

UNIVERSITY  
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CENTRAL  
LANCASHIRE  
PARTNERSHIP  
POLICING

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# Lancashire Constabulary

## Summary

### Title.

### University of Central Lancashire Partnership Policing.

The University of Central Lancashire is located within Central Division close to the centre of Preston, Lancashire.

In 1997, the Division moved towards a geographic style of policing and I took ownership of the policing problems of the University.

It was apparent that the main volume crime issues facing the area were crimes against property. This was a problem which affected both students and the university organisation\_

t Scanning and analysis quickly indicated that a large proportion of these crimes could have been avoided had basic security and crime prevention measures been adhered to. The issue was, therefore, largely one of education. Education of the community to prevent students and staff becoming victims of crime and education of the University organisation to help it to improve the way in which it addressed its crime problems.

The University is an autonomous organisation which can resemble a distinct community. It has its own physical boundaries, hierarchy, discipline structure and policing systems. As an organisation they had many of the resources and structures to deal with their crime problems, but needed help to work more efficiently.

The response to the problem was, therefore, to develop partnerships within the University to help them to address their crime problems. This approach was beneficial to the police as it has a positive influence not only on crime figures, but also on demands upon police time.

The impact of the response was measured by comparison of property crime figures from one year to the next,

A comparison of crimes recorded during the autumn term 1998 and the autumn term 1999 shows that crime on campus was reduced by 58.2% during this period.

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# University of Central Lancashire Partnerships Policing.

## Introduction.

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) is centred on Preston, Lancashire. It lies within Lancashire Constabulary's Central Division. Rather than being on a green field site on the outskirts of the town centre the campus is located immediately to the north of Preston Town Centre on a site which has grown rapidly as the University evolved from the former Preston Polytechnic. The campus is open to the public, partly due to organisational and ideological factors, but not least because the campus is bisected by public roads and footpaths.

Historically, the University has shared many of the crime problems associated with Preston town centre. Offenders who committed crime in the town would also commit crime on and around the university campus. This problem was made worse by the immediate proximity of several areas of low status council housing.

In 1997, Central Division reorganised into a four sector, geographic model. Within this, Sector "D" covered Preston town centre and the wards of "Central" and "Avenham". Within the process of reorganisation, the need to adopt a problem orientated approach to policing was highlighted as being fundamental to breaking into the reactionary cycle of demand on police resources.

The University lay within Central Ward and being the size of a small town in terms of population and crime problems, had a good claim to a dedicated police resource. At the time there were some existing contacts between the police and the university. The Community Safety and Partnerships Department had some contacts and on a day to day basis reporting, investigation and detection of crime on the campus was occurring. However, nobody within Lancashire Constabulary had ownership of the overall problem. I was given ownership of policing UCLAN.

## **Scanning**

Initially my approach to ownership of the problem was to patrol the campus and its environs on foot. At the time no foot patrol was being performed in the area. Recent surveys of the communities within the Division had indicated that this was high up on the public's policing priorities.

The 1997 crime figures indicated the following crime levels on campus

<b>Home Office Class</b>	<b>Number</b>
Burglary (Dwelling)	10
Burglary (Other than a Dwelling)	9
Other stealings	12
Thefts within the library	9
Vehicle crime (on and around the campus)	53
<b>Total Crime on Campus</b>	<b>59</b>

Foot patrol and the networking that it promoted allowed for effective scanning of the area's problems. When this was combined with INDEPOL Crime Statistics, anecdotal evidence from other officers of working on the area and information from Central Division Intelligence Unit it was immediately recognised that-

***The problem was the ease with which offenders firstly gain access to the university campus and secondly, find property unattended or poorly secured therein.***

