



**CLEVELAND
POLICE**

NOMINATION FOR THE TILLEY AWARD 2000

**MIDDLESBROUGH POLICE
DISTRICT**

**MULTI-AGENCY
ACTION AGAINST PROSTITUTION
PROJECT**

Superintendent Graham Strange
on behalf of Middlesbrough
Prostitution Task Group.

MULTI-AGENCY ACTION AGAINST PROSTITUTION

(M.A.P. PROJECT)

A partnership initiative aimed at reducing the level of prostitution, kerbcrawling and associated crime and anti-social behaviour in Middlesbrough including the protection of young people abused through prostitution.

CLEVELAND POLICE

MIDDLESBROUGH DISTRICT

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MULTI-AGENCY ACTION AGAINST PROSTITUTION PROJECT

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SUMMARY

On the 6th August 1998, a 1,000-signature petition was handed in to Middlesbrough Town Hall by residents who were demanding the Police and Local Authority take action to tackle the problems associated with prostitution.

During the previous five years prostitution in Middlesbrough increased substantially and young girls began to operate in residential areas rather than the more traditional locations.

The increase in the number of young girls involved was highlighted by the number of police warnings, cautions and arrests of girls under the age of 18 years which increased from 7 in 1993 to 84 in 1997. This coincided with an increase in the availability of heroin and 'crack' cocaine.

Residential and business communities suffered harassment and intimidation by prostitutes who accosted men innocently in the area and kerbcrawlers accosting women and children not involved in prostitution. The visual activity of prostitutes and kerbcrawlers created fear of crime. Parents would not allow their children outside for fear of them being accosted or abducted by kerbcrawlers.

Other problems included the degradation of the area, low self-esteem of the community and reduced opportunity for area development. A detrimental effect on the business community was caused as a result of prostitution related waste and drug abuse materials being deposited outside premises.

As a result of public concern the children's charity Banardos sponsored a 12 month research project entitled 'Sexually Exploited Children On the Streets', (S.E.C.O.S. Project). The aim of the project was to make contact with young people who were being sexually exploited on the streets of Middlesbrough. They were to seek out information with a view to making recommendations for future interagency strategy to support and protect young people involved in selling sex.

In response to The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Middlesbrough Police together with their partners in the Local Authority conducted an audit of crime and disorder (Appendix 'A'). They consulted with the local communities, business and other agencies and drew up a crime reduction strategy (Appendix 'B'), which reflected the public's priorities.

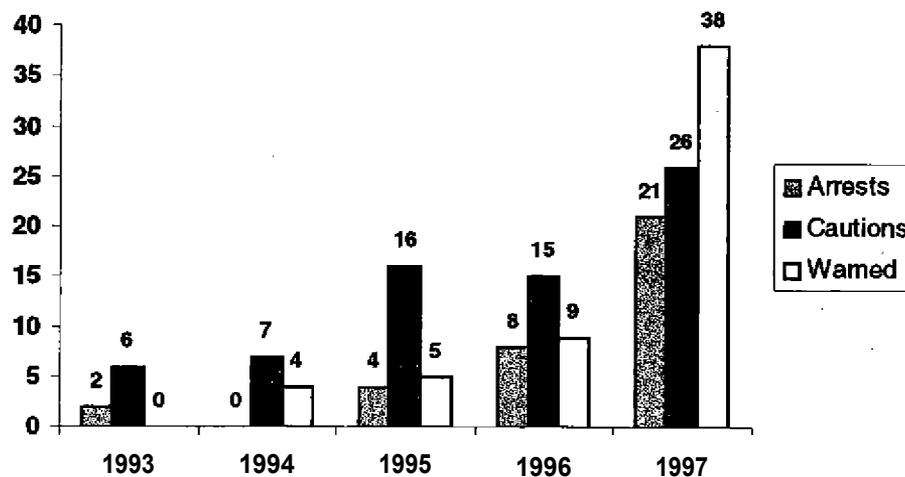
The audit, which was published in November 1998, identified prostitution as an area of public concern. A strategy for reducing crime and disorder in Middlesbrough for 1999 — 2002 led to the creation of the Multi-agency **Prostitution Task Group**. For the first time all agencies began to act as one team working towards a specific and measurable action plan.

SCANNING

Prostitution in Middlesbrough goes back many years. Although the town's heavy industry dwindled prostitutes continued to work in the traditional areas near to the old dock area on the north fringe of the town.

During the early to mid 90's the prostitution scene in Middlesbrough changed considerably. The numbers involved in prostitution increased substantially and the rise in the number of young girls under the age of 18 years led to conflict between the younger and older women. The younger element, were forced to work away from the traditional areas and began to, operate from residential parts of the town centre.

The below chart highlights the increase in the number of police warnings, cautions and arrests of young girls under the age of 18 years between 1993 - 1997.

