This included, where applicable, new doors, door furniture, window locks, security lights and attack alarms. The scheme also installed smoke alarms; fire blankets and CO2 detectors. The average cost per unit was £400.

The community has gained other benefits from the scheme, for example, some houses were found to be in such poor condition that other agencies had to be called in to assist with making good the fabric of the building. The scheme has also identified some elderly people that were unknown to any agency, and living in very poor conditions. They were subsequently referred to the appropriate agencies that were in a position to assist them.

The initiative has a rolling evaluation programme. To date 131 houses have been subject to the project, and not one has become a repeat victim of crime. The scheme has also saved the lives of three people through the fitting of smoke alarms in *one of* the dwellings targeted by SASH.

# Safe and Sound Heart

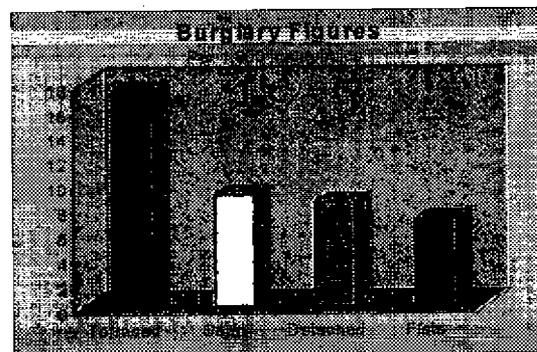
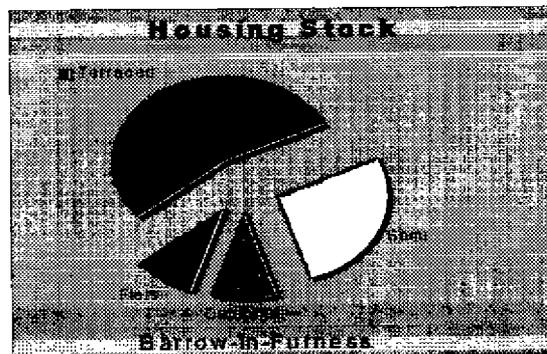
Historically, Barrow-in-Furness was a small farming community until the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century when it became an industrial boomtown. The population growth expanded from 448 to some 47,000 in thirty years. During this time housing stocks were extremely low, so to accommodate the work force residential properties needed to be constructed quickly. These took the form of high density terraced housing estates built on a gridiron profile. Unwittingly, these early developers created modern day problems. The local economy has slumped with the major employer, Marconi Marine downsizing its workforce from 15,000 to 4,500 in 5 years. The value of the housing stock is low with the environmental design poor. This has led to poor community interaction with corresponding crime levels,

In 1996 the Heart of Barrow Partnership submitted a successful bid to central government for funding under Round 2 of the Single Regeneration Budget. As a result they received £5.5m over 5 years. £650,000 was vied to community safety which ensured the funding of nine projects. In order to ascertain base lines in relation to crime and the fear of crime, an audit was conducted by Lancaster University which comprised the analysis of crime figures, together with a face to face survey of residents in the Central Ward. This was the most intensive audit ever having been commissioned in the country.

The Audit showed that the burglary rate for the Central Ward was 13.5%.. This figure was 2.5% higher than the national average. It must be stressed however, that the reporting of burglary, either with loss or without runs at 93% and 92%, which is far greater than the national average.

The audit also showed that repeat victimisation for burglary within the ward was currently running at 17% and stated that "particular individuals were the focus of repeat victimisation". Finally, the audit looked at the fear of crime. It found that 3% of people felt unsafe in their home during the day and a staggering 19% felt unsafe in their own homes at night. This was 8% higher than the British Crime Survey. As a result of the audit's findings, various initiatives were introduced, i.e. town centre CCTV. It was felt that a long-term initiative was required to address burglary and the fear of crime.

Over 55% of the housing stock in Barrow-in-Furness is of terraced design. For the year 1997 to 1998 there were - - - domestic burglaries in Barrow-in-Furness. These figures showed, not suprisingly, that burglary within terraced style housing was the highest. However, if these figures are normalised per 1,000 households, burglary of terraced housing is still nearly double that of any other style housing.



Initially, limited Single regeneration funds were allocated to Age Concern, delivering a home based educational package to assist elderly people overcome the fear of crime. Before this project got underway, additional funding for community based crime prevention projects became available from the Local Authority's Capital receipts Fund. The original educational funds were merged with the Local Authority funds, thereby extending the scope of the project to actually providing home security and safety products, as well as the educational programme.

