

THE HEDLEY MODEL

A PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH BY
WALLSEND AREA COMMAND

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Summary

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Hedley Place is a housing estate in Wallsend, North Tyneside, situated adjacent to a busy town centre high street. Disorder occurred on a regular basis as youngsters purchased alcohol illegally at local off licences and engaged in anti-social behaviour much to the concern of local residents.

Local Police Officers and officials from North Tyneside Council were well aware of the problem; the area was highlighted as a disorder 'hotspot' and was regularly targeted by patrols. Residents became so alarmed by the outrageous behaviour of some youths that they gathered themselves and protested their feelings at a local Police and Community Forum.

THE EVIDENCE

A small multi-agency team set up a database and monitored activity on the estate, quickly establishing that the main protagonists were a group of 9 youths none of whom lived in Hedley Place. Between May 1999 and November 57 incidents of disorder occurred involving 5 key members of the group.

THE RESPONSE

The project coincided with the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 with the use of ASBO's being strongly recommended by the Home Office. In partnership with North Tyneside Council it was decided to try and obtain ASBO's against the youths involved.

THE IMPACT

Officers questionnaire all residents and the results were included in the Police Inspector's evidence. This was a radical and innovative departure from normal practice, and minimized the fears of residents ensuring that they did not have to go to court.

Once the offenders learned the local community was united and that ASBO's were being sought against them, the disorder ceased.

ASBO applications against the 3 ringleaders were granted for 3 years duration the longest in legal history and all excluded the offenders from Hedley Place. The method used was simple taking only 6 weeks to process. Thus the HEDT.F,Y MODEL evolved and is now used throughout Northumbria Police for obtaining ASBO's.

North Tyneside Council as part of the coordinated response, sent in a Task Force to help to clear up the graffiti, and repair any damage sustained carried out the final phase of the project.

Residents now feel content, and their quality of life has returned. The assessment phase continues, but locally Wallsend Area Command has seen a considerable decrease in the spate of offending in the area where youth disorder has decreased by 94% and where all crime is down by 14%.

From October 1999 to April 2000 there have been no incidents of youth disorder in Hedley Place.

The Project

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Hedley Place is an urban Local Authority housing area in Wallsend, North Tyneside, situated adjacent to a busy town centre high street. It is a typical 1960's housing development made up of flats housing mainly elderly residents with family maisonettes on the upper levels. The estate has 134 properties and is less than one quarter of a mile square. There are 163 sole and joint tenants and ages of residents vary from infants to 86 years, the oldest resident on the estate.

Local police officers have in years past, faced difficulties in apprehending offenders who have many avenues of escape and indeed in one infamous incident one youth hurled a fridge off the walkway down onto a police officer waiting below!

SCANNING

Hedley Place is an area which **has** over many years faced problems with youth disorder and in more recent times became the focal meeting point for young people who traveled into the town centre and congregated on the stairways.

Disorder occurred on a regular basis in Hedley Place as youngsters illegally purchased alcoholic drinks at local off licences and engaged in anti social behaviour much to the consternation of local residents.

Wallsend Area Command was well equipped to deal with normal incidents of disorder, indeed it had its own disorder policy which was documented and circulated to all of its staff. Dealing effectively with public disorder was a priority set in the local policing plan, and the successful methods used to reduce crime were applied in the same way to reduce disorder namely, the targeting of offenders and intelligence led policing within a problem solving approach in partnership with others.

Responsibilities for 'scanning' the environment had been given to patrol Inspectors with geographic responsibility for a given area to identify patterns of disorder and emerging trends within any given area. It was his or her responsibility to co-ordinate the police response to disorder issues particularly those of a long-standing nature. After analysis, the cause of the problems was to be identified and an appropriate response defined and incorporated as part of the final solution.

In addition to solving long term problems, short term disorder issues were addressed by the Tasking and Coordinating Group who were able to respond to emerging patterns of disorder and define action plans to deal with them. The group mainly dealt with short-term issues and strategic plans were set for the coming week.