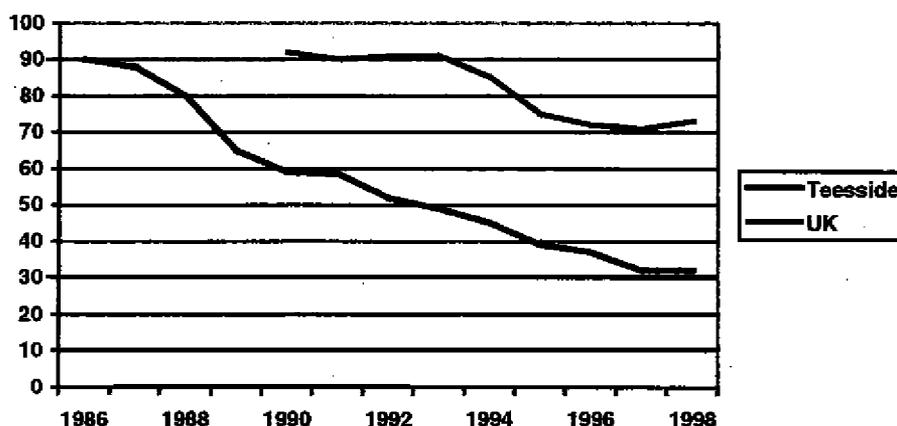


This chart is a measure of police activity in response to the problem. This raised public concern to such a degree that the Children's Charity Banardos, Middlesbrough Local Authority and Social Services sponsored the S.E.C.O.S. Project, which commenced in February 1998.

The rise in prostitution appeared to coincide with increased availability of heroin locally. Middlesbrough having been identified as having one of the lowest street heroin prices in the country.

Heroin prices between 1986 — 1998 (Information published yearly by N.C.I.S)

Price per gram



Poor media reporting appeared to promote rather than deter prostitution and informed men from outside of the area where to go to obtain the services of a prostitute, including underage children.

The effects on policing included an increase in crime, such as assault, robbery, rape, kidnapping, child abuse and the misuse of drugs.

Residents and those conducting business in the areas affected by prostitution suffered harassment and intimidation, which led to the submission of a 1,000-signature petition.

Following the public consultation process which was carried out in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 it was clear that the public, support agencies, Local Authority and the police recognised that prostitution and the associated activity were of major public concern.

The local community were witnessing a break down in social structure. House prices in affected areas reduced and those who could afford to move left the area. Many of those who remained felt that they were in a poverty trap. The doors were opened to private landlords who offered no controls in relation to their occupants.

Prostitution became a magnet for other criminal activity and in particular drug abuse.

ANALYSIS

S.E.C.O.S. PROTECT

During the research period, the S.E.C.O.S Project made contact with 70 children, young people and adults. Thirty of those contacted were aged 12 — 17 years, thirteen were aged 18 — 21 years and the remainder were over 21 years.

In total 31 children and young people aged 12 years – 17 years were either involved in or at risk of abuse through prostitution.

Analysis of the information from the S.E.C.O.S. Project indicated that all the girls at some point worked on the streets.

Other key findings were:

97% had run away from home or Local Authority care.

91% were coerced into prostitution.

87% were involved in drug abuse

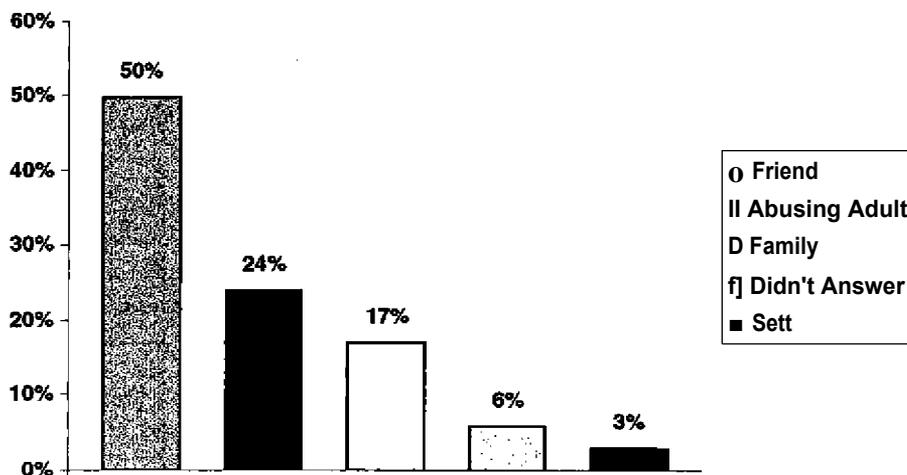
86% experienced childhood abuse (Either sexual, physical or both)

53% had engaged in self-harming behaviour.