The result of this funding merge is " Safe and Sound Heart " (SASH), a community partnership, established in early 1998 to deliver home security improvements and safety advice to the community,

The principal aims of SASH are:

- *To reduce crime, especially house burglaries*
- *To reduce the fear of crime*
- *To improve safety around the home*
- *To offer educational advice on safety and security issues.*

### **The Partners**

The multi-agency partnership drawn together under the SASH project represents a wide range of expertise from within the community. Partners fall into two categories — advisory and operational:

#### **Advisory**

- **Cumbria Constabulary Community Safety Department**

Provided initial information in relation to crime statistics from crime pattern analysis, including repeat victims of crime. They also provide on going statistical evidence and identify the areas with in the Borough that the group should be working in. The Police also provide information in relation to security standards and "Secured by Design".

- **Cumbria Fire Service**

Provide information and advice on fire safety within the home and fire prevention methods.

- **Morcambe Bay Health Authority**

Provide advice and literature on accident prevention, particularly in relation to older people in their home.

- + **Victim Support**

Provide additional referrals, especially elderly people who are the first time victim of crime.

## **Operational**

- **Cumbria Constabulary Community Safety Department**

Initial training of the workers in relation to security surveys of domestic properties and training in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

The Police Architectural Liaison officer is also involved in the larger projects within the central ward.

- **Age Concern**

The worker makes contact with the referrals or identifies potential clients. They first make contact by letter, followed by a personal visit. They assess the security/safety needs for the house. Finally they produce recommendations, and make the referrals to the SASH team. In order to maintain continuity, the same worker conducts follow up enquiries.

- **Community Action Furness**

Community Action Furness (CAF) is a local charity involved with numerous local community projects. They appointed a team who installs the home security/safety improvements as recommended by Age Concern and the Police. New employment was created which including a manager, one full time trainee and two New Deal workers. The team has its own transport and office space.

- **Anchor Housing**

Anchor Housing conducts the final inspection of the properties and sign off completed works to the Local Authority.

- **Barrow Borough Council**

The Local Authority holds and releases Capital Receipts and SRB funds to Community Action Furness as completed referrals are submitted.

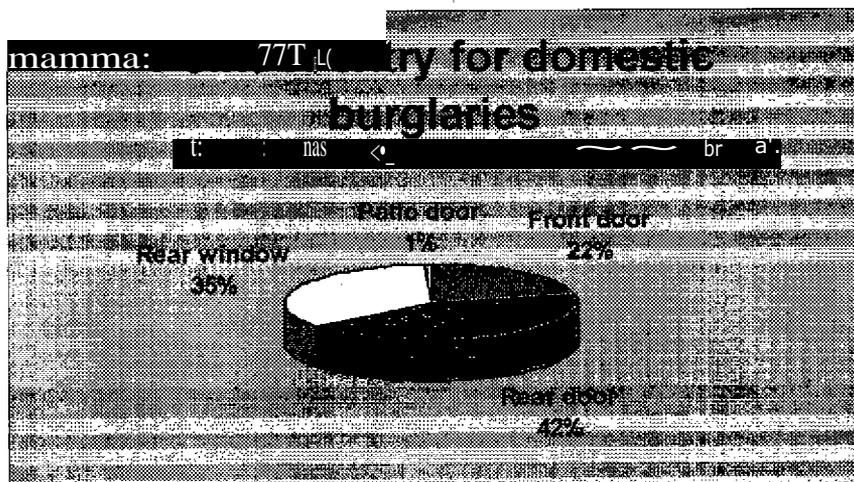
## **Initial Set up**

SASH began with a budget of £40,000 for the financial year commencing April 1998. Community Action Furness appointed a project manager who undertook responsibility for the accounts and the implementation of the project. Numerous meetings were held with all of the above partners to discuss and iron out any potential problems. It was agreed that during the first year SASH would be offered to vulnerable older people within the Central Ward of the borough. The scheme is completely free at the point of delivery — anyone over 55 qualifies for a 100% grant up to a limit of £550 per household. Working in partnership with the Police (Secured by Design), Fire Service and other agencies, security and safety standards were agreed and set for the project.