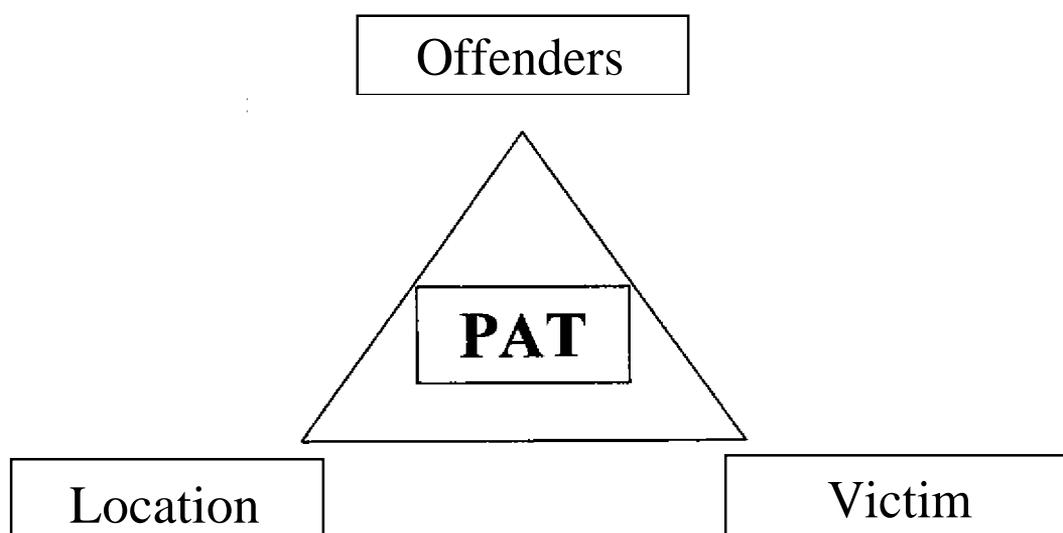
Scanning indicated that there were numerous and varied other groups and organisations who would have an interest in the problem.

These were-

- The University.
- Students.
- Student Union.
- Staff.
- Local residents.
- Contractors.
- Midland Bank (University Branch).
- Retail premises in the locality.
- Licensed premises within the locality.
- Landlords of student residential properties.

## Analysis

The problem was analysed following the principles of the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT). A solution was sought which allowed the problem of crime on the campus to be influenced by affecting either the behaviour of the offender, the victim or the physical attributes of the location.



## The Offenders

Analysis of the offenders showed that they were-

- Various, numerous and prolific.
- Frequently from the Preston area and often resident close to the campus.
- Often committing crime to support drug habits.
- Viewing the university as a soft target.

Or

- Local youths at the start of their criminal careers.

Or

- Opportunist offenders from within the university

## The Location

Analysis of the location revealed that-

- The university campus is located to the north of Preston town centre.
- It has 25 main teaching buildings and 13 halls of residence.
- The Campus is open to the public and is bisected by public roads.
- An open access policy applies to most teaching and administration buildings.
- The majority of the halls of residence are located on campus north adjacent to public roads. They have insecure perimeters but are broadly well designed featuring adequate levels of in built security features.
- There are 20 separate campus car parks. Only one car park had effective CCTV coverage.
- Around the campus are areas of low status housing in which many of the offenders are housed.

## The Victim

Analysis of features of the victims of crime revealed that-

- **The university** has an ideological commitment to open access. Within these open access buildings a large amount of property, both organisational and personal, is poorly secured during the day.

- **Staff** appear to have a false perception of the level of security on the campus. They frequently perceive the campus as a safe, "ring fenced" environment in the same way as a green field campus site may be viewed. There is a perception that they will not become a victim of crime. When combined with open access policies, this helps to perpetuate the reputation among prolific and opportunist criminals that the campus is a "soft touch".
- **Students** are assimilated into the university culture during their time there. Hence, they also assume the false perception of the risk of becoming a victim of crime. They are relatively vulnerable in their first year as they tend to be less "street wise" and most are accommodated in halls of residence on campus. Students run a high risk of becoming a victim of property crime. Much of this crime is opportunist and facilitated by poor care of personal property. The **Student Union** has been subjected to numerous sneak in thefts and burglaries and has poor levels of security, although as an organisation they are committed to promoting student safety.  
**My experience of attending, reporting and investigating these types of crimes clearly pointed towards poor use of available security features and the associated poor crime awareness, being significant contributing factors to the ease with which the crimes were committed.**
- **Contractors** are working on site on a daily basis and are vulnerable to theft of tools, materials etc. Analysis of these thefts showed that they were frequently from unattended vehicles or insecure areas of buildings or sites.
- **Visitors** to the campus, with limited local knowledge, frequently run an increased risk of becoming a victim of vehicle crime. Analysis suggests that ignoring basic crime prevention advice in relation to security of property within vehicles was a major influence on this problem.

## Conclusion

Historically the university and its environs have been an area of relatively high criminal activity. Successive attempts to solve the area's crime problems by traditional, reactive, policing methods have only provided temporary solutions to long term problems. Prolific offenders committing crime on the area would be targeted, arrested and processed and a short-term problem would be addressed by a short-term solution. The police service, with its relatively fixed resources, is faced with the challenge of managing the ever-increasing demands on its time and manpower.

The solution to this was so obvious that profound statistical analysis was not necessary.

Professional experience, combined with analysis using the PAT triangle, suggested that the most efficient way to impact upon the crime problems at the university is to focus on crime prevention through education.