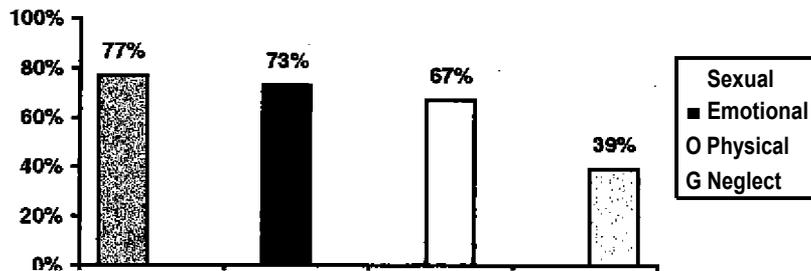
Those who were regularly missing from home were either: -

- Befriended by another peer who was street wise or a significantly older abusing adult; or
- Were influenced by a family member.

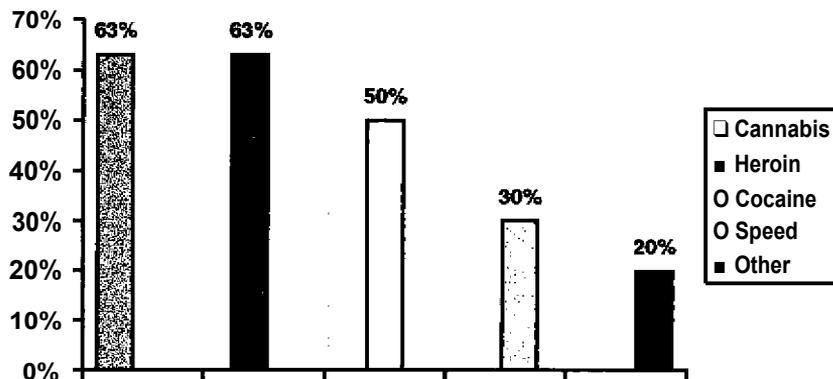
INTRODUCTION INTO ABUSE THROUGH PROSTITUTION



The majority of the girls had previously suffered from several types of childhood abuse.



The misuse of controlled drugs was an additional factor. It was not possible to state, whether drugs or prostitution came first, but the below chart indicates the level of drug abuse by the young girls.



A typical profile was:-

- She had been in Local Authority care;
- She was introduced to prostitution through a friend;
- ◆ She developed a heroin habit of £150 a day;
- ◆ She had regular punters;
- ◆ She became a shoplifter and asked a police officer, "Do you want me to be a shoplifter or a prostitute?"
- ◆ The average age of entry into prostitution is 12 1/3 years.

The young girls under the age of 18 years were ill equipped to make informed choices as to whether they should be involved in selling sex. The reasons why they were involved were complex but the evidence indicated that they did not enter prostitution by choice but were coerced by a series of complex circumstances.

This research provided information, which: -

- Confirmed that children involved in prostitution were victims of crime; and
- Helped agencies identify children at an early stage that were at risk of abuse through prostitution.

A Multi-agency protocol was required to help young people who were at risk of abuse through prostitution.

Outreach Services

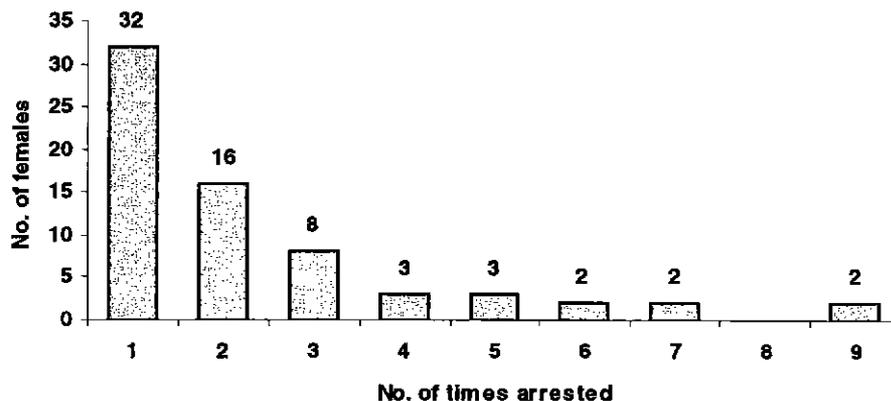
In January 1996 Tees Health Authority, working with the Genito Urinary Medicine Consultant in Middlesbrough set up an outreach service for commercial sex to prevent the spread of HIV. It offers screening, sexual health advice, free condoms and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections. The drop-in clinic is held at a location in central Middlesbrough adjacent to the area where the prostitutes work. Two outreach workers also go out onto the streets to offer condoms to the prostitutes who do not use the clinic.

This service was based upon the principle of harm reduction and needed to be expanded to include general safety of the girls whilst on the streets.

