

**SAFE ANGUS FOR E1 ERY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TITLE OF THE PROJECT**

**'SAFE' - SAFE ANGUS FOR EVERYONE**

### **THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM ADDRESSED**

The problem addressed by this project is a complex one. Principally it addresses the incidence of the misuse of alcohol and controlled drugs among secondary school age children in Angus, and the escalation of that misuse as these young people progress through the school years. In addition the project tackles criminal and antisocial activities with a clear link to this type of behaviour, including vandalism and disorderly conduct which give rise to a perceived fear of crime associated with young people gathering in groups in public areas.

The project also takes cognisance of the fact that not all young people gathering in groups are causing problems or involved in any criminal behaviour.

### **THE EVIDENCE USED TO DEFINE THE PROBLEM**

Academic research was commissioned in Angus to determine the extent of licit and illicit drug use and misuse within secondary schools. The information gleaned from this research was aligned, to statistical information from Tayside Police relative to juvenile offenders, incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people, and information drawn from an ongoing police initiative aimed at reducing under-age drinking.

In order to draw a correlation between certain types of behaviour and the underlying causes, further evidence was gathered in terms of the costs associated with vandalism against council properties and information on secondary fires from Tayside Fire Brigade. Qualitative information was gathered from community representatives including Community Safety Panels, Crime Prevention Panels and local youth groups. Local press articles were also monitored as a gauge of wider public opinion.

### **A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM**

The project is based on the principles of Problem Oriented Policing. It adopts a multi-agency approach led by the police to tackle a complex range of problems. The project allows for enforcement to tackle under-age drinking and early intervention to remove unsightly vandalism and graffiti. Liaison with young people is undertaken to encourage them into more positive leisure and recreational activities through an appropriate diversion scheme. The project management group is continually apprised of areas where there are recurring problems via a joint undertaking by the Divisional Crime Management Unit and the Council Risk Management Section. Each has the responsibility for maintaining a shared database of information, to identify areas where there are problems, and to provide information on possible solutions.

### **THE IMPACT OF THE RESPONSE AND HOW THIS WAS MEASURED**

The foundation for this project is the research carried out by Glasgow University, and it is apparent that this has greatly supplemented the crime pattern analysis information held solely by Tayside Police.

The project specifically measures:

- the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour;
- the number of areas identified where there are recurring problems;
- the number of young people diverted to positive sporting and leisure activities;
- the number of reported incidents of under age-drinking;
- the number of reported licensing offences;
- the number of reported cases related to the misuse of controlled drugs by young people.

The project will also, in the longer term, through an invest-to-save process, begin to demonstrate where savings can be made by the prompt and appropriate replacement and repair of damaged property.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

The Problem Solving Policing approach 'adopted by Tayside Police in Angus continually seeks to provide local solutions for local problems. Wherever possible a partnership approach is taken with other public sector agencies to arrive at more comprehensive and effective joint solutions than those which might otherwise be available to an agency working alone.

Tayside Police is also convinced that in many cases the underlying causes of persistent social problems which impact on the perception of community safety can only be effectively tackled from a partnership standpoint. The force has established close working relationships with Angus Council, Tayside Fire Brigade and Tayside Primary Care NHS Trust, within the Angus Community Safety Partnership, to ensure the delivery of a joint Community Safety and Substance Misuse Strategy. Recently this partnership, along with four other areas in Scotland, was granted Pathfinder status to work with and be supported by the Scottish Executive and COSLA in pursuit of "model of excellence" status.

The SAFE project forms an integral part of the Pathfinder exercise. It also adds significant value to the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) process in the identification of problems by the analysis and comparison of information from partner agencies working in the same field. This is especially important with regard to information relating to incidents which do not in themselves constitute crimes, are not reported to the police, but are collated by other agencies and impact on community safety.

A monitoring and evaluation process quantifies the financial savings which can be made. In effect, for the first time in our area, we are able to demonstrate the direct and indirect costs of dealing with the impact of crime.

The underlying research carried out by Professor McKeganey and Lesley Reid of Glasgow University has revealed alarming trends related to the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs among young people in Angus. In particular it clearly indicates the significant rise in levels of use of these substances as a child progresses through the secondary school years.

The report also highlights an intrinsic link between the misuse of alcohol and drugs among young people with anti-social behaviour, vandalism, graffiti and other minor crimes or offences. It also shows there is a perceived fear of crime amongst older members of the community that is directly associated with young people gathering in large groups in public places.

This is an extremely exciting and innovative proposition, which has adopted a multi-faceted approach and builds on the experience of a tried and tested Problem Solving Policing approach in Angus. The project maintains links to several multi-agency initiatives in Angus which have been proven to strongly support the principles of Problem Solving Policing and to tackle the range of identified problems involving young people.

The project is co-ordinated by the Community Safety Development Officer, a Police Sergeant seconded to Angus Council by Tayside Police. The Community Safety Development Officer is responsible for a Project Management Group comprising representation from Tayside Police, and Angus Council Departments for Social Work, Education, Finance - Insurance/Risk Management and VFM, and Property

Services, thus ensuring that the designated agencies or departments liaise on a regular basis and deliver the services necessary to meet the aims and objectives of the project.

The misuse of controlled substances and alcohol can have a devastating effect on young people and their families and, as Professor McKeganey