## Identification Process

### Pro-active

Each target area is identified utilising the police statistical evidence from crime pattern analysis:



This shows the streets of the Central Ward that has suffered the most crimes within a twelve-month period. It is fair to say that elderly people residing in these streets will have a raised fear of crime, and may have suffered a crime. The statistics also showed that points of entry for burglaries were to the rear of the building,

### Re-active

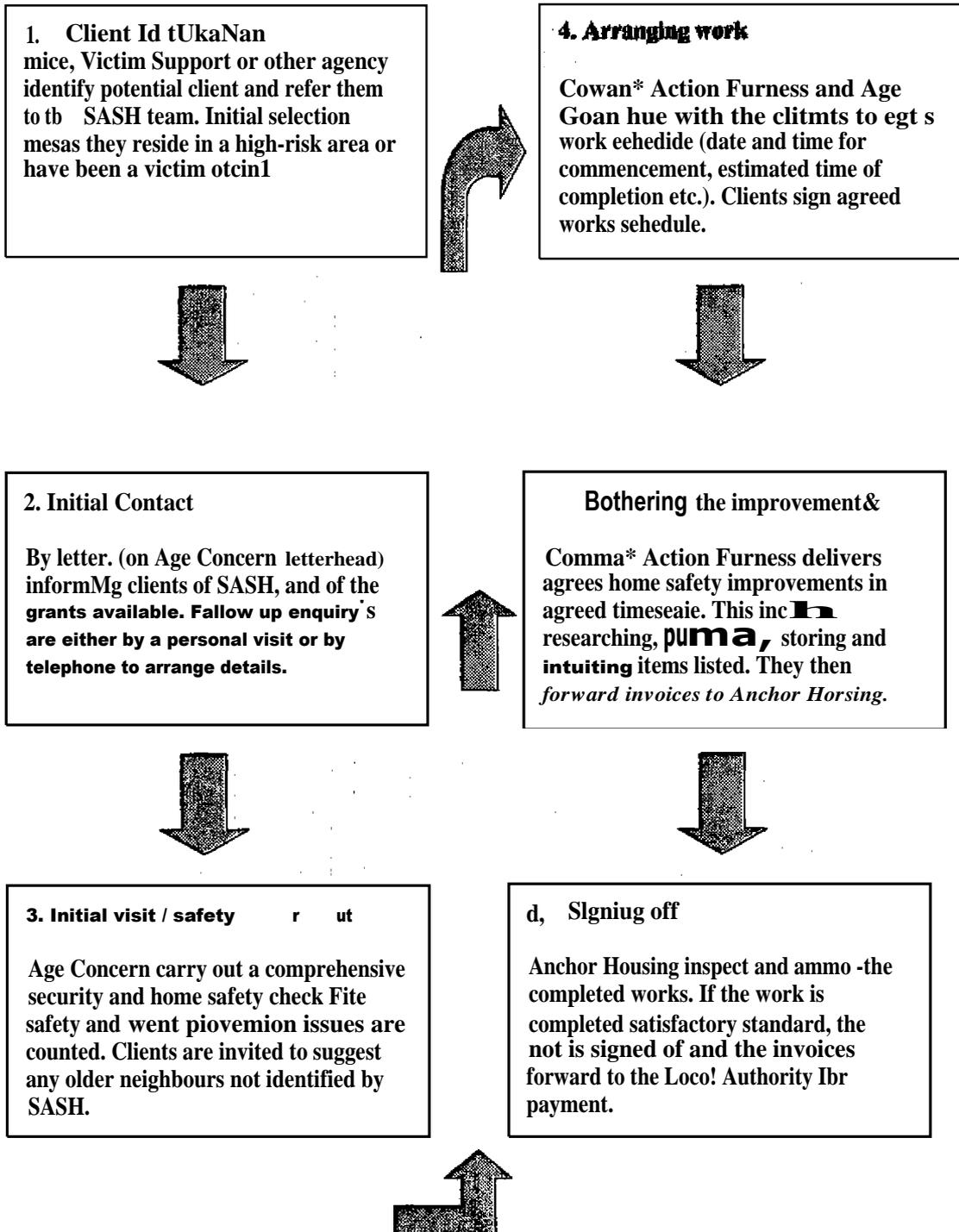
The re-active approach for the scheme is simple, all burglaries are collated, and for the pilot year, any person matching the aggrieved criteria is referred to Age Concern. Each other burglary is assessed on its merits and maybe referred. The crime prevention officer or Victim Support Officer then makes the referral. The aggrieved person is then visited by the Age Concern worker within 48 hours of the crime and is offered immediate advice and support. The SASH team will then attend the property within 5 working days of this visit.