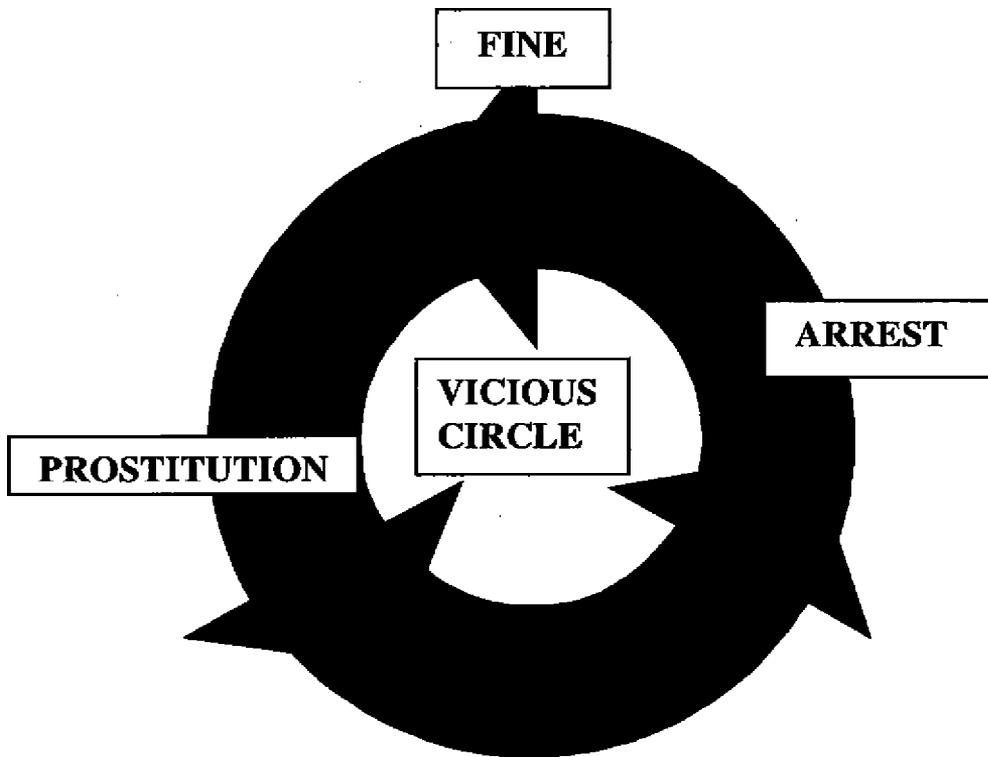
POLICE TACTICS

Targeting Prostitutes

During 1998, Middlesbrough Police made over 200 arrests for soliciting. Analysis showed that the prostitutes were likely to re-offend if arrested.



The arrest policy only had a temporary impact upon the area. It generated a vicious circle. Fines forced street workers to return to the street to earn more money.



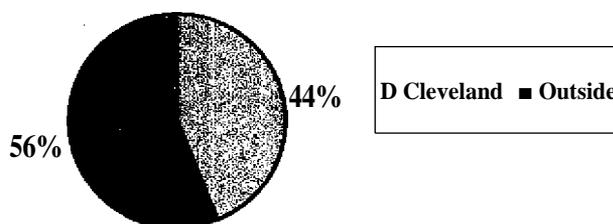
The prostitution arrest policy needed to be more focused and linked to other multi-agency services to be permanently effective.

Targeting Kerbcrawlers

During 1998 a policy of sending advice letters to those who may have been involved in kerbcrawling was partially successful

Data collected from July 1999 — December 1999 indicated most kerbcrawlers travelled in to Middlesbrough from outside the Cleveland area.

Kerbcrawler Data by area of residence



A more proactive media strategy was required to deter kerbcrawlers and further analysis was required to establish kerbcrawler profiles.

Media

Previous media reporting had promoted an impression of tolerance of prostitution and kerbcrawling in Middlesbrough. It also informed men throughout the region where to go to seek these services.

To protect children and residents the use of the media in respect of prostitution issues should always include law enforcement, particularly in respect of kerb crawling.

Residents Petition

This confirmed the general feeling of member of the public who lived in the area affected by prostitution.

More detailed research was required in respect of public opinion and the level and effect of prostitution in residential areas.

Gaps in information and service

During the analysis stages many gaps in information and service were identified such as a lack of: -

- ◆ Information sharing between agencies;
- ◆ Multi-agency co-ordination;
- ◆ Support service for vulnerable girls under the age of 18 years;
- ◆ Services to help adult women exit prostitution;
- ◆ Police liaison with prostitutes;
- Detailed information about the public perception of the problem;
- ◆ Police data only reflected police activity and did not show the true level or effects of prostitution. There was a lack of management information.

Conclusion

A more informed Multi-agency response was required to tackle the problems associated with prostitution. There was a need for all contributing agencies to be co-ordinated and held accountable to an agreed action plan. The Multi-Agency Prostitution Task Group fulfilled this role.