The process was assisted by the area command's Crime and Disorder Unit, who had a clear role in the daily handling of disorder issues. Their work can be summarised as follows:

- The monitoring, analysis and coding of disorder incidents.
- Ensuring relevant issues were flagged for attention.
- To provide a research capability
- To analyse intelligence
- To produce intelligence 'packages' for Inspectors
- Maintenance of a database of repeat offenders
- Prepare disorder-briefing sheets identifying 'hotspots' for disorder patrols.
- Identification of repeat victims for additional support

A dedicated disorder patrol had been in place for some time. It consisted of a Sergeant and 3 Constables working 6pm to 3am to provide a dedicated response at times when demand was highest. Their duties were aimed at providing a better quality of service to the public through a more efficient

response to disorder incidents, to take positive action in relation to disorder and be proactive and adopt a problem solving approach.

The whole problem solving approach was supported by a team of experts, consisting of the following key members of staff:

- Crime prevention officer
- Youth Issues Officer
- Community Beat Officers

The local Crime and Disorder Act Audit had highlighted disorder as a priority and set a target to reduce disorder incidents by 10% over the following 3 years i.e. April 1999 to March 2002. Partnership objectives were set and published, and the police and representatives from North Tyneside Council sat together on a disorder working party to ensure all obligations were fulfilled.

The partnership between the police and the local authority was particularly strong in solving persistent disorder problems. Police use had been made of technical equipment held by the local authority for the North Tyneside Security Partnership (the council and the police) which had been deployed to solve neighbourhood nuisance problems.

One other tool successfully utilised by local officers was use of written guidance to parents of juveniles stopped in the locality of disorder incidents. Known as the 'DIS 1 procedure', named after the form the officers submitted the scheme had been successful since its inception in January 1998 and until March 2000 1614 youths had been stopped and parents warned. Of these only 177 (11%) had been subject of a second stop in similar circumstances.

As previously stated local police officers were well aware of the problem in Hedley Place, and the area was highlighted as a disorder 'hotspot', regularly targeted by patrols. Youths were warned of their behaviour and their parents were given advisory letters, and if anti social behaviour continued the Police Youth Issues Officer visited them. Despite this, the anti-social behaviour continued throughout the winter and spring of 1999. Residents became so alarmed by the outrageous behaviour of some youths who were now smoking drugs, having sex and intimidating and harassing residents that they gathered themselves together and vented their feelings at a local Police and Community Forum Meeting.

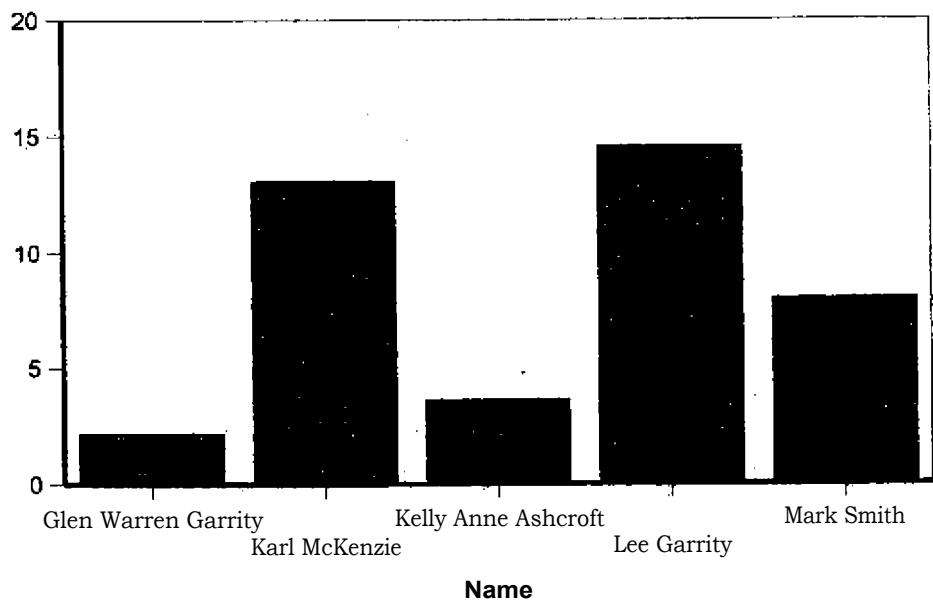
Wallsend Area Command had already commenced Operation dump' in an effort to gather intelligence and target the main offenders. As a result of the public meeting, it was clear that the traditional policing approach was not working and to defeat the problem a new approach was necessary.