### How is SASH delivered?

The Police, Victim Support, or any other agency makes referrals to Age Concern either. The Age Concern worker then makes contact with the victim by way of letter explaining the project and giving a contact number. This generates a moderate response, as it has been found that people are very wary of schemes that involve "something for nothing". This is followed by a personal visit, by the Age Concern representative who yields more referrals.

Community involvement at this stage is crucial. Existing victims often offer access to particular elderly neighbours, as in the case of one 94-year-old lady who lived alone. She never opened her door or replied to any attempted contact. A neighbour spoke to her about the scheme, and pointed out to her the benefits of the scheme. Eventually her security and safety were dramatically increased.

# SASH Delivery Mechanism



## **So what does SASH provide?**

Any or all of the following up to a maximum of £550:

### **Front Door**

Solid construction front door with all furniture, BS3621 five lever mortice lock, high security rim latch, door viewer and door chain.

### **Back Door**

Solid construction back door, BS3621 mortice sash lock, manual shoot bolts and / or hinge bolts.

### **Window Locks**

Key operated locks on all ground floor windows

### **Back Yard**

New yard door, manual operated shoot bolts, staple and hasp with BS padlock. Security light

### **Safety**

Two smoke alarms fitted with a ten-year battery, carbon monoxide detector, fire blanket and gas ignitor

### **Educational**

Training in the operation in all of the above security and safety tools, literature and follow up enquiry's

### **Other agencies**

On some occasion the standard of life of some of the clients is extremely poor, and some of the clients were not know to any agencies. Referrals were made to Social Services, Warm Heart Scheme ( Heatsavers programme), the Local Authority, Gas and Electricity Boards and Morcambe Bay Health Authority (district nurses etc).

## **Monitoring the impact of SASH.**

The two main points for monitoring the initiative are crime statistics for the area in relation to burglary, and the fear of crime\_

The impact of SASH has been constantly monitored through routine follow up visits. When asked how they now feel with regard to the threat of crime, clients invariably describe a feeling of increased security at home.

In the worst crime hot spots, some older residents were often unable to sleep for the fear of the nightly disturbances on their street. This trend is particularly acute where unemployed young people occupy rented accommodation alongside older residents who have lived in the street all of their lives. In these circumstance beneficiaries of the scheme report the security improvements installed by SASH help them sleep in peace, knowing their home is safe and secure against intruders.

SASH safety initiatives have directly saved at least three lives to date. An elderly woman's smoke alarm activated, enabling her and her son to escape unharmed from her burning home in the early hours only three days after SASH fitted the alarm. Another elderly gentleman was woken by his SASH smoke alarm to find a fire in his kitchen\_ Dozens of beneficiaries have been alerted to dangerous gas fire emissions by the carbon monoxide detector installed under SASH.

To date, the SASH team has improved 131 homes and not one has become a repeat victim to crime. This is an excellent testimony to the hard work and support provided by all of the partners.

## **The future**

SASH has been so successful that the Local Authority has raised the funding level for the scheme to £50,000 for the financial year 1999-2000. Local sponsorship has brought in thousands of pounds of extra monies and resources. Barrow-in-Furness is again applying for Single Regeneration Funding, of which SASH is one of the main proposed projects. If this bid is successful, SASH will be awarded £400,000 over a six-year period. This will enable SASH to carry out its work for any victim of burglary, and introduce a means test for potential clients under 55 when working pro-actively. They will also expand to provide a twenty four-hour service. A member of the SASH team will visit the scene of the burglary, within twenty four hours, and carry out essential repairs. The victim will then be processed as above for any other works required.

Another proposal is to link it to other crime reduction initiatives already running in the town. The committee is proposing to hold a series of "Elderly Citizen" days within the community the SASH programme is running. This scheme will put the elderly residents through a series of safety scenarios i.e. Bogus caller, health emergency or power cut. Children from local school and the youth from local youth clubs will be the "actors" and assistants for the event, thus assisting in bridging the generation gap.

## **Conclusion**

SASH is a model example of a long-term multi-agency partnership. Clearly any one member of the partnership cannot in isolation, deliver the safety and security improvements. However, by working in partnership SASH goes beyond merely offering **ed tiAal** advice or a re-active approach to crime, and instead takes a pro-active approach to tackling some of the key issues relating to crime and the fear of crime at a community level. At the same time it also covers, uniquely, aspects of home and personal safety, which has already saved some lives.

## **Contact Person**

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