RESPONSE

In December 1998, the **Multi-agency Prostitution Task Group** was established. Representation on the Group included the Police, Local Authority, Health, Outreach Services, S.E.C_O.S., Education, Resident, Probation, Social Services, a local reporter; Durham and Teesside Universities.

Many of this group had met previously in various professional capacities but this was the first time that all members had met as one group with a united aim. The group chaired by the Superintendent Operations of Middlesbrough Police created a single **multi-agency action plan (Appendix `C')**. The Corporate Director of **Middlesbrough** Local Authority was appointed as 'mentor' to the chair of the Group. This being the first time that an outside agency has acted in such an advisory capacity to the police.

The action plan covered police enforcement, the provision of services and the gathering/circulation of information.

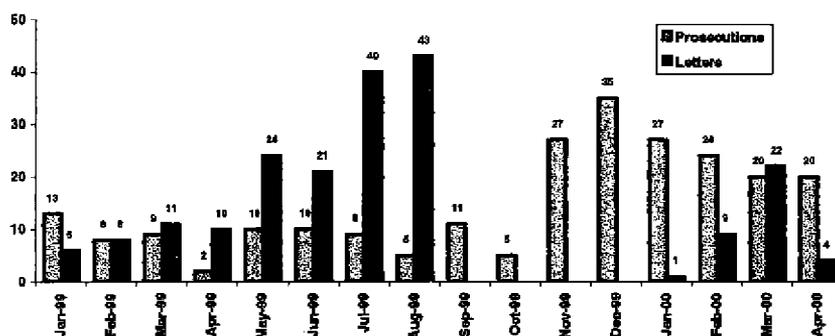
Targeting kerbcrawlers

Police tactics in relation to targeting kerbcrawlers evolved gradually. This could be described as the 'here and now' strategy as *the* effects of targeting kerbcrawlers are immediate.

In October 1998, the police ceased cautioning kerbcrawlers. If there was sufficient evidence to prove the offence then the individual was prosecuted. In cases where an individual was seen in an area frequented by prostitutes but there was insufficient evidence to prove the offence an advice letter was sent to their home address. A clear intention of the police was to increase the number of prosecutions in respect of kerbcrawling offences. To achieve this we: -

- ◆ Utilised observations in the area where the pick up takes place;
- ◆ Utilised C.C.T.V. I covert technical recording equipment; and
- ◆ Targeted the areas where the women take their clients.

The below chart indicates the number of prosecutions for kerbcrawling and the number of advice letters sent to individuals seen in the areas frequented by prostitutes. It shows the change in policy from sending advice letters to prosecution_



All those reported for summons appear before court on the last Friday of each month. The purpose of this is to influence behaviour. For example due to the kerbcrawlers appearing before court on the same day the Magistrates become aware of the scale of the problem and sentence appropriately. Due to the large number of kerbcrawlers appearing before court on the same day the media report on proceedings. This is known by them as 'Naming and Shaming'. The intention of the police was not to 'Name and Shame' but to: -

- ◆ Deter that individual from repeat offending;
- ◆ Deter other potential kerbcrawlers from coming to Middlesbrough;
- ◆ Raise the awareness of police activity to residents and members of the business community, and
- ◆ Ultimately make the streets safe.

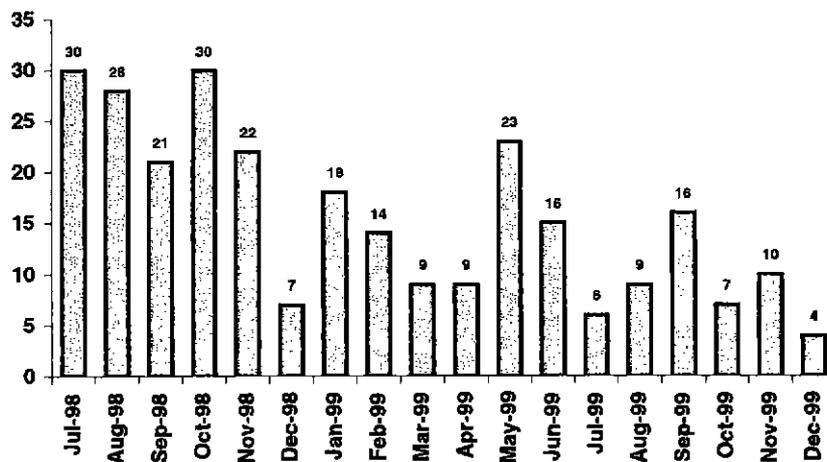
The tactic proved very successful with few repeat offenders.

Applications for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are made in respect of identified repeat offenders. The application being to ban the kerb crawler from entering Middlesbrough town centre. This attracted local and national media attention (Appendix 'D').