Taking cognizance of the rationale and concept of problem orientated policing and in particular the SARA model it was decided locally for Wallsend Area Command and North Tyneside Council to work together in partnership to combat the problem once and for all

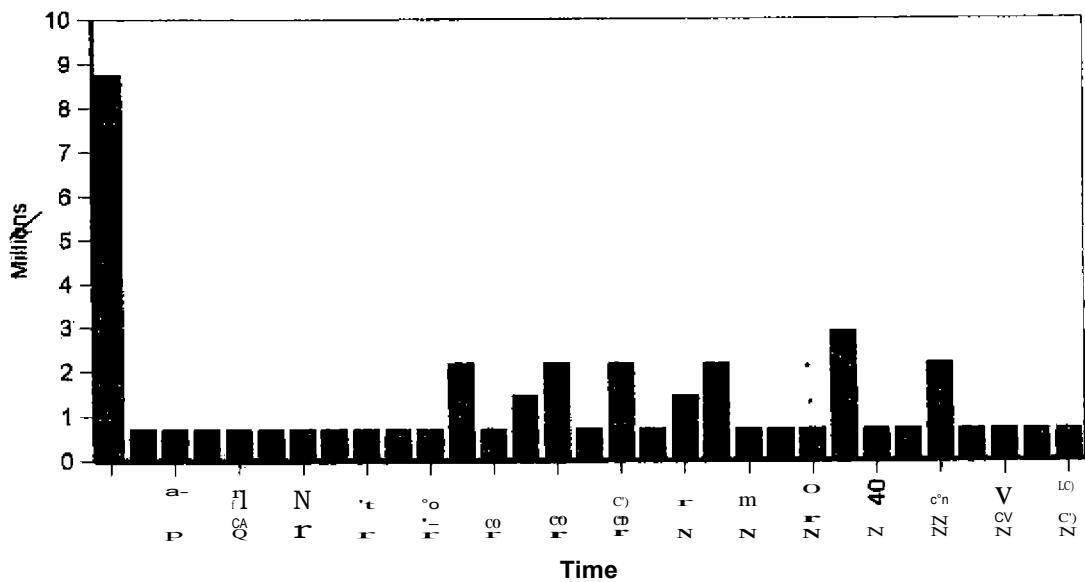
ANALYSIS

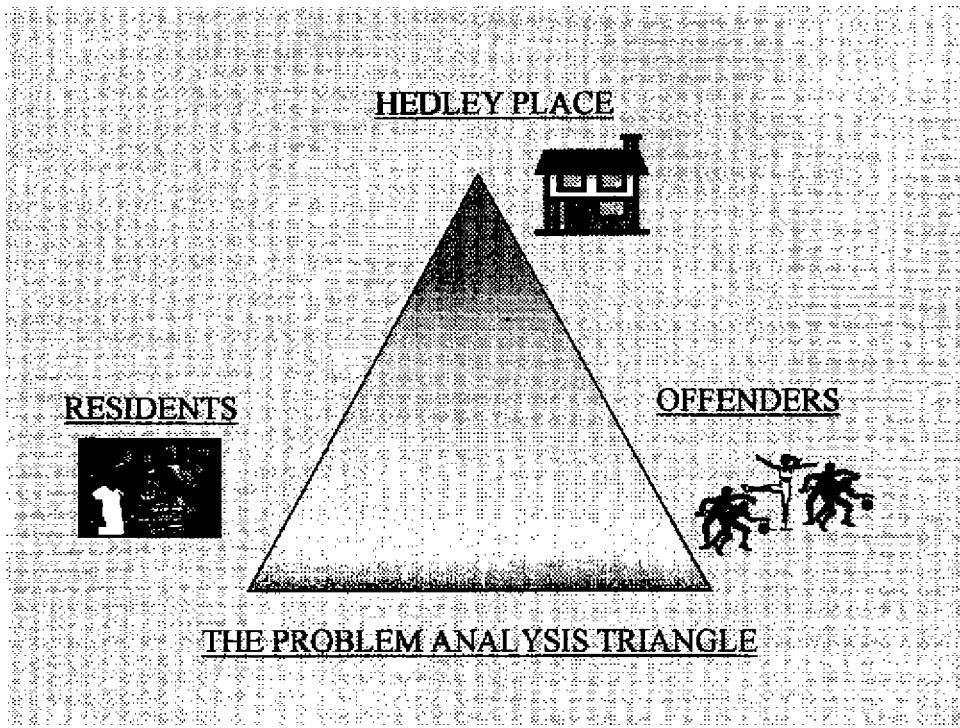
Inspector Phil Butler and Community Beat Officer P.C. Steve Wake have geographical responsibility for policing the Wallsend Town Centre. In an attempt to analyse the wide array of intelligence and information gathered they established a database and monitored activity on the estate.

They quickly established that the main protagonists were a group of 9 youths none of whom lived in Hedley Place. During the periods of Wednesday 5th May 1999 and Wednesday 27th October 1999 the Police recorded 57 incidents of disorder involving 5 key members of this group.



In addition the times of key offending provided an accurate picture of when the offenders were attending Hedley Place and congregating on the stairs. This allowed for officers to concentrate their intelligence gathering within the location at the key times.





The Location

Steps were taken to carry out an environmental survey of Hedley Place in an attempt to thwart the problem. The CBO P.C. Wake spoke confidentially to local residents and identified key householders who would supply information and intelligence on a regular basis. The Neighbourhood Watch coordinator who arranged local residents meetings and fed information into the Intelligence Unit assisted this process.

The Crime Prevention Officer was consulted and was able to provide **situational** analysis and a site survey identifying architectural problems and key design features. This was done in tandem with the local authority who aimed to keep waste and litter down to a **minimum** in the **area**. It was clear however that this particular problem could not be designed out at this stage and any steps to rectify the location would be costly and disruptive to the residents.

The Resident*

As has been outlined much work was done with 'gleaning' information from the residents, but additionally work and consultation was undertaken to try and allay their fears. One example of this was a letter sent by Superintendent Gauden to all the residents of Hedley Place urging them for their support, and setting out the aims of the operation. Soon it became clear that there were a handful of local women who were prepared to represent the community and liaise directly with the police.

After deliberation it was recognised that as with the location, little could be done with the residents to alleviate the problem. After all, none of the offenders lived in Hedley Place and the residents couldn't be uprooted and moved from the area. They had a right to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes.

The Offenders

The first phase of the operation was to identify the key offenders and target them for `extra' attention. This was done quite easily but the difficulty arose in what action to take against them. They had all come to the attention of the police in the past and all had **been** to court for one reason or another. It was clear that *the* sanctions imposed by any criminal court based on their low level of offending would have little or no effect.

It became blatantly clear that the easiest and most *effective* solution was to take positive action against the offenders and to somehow exclude them from the estate.

RESPONSE

The operation co-incided with the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the powers given to Local Authorities and the Police. The use of Anti Social Behaviour Orders to combat persistent disorderly behaviour was being strongly recommended by the Home Office and a Problem-Solving Group led by Superintendent Gauden carefully considered this course of action.