**It was instantly apparent that the best way of achieving this was to build partnerships within the university.**

If successful, this with partnerships approach would yield the following benefits-

- A reduction in crime.
- A reduction in demands upon police resources.
- Increased satisfaction with the service provided by the police.
- Aiding the university staff to work more professionally and efficiently.

## RESPONSE

The first part of the response was to continue to provide the area with regular focused foot patrol. This was undertaken in order to perform a basic policing function and also to build bridges within the community, gather intelligence and provide a first point of contact with the police.

Throughout the time I have been involved with the university, regular foot patrol has been the corner stone of activity. Feed back from staff and students has indicated throughout the duration of the plan, this high profile indication of police ownership of the university's problems is greatly valued. Aside from the apparent benefits to operational policing, the benefits generated by the police commitment to the area and the familiarity of the patrolling officer generate an enormous amount of good will and valuable contacts.

From this starting point, partnerships within the university were developed.

### University Media

Partnerships with the university media were used to address the key issue of the perception of crime on the Campus and to have an educational impact on the readers.

- The bi-monthly student newspaper "Pluto" carries a regular Crimefile feature. This is a police appeal for information on recent crimes committed against students or against property on the campus. On the face of it, the Crimefile feature was a failure. After six months (eight issues) there had been no further information generated as a result of any of the crimes featured. At this point I reassessed the value of this partnership in the light of this information. I decided to continue with Crimefile as it serves an educational function, namely to raise awareness of the types of crime committed against students. It also allows me to maintain a valuable partnership with the Pluto staff.

The value of this partnership was demonstrated in March 2000 when Pluto was valuable in disseminating information to students in the wake of a number of attacks on lone female students.

A sample copy of Crimefile and a front-page article relating to student safety are attached in Appendix One.

- Contact was made with the editor of "Outlook", the staff newsletter. In this case I was able to adopt a more straightforward approach to spreading crime prevention information. Here we simply use the publication to carry timely and relevant crime prevention information, as and when it is required.
- The security home page on the university Intranet is currently being developed to carry a relevant crime prevention message. When this is in operation it will be used to highlight current or emerging crime problems on the campus.

## **Campus Services (Security)**

A more complex partnership has been developed with the university security service.

- The first action was to establish a weekly drop-in centre on campus. This allowed for regular, easy access to the police service, for both staff and students and provided a focal point for enquires.
- The line manager for the security staff, Helen Gault, quickly became the most valuable day to day partner. We identified that to achieve a reduction in campus crime we both needed a better understanding of the true picture of crime on the campus. The most efficient way to achieve this was to share information. I set up monthly meetings at which we would compare reported crime figures, share information on unreported crime and discuss information on active criminals. The university reciprocated by providing me with access to its internal security report system. We also used the meetings to formulate timely and appropriate crime prevention action plans. For example we started to jointly staff crime prevention and cycle marking stands for two days in every term.

As the meetings developed it was apparent that the complex internal workings of the university were often far too slow to respond to problems. This was often due to various departments and budget holders having differing agendas. I found that the provision of brief reports from the police could provide Helen with significant leverage to gain the release of funds for investment in crime prevention. For example CCTV coverage in the foyer. Copy of reports to Helen Gault are attached in Appendix Two.

- Analysis had already identified a lack of access control as being fundamental to the ease with which crime was being committed in areas of the campus, namely the university's library. For financial and ideological reasons the library had always adopted an open access policy. High levels of reported and unreported thefts of property from bags in the library were the result of this policy. To target this we adopted a partnership approach, highlighting the issues surrounding the thefts and presenting profiles of the type of offender now targeting students in the library. This was delivered throughout the tiers of management from the Vice-chancellor downwards. The structured pressure resulted in access controls being introduced in 1999. Following this there was a marked decrease in library crime.
- The partnership facilitated the inclusion of Campus Services within the Preston town centre / pub radio network.
- When I took on responsibility for the University they had started to draft civil exclusion orders against persons found committing crime on the campus. Analysis showed the procedure was flawed as staff did not have the necessary offender knowledge to serve the orders. Subsequently, there was no documented system for proving service of the orders. To refine this I used local knowledge and documented police procedure to promote the service and recording of these orders. Practically speaking, it was easier for me to locate these people, serve the order on them and document the service by means of pocket notebook and statement, if necessary. It is unlikely that the university will ever instigate civil legal proceedings against any person breaching an order, but of the ten orders I have served in the past three years, the rate of subsequent re-offending on campus is only 30 percent.

We are also now in a position to charge those excluded persons with burglary if they commit thefts on campus, as we can prove the element of trespass in the offence.

- The partnership between the police and campus services allowed both parties to work together to develop and refine the way the university deals with crime and incidents. This has been achieved by best practice analysis of past incidents and by having a positive influence on the training and development of staff for future incidents.