Targeting Prostitutes

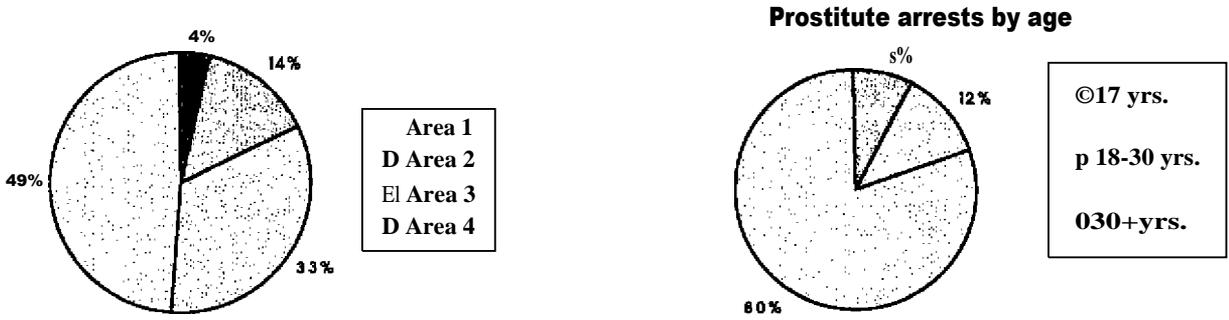
The police continued to arrest prostitutes who worked in residential parts of the town. The following charts indicate the numbers of those arrested for prostitution, the location of the arrests and the ages of the women arrested.

Prostitute arrests from July 1998 – December 1999



The reduction in the number of prostitute's arrests reflected the change in policy to target kerbcrawlers.

For the purpose of monitoring prostitution activity Middlesbrough District was divided into four areas. Area 1 being a commercial area and areas 2,3, and 4 are residential.



During the introduction of the juvenile protocol, described below, a number of 17-year-old girls were arrested. The policy now is that no 17 year old girl would be arrested unless a multi agency group agreed that arrest was necessary as part of the exiting strategy. To date this has not occurred.

Since 1st April 2000, drug referral workers have operated from Middlesbrough Custody Office, which has enabled prostitutes to receive support and advice at the time of their arrest, which has made the arrest more purposeful.

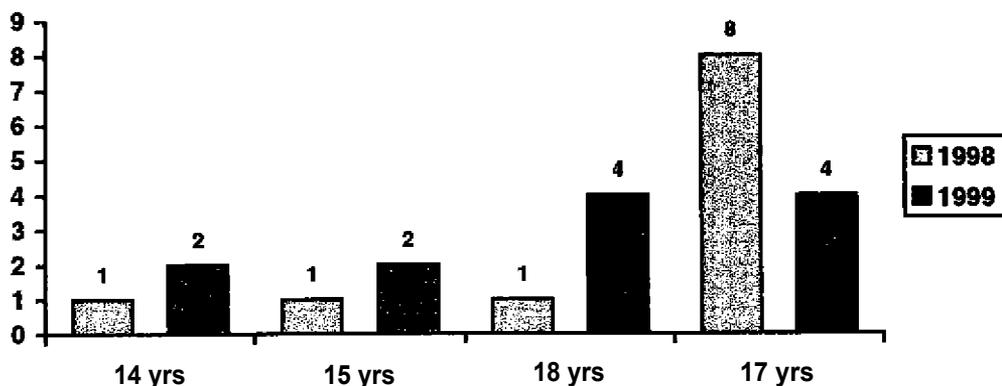
Multi-Agency - Juvenile Protocol on Victims of Child Prostitution

The protocol (Appendix 'E') commenced in March 1998, its basic principle is to deal with street workers under the age of 18 years as young victims rather than offenders and help them exit from prostitution. A young girl who is believed to be involved in prostitution is not arrested but is encouraged to attend the police station as a volunteer where the multi-agency caring approach is adopted. The process includes: -

- ◆ An interview;
- ◆ A risk assessment;
- ◆ Intelligence gathering in relation to punters, drug dealers and influences; and
- ◆ Referral to Social Services Department and S.E.C.O.S.;

The chart overleaf indicates the number of young girls at risk who were referred to the multi-agency protocol.

Police Juvenile Protocol Referrals for 1998 and 1999



Management Information

From January 2000, improved management information systems were introduced, which included: -

- i) Sightings of prostitutes and warnings given. The purpose being to establish the exact number of prostitutes operating in Middlesbrough and to monitor levels of activity. When sufficient information is available, additional action will be taken such as the provision of support or the use of anti-social behaviour orders;
- ii) Monitoring of violent crime committed by or against prostitutes;
- iii) Number of intelligence reports received by police from support agencies;
- iv) Number of repeat prostitute or kerbcrawler offenders;
- v) Number of streets where prostitutes operate;
- vi) Kerbcrawler Social Data Questionnaires;
- vii) Number of Anti Social Behaviour Order applications applied for and granted; and
- viii) The number of young people referred through the joint protocol and assisted in an exit plan.