The problem faced by the group was that local residents were in fear of the youths causing the disorder and therefore were reluctant to provide witness statements and go to court to give testimony. In addition the new powers were based in the civil courts and the practice involved was new and unused. The burden of proof was based on the balance of probabilities and hearsay evidence was permissible in some circumstances. These factors, many of which were new and untested in a criminal `type' investigation, had to be considered and put into operational practice.

After consultation, and thorough discussion of the options, it was decided to try and obtain ASBO's against the youths involved.

The database quickly monitored and established patterns of anti social behaviour in Hedley Place. Any incidents attended by the police were logged and statements requested. At the conclusion of the operation it was noted that there had been 57 incidents in Hedley Place and a total of 5 key offenders had been identified as responsible. This number was then closely analysed, and reduced to a hard core of 3 main ringleaders.

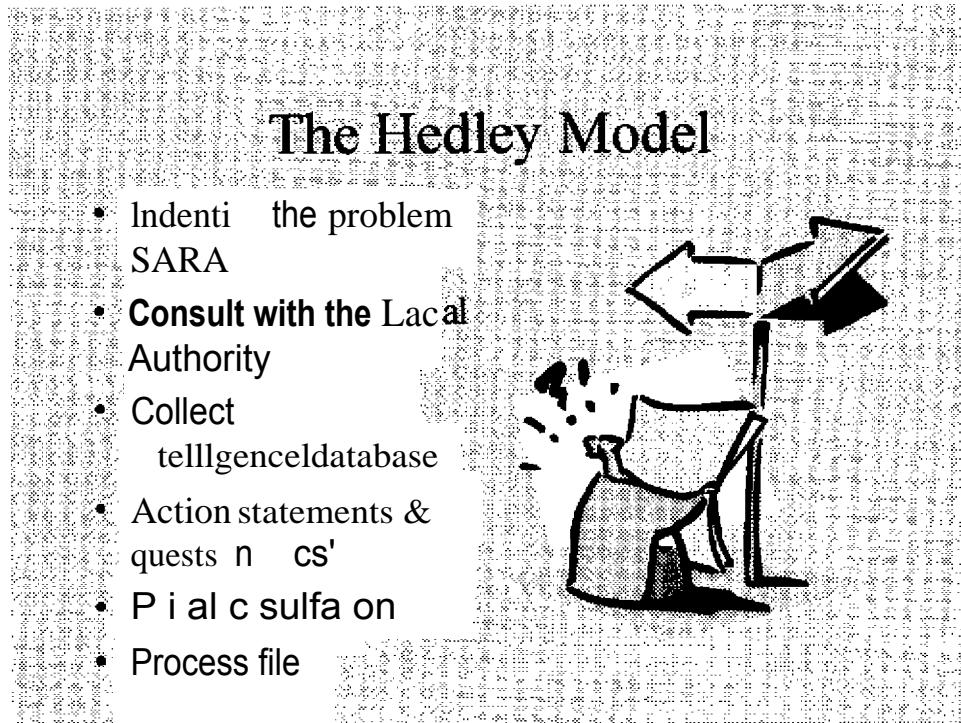
Inspector Butler and P.C. Wake had worked hard during the previous year to establish a Town Centre Partnership' along Home Office guidelines, and the local business community under the banner of the Wallsend Business Association (established with the assistance of the North Tyneside Council) assisted the project Local Off Licence owners were advised of their responsibilities and played their part in refusing to serve any of the key offenders or their friends and associates.

The use of ASBO's requires quick and decisive action and the legislation states that there should be a speedy response by the agencies involved. With the consultation period over, it came to the point of assimilating all the data and *evidence* together in order to submit a file of evidence. There was, however, a glaring omission; There were no statements whatsoever from local witnesses. Local residents were in fear of the youths, and were extremely reluctant to make statements. The Problem Solving Group considered this issue and devised a questionnaire.