For example, staff training packages developed and delivered to date include-

1. Statements and rules of evidence.
2. Identification procedure.
3. Suspect packages.
4. Powers of arrest.
5. The Misuse of Drugs.
6. Conflict Resolution.
7. Use of pocket books.

## **Student Accommodation Services (SAS)**

Student Accommodation Services (SAS) are responsible for all university owned accommodation on and off campus. A partnership with them was developed to address the following issues.

- To provide a point of first contact with the police for both staff and students. Housing is such a fundamentally important issue that there are frequently wider policing issues surrounding individual problems.
- For both partners, much of the benefit has been to improve two way flows of information and intelligence. A good example of this occurred recently when a search warrant issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act was recently executed in student premises.

- The partnership facilitates easy promotion of the safety and security issues among students in university accommodation.
- The partnership provides targeted and appropriate crime prevention advice to student residents. It allows the police to identify actual or potential problems and then to formulate a joint response to these problems. An example of this is the identification of the increased risk of students in ground floor flats becoming a victim of domestic burglary. This problem is more acute in the Christmas vacation period when the flats are largely empty. To combat this I obtained appropriate Home Office crime prevention posters and wrote a letter to the resident of each ground floor flat. A copy of this can be found in appendix three. SAS distributed the letters and posters. Partly as a result of this, over the last two Christmas holidays we have not had any domestic burglaries on campus during this period.
- The partnership has addressed staff training and development issues in the same way as detailed for campus Services.

## **Student Union**

Partnership with the Students Union have been developed to-

- Ensure that every new student receives safety and security information as they arrive at the university. At the start of each academic year every new students receives an input on safety and security in university accommodation. This takes the form of a presentation and distribution of material by all the partners listed here with the addition of the Fire Service. It is designed to give the students a realistic overview of the problems they may encounter during the coming year, how to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of these and which organisations can subsequently provide help dealing with them.
- Address ongoing campus safety issues. I work together with welfare and women's representatives from the S.U. to impact on long term safety issues. Currently, this is in the form of jointly assessing the improvements required to the lighting and foliage on campus. The aim of

this is ultimately to work with the university to significantly improve the night time environment.

- Improve staff training. (as detailed above).

## **How successful was the overall approach?**

The problem orientated approach to policing the university involved multiple partnerships. It was fundamental to the effectiveness of the partnerships that the parties involved regularly reviewed their involvement with a view to improving their outputs. This ensures that only partnerships which add value to the stated aims are maintained.

This approach to policing the campus has had its share of problems and ideas that did not work in their original form.

- As earlier stated, the response from the Crimefile feature was less than expected and the idea was subsequently modified to include an educational aim.
- The drop-in facility has not been as well attended as had been hoped, with only two or three callers on average per weekly session. However, it has been continued with as it provides other benefits such as a regular police presence, opportunity for networking and appointment times for statement taking and ongoing enquires.
- Despite the increase in targeted crime prevention advice and information provided, many offences committed on the campus would be prevented by basic security measures being taken by the victim. Hence, the message is still not being received as fully as I would like and there is still an ongoing need to maintain the commitment to promoting crime prevention.
- In certain areas of the university there was there was an ideological reluctance to the introduction of access control. Gradual promotion of the issue was needed to overcome this initially. Now that the real benefits of access control have been demonstrated in the library, there is further work necessary to role out the ideas and its implementation.

- As with many large and complex organisations, with multiple budget holders, inertia is a problem. Frequently this produces long delays between the identification of a problem and the implementation of its solution. Further work is necessary to ensure that the right measures are installed in the right place at the right time.
- The problem of vehicle crime on and around the campus was found to be sufficient to require a separate POPs plan to impact upon it. A copy of the University Car Crime Initiative is attached to this document in appendix four.

## **Results and Conclusion**

A comparison of crimes recorded during the autumn term 1998 (01/10/98 to 31/12/98) and the autumn term 1999 (01/09/99 to 31/12/99) shows-

- Burglary in a dwelling on campus down 62.5%.
- Burglary other than in a dwelling down 80%.
- + Vehicle crime down 66%.
- Crime in the library reduced to zero.
- Other thefts increased by 22.2%.

Overall, crime on campus was reduced by 58.2%.

This was achieved against a police resource input of one officer having ownership of the problem for three years, with sixty percent of operational time being spent policing the campus. With the partnerships now in place this involvement has been scaled down to approximately 20 percent of one officer's activity. To date there has been no noticeable increase in crime.

The aim still remains the same-

***"To make the community of the University of Central Lancashire feel safe, involved and reassured (L"***

PC Iain Asher.