Media Strategy

The following media policy was implemented: -

- i) No national publicity would be given in respect of prostitution issues without the agreement of the Prostitution Task Group as irresponsible national reporting may promote prostitution and kerbcrawling in the area.
- ii) All publicity relating to prostitution 1 kerbcrawling will have built within it a clear enforcement message.
- iii) The media will be used to raise public awareness of the serious issues surrounding prostitution such as the level of crime, which includes assault, robbery, rape, abduction, child abuse and drug abuse. As well as the community and social problems such as intimidation, harassment and the increase in the fear of crime.
- iv) The police will create publicity for the 12 kerbcrawler court days and 6 high profile enforcement operations per year.
- v) There will be 3 awareness campaigns annually by the support agencies to promote their services.
- vi) There will be no public support for a prostitution tolerance zone.

A selection of media reports are attached (Appendix `F').

Drug Enforcement Operations

In July 1998, a Dedicated Drug Enforcement Unit was formed in Middlesbrough. Primary objectives of the unit were to target those involved in the street level supply and District level inter dealer supply of controlled drugs. During 1999 the unit arrested and charged 50 people with offences connected with the unlawful supply of heroin and crack cocaine in the areas where prostitutes operate. Operations 'Sunset' and 'Dedlock' for example received substantial media interest (Appendix `G') and highlighted the links between prostitution and drugs.

S.E.C.O.S. Project

Following the success of the research project S.E.C.O.S developed into a full time project. Funding for the project was received from S.R.B, New Deals for Communities, Tees Health, Social Services Department and Barnardos. It will initially run for a 5-year period. S.E.C.O.S provides a drop in facility on 2 evenings per week and outreach services to young people abused through prostitution.

S.E.C.O.S also work with individuals on their Exiting plan as identified through the joint protocol and Social Service Department strategy. Since January 2000 5 people have exited prostitution for more than a 3-month period and work continues with 12 young people. S.E.C.O.S work alongside statutory agencies including the Women's Health Outreach Service and have been instrumental in setting up procedures for sharing working practices and disseminating information to Police and Social Services Department regarding dangerous adults (dodgy punters) and young people at risk.

Health Outreach Services

A 'Dodgy Punter' form (Appendix 'H') was introduced to allow sex workers to share information amongst themselves so they could identify potentially dangerous people.

Prostitute Liaison Officer

The introduction of a dedicated Police Liaison Officer was identified as a vital part of the strategy of managing street prostitution issues. This officer regularly attends the drop in centre and has worked to gain the confidence sex workers. Not being involved in police enforcement issues she has been able to gain the trust of many of the women.

Together with support agencies and health outreach workers her role is to promote safety of the street workers. The 'Keep Safe' card below is circulated to sex workers and offers general safety advice.

Ever considered getting help?
Xtra emotional & practical support is available
Interested in changing your lifestyle?
Trusted workers can help YOU exit

~ PLEASE CONTACT US ~

Keep an eye out for each other
 Ensure your punters always use protection
 Easy targets make for easy pickings - Don't carry money or jewellery
 Punters - try to get registrations and any other info

Street work can be dangerous - **BE ON YOUR GUARD**
 Alcohol and Drugs can make you less alert
 For evidence if you get attacked - Leave something in the vehicle
 End the Violence - **YOU** don't deserve it - talk to someone

sponsored by the Home Office

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Barbara : (01642) 3375/303272
 Linda : 4 550
 Weadr. : 01642) 32 800
 Drug & Alcohol : (01 42) 242 50
 Ward 48 : 48

KEEP SAFE
M.A.P.

Drop: In Out - acFi:W diiesd ay 7 p.m. - 10 p.m.
 .m. - 9 p.m.

This has allowed her to obtain valuable information about violent incidents committed against prostitutes. She receives 'Dodgy Punter' forms from the outreach service and intelligence logs from other services. By having a single point of contact this officer is able to identify potentially dangerous people and provide witness support when required. For example the officer recently escorted three women whilst they attended an identification parade for a serial prostitute rapist.

Police Missing from Home Protocol

As a direct result of the S.E.C.O.S. research the Police began to closely monitor the missing from home register in an attempt to identify young girls who were at risk of becoming involved in prostitution. The monitoring process includes a check to see if a young girl who goes missing from home falls into the following category: -

- * Is any of her family involved in prostitution e.g. mother or sister?
- Does she have a boy friend five or more years her senior?
- ◆ Has she suffered physical or sexual abuse at home?
- ◆ Are her friends or associates involved in prostitution?
- ◆ Does she have a drug habit?
- ◆ Has she a history of self-harming?

Presentations to Designated teachers

A series of joint presentations by the police and S.E.C.O.S. have been made to designated teachers to raise awareness of the issues of the abuse of children through prostitution and to help identify those who may be at risk of becoming involved.

Residential Survey

A residential survey (Appendix `I') was conducted to obtain the views of people who live in the areas effected by prostitution. The survey was designed to identify the extent of prostitution, which occurs in residential areas and the effect that it has on those people and their families_

Social Data Questionnaire

In December 1999, police began to complete Social Data Questionnaires (Appendix T) with all kerbcrawlers who were reported for summons_ The objective initially is to obtain sufficient information about the kerb crawlers, which may help the police and other agencies to understand the kerb crawler, and what action is required to prevent them and others from offending.

Redesign of Streets

After consultation with local residents and the police the Local Authority have taken action to erect street signs, relocated a bus shelter, improved street lighting and cut down shrubs. Other solutions such as road closure and removal or railings are under consideration.

ASSESSMENT

Success of the M.A.P. Project was based upon:

- The development of a tactical strategy for all contributing agencies.
- The creation of an action plan under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which is, a document accountable under statute.
- The creation of a Multi Agency approach to tackling the complex issues in respect of prostitution. Where all contributing parties work towards one agreed action plan.
- Improved accountability mechanism of each agency.
- + Empowerment of responsibility in respect of each agencies contribution.
- Improved sharing of information between agencies.
- Improved collation of management information.
- Improved provision of services for young people.
- Improved police liaison with sex workers.
- Focused police enforcement tactics, which fit into the work of other agencies.
- Increased number of kerbcrawlers prosecuted_
- Improved quality of life for those who live and work in the areas previously affected by prostitution.
- Reduced number of girls under the age of 18 years involved in prostitution practices.
- Multi-Agency mentor system where the Corporate Director of Middlesbrough Local Authority acts as mentor to the Superintendent Operations of Middlesbrough Police who chairs of the Prostitution Task Group.
- * The structure and performance of the Prostitution Task Group, the tactics applied and improved management data has provided benchmarking for our own performance and others who are involved in tackling prostitution.
- Joint training has developed involving the Outreach services, police, education, Social Services
- Improved road design and structure of roads.
- Consultation process between agencies, which allows sustained improvement of services.
- Improved information gathering systems e.g. residential survey, social data questionnaire.

As part of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Prostitution Task Group chair provides a progress report to the Crime and Disorder Steering Group by *the 1st* of April each year. The action plan will be modified to meet the changing needs of the group.

A reduction in the number of volute people involved in prostitution

During 1999 a total of 12 police juvenile protocol referrals were made which involved 10 different girls. The promising signs are that 8 of the girls were only referred on one occasion, which indicates that the protocol has helped to exit young people from prostitution at an early stage. In the long term this strategy without doubt will lead to a reduction of women involved in prostitution.

A reduction in the number of street prostitutes

After consultation with members of the multi-agency prostitution task group, the police now target women who persistently work in residential areas. The purpose being to link enforcement with the support services so that the vicious circle as described in the scanning process can be broken.

Systems are now in place to accurately show how many women are involved in prostitution. Now a clear baseline has been established it is possible to achieve a reduction in the number of active prostitutes. This objective can be achieved by targeting prostitutes by using enforcement techniques such as arrest coupled with the use of anti-social behaviour orders and also providing sufficient support services to identify the motivational factors and subsequently deal with the issues by helping them exit from prostitution.

Whilst it is possible that displacement might take place in the short term there is no empirical evidence to suggest this to be the case. Monitoring structures are in place to identify this, should it occur.

Indications are that the co-ordinated multi-agency approach is reducing the number of women involved in street prostitution.

Reduction in the number of kerbcrawlers

Present enforcement techniques linked with appropriate media reporting has acted as a deterrent for many potential kerbcrawlers. The process for application and granting of anti-social behaviour orders is established repeat offenders will *be* subject to arrest if they enter the exclusion zone.

Officers will continue to complete the Social Data Questionnaires to enable us to monitor any change in kerbcrawler behaviour or attitude. The questionnaires will be analysed by representatives from the University of Durham and the initial analysis is expected by October 2000.

Changes in Legislation are required in relation to a power of arrest for kerbcrawling. This will not only have an immense deterrent effect but will enable the police to take a DNA sample at the time of being prosecuted.

Residents' perception of the problem

Regardless of the statistics provided by the police and other services the true measure of success is whether members of the public perceive an improvement in their quality of life. The residential survey which was conducted in April 2000, shows some signs of recognition of the action which is being taken by the police and other services. However a lot more work still needs to be conducted before this problem is finally resolved or reduced to acceptable levels for residents and other members of the public.

The residential survey will be repeated after 12 months to monitor changes in the perception of members of the public in respect of the prostitution issues.

CONCLUSION

Combined law enforcement techniques such as prosecuting kerbcrawlers, arresting prostitutes and targeting drug dealer networks have helped the police to make a significant impact upon the prostitution scene of Middlesbrough. This combined with the improved provision of service, especially in respect of young victims of abuse through prostitution and the enhanced information sharing processes will without doubt lead to a sustained improvement of the quality of life for those who live, work and visit Middlesbrough.