In order to canvass the views of the community P.C. Wake surveyed the residents and their views were included as part of Inspector Butler's evidence. This was a radical departure from normal practice and indeed an innovative step. This greatly assisted in the information gathering process and local residents were relieved that they did not have to go to court and give evidence.

ASSESSMENT

This process was extremely influential for the group and from it they developed the HEDLEY MODEL, which is now used throughout Northumbria Police as an ideal approach to obtaining ASBO's for persistent offenders engaged in anti social behaviour.



Once the offenders learned that the local community was united against them and that ASBO's were being sought, the disorder ceased overnight. The offenders left the area and since that time there have been no calls of youth disorder to Hedley Place.

Northumbria Police and North Tyneside Council pursued ASBO applications against the 3 main ringleaders. The applications were granted by North Tyneside Magistrates Court for duration of 3 years, the longest in legal history and all were excluded from Hedley place.

The final phase of the project took place when North Tyneside Council sent in a Task Force to help to clear up the graffiti and repair all damage sustained over the period of the project. This was in line with an agreed multi-agency initiative, Operation 'Kinetic'.

Operation 'Kinetic' is a good example of interagency cooperation involving Wallsend Area Command, North Tyneside Council and other agencies such as, DSS and local housing associations. The objective of 'Kinetic' is to "effect social and environmental change and ultimately to improve the

quality of life of residents whilst reducing the fear of crime and incidence of crime in an area." All agencies work together 24 hours **a** day over **a** given time period. Emphasis is given to the following

- Repairs to vandalised council property
- Removing graffiti
- Cleaning of rubbish
- + Boarding up of voids
- Street lighting repairs
- Truancy checks
- Service of arrears notices

Housing benefits verification

Local residents now feel much happier and have stated that their quality of life is now back to where it once was. The assessment continues particularly in conjunction with local agencies but Wallsend Area Command has seen **a** considerable decrease in the spate of offending in the area where youth disorder has decreased by 94% and all crime is down 14%.

The exercise has persuaded all officers and representatives of the local authority of the merits of encouraging and adopting a problem orientated approach to solving crime and disorder. It has been instrumental in formalising the area commands problem solving approach to local policing problems not just disorder issues but a diverse range of problems such as, persistent missing from homes, repeat domestic violence victims, traffic problems and crime hot spots.

The project has led to the formation of a permanent Problem-Solving Group, which sits every month and considers problems identified by members of staff. Forms have been devised reflecting the SARA model, which help to identify, analyse, respond to and assess any problems, which exist.

Officers are now tasked to regularly challenge what they do and ask themselves what are they dealing with? Is it problem that everyone is simply reacting to? Can it be resolved by tackling it differently? They are supported in the analysis stage by staff within the Crime and Disorder Unit, who assist with key analysis and interpretation. Cognizance has been taken of feed back from other research in other forces, and the system has been purposely left simple and free of bureaucracy.

In addition the development of the 'Hedley Model' has encouraged people working within other area commands in Northumbria Police to pursue ASBO applications, *seeing* that they can be achieved quite easily if they adopt the same simple principles and processes to the investigation as outlined in the 'Hedley Model'.

By using the model and combining it with a problem solving approach, Wallsend Area Command and North Tyneside Council have shown that innovation is the key to resolving problems. It includes many features of 'Best value' another issue to be considered by all involved in local government over the coming few years. The aim is to build solidly upon *this* good work *and* feed

and nourish the problem orientated policing culture, which will undoubtedly grow and evolve further.

APPENDICES

- **Wallsend Area Commands Local Policing Plan**
- **Aerial view of Hedley Place**
- **The Wallsend approach as described in 'Police Review' April 1999**
- **Disorder policy**
- **Disorder Patrol policy**
- **Operation Kinetic**
- **Minutes of Police and Community Forum Meeting 5th October 1999**
- **The 'Hedley Place Exclusion Zone'**
- **Media Coverage of the Project**
- **The Problem-Solving Group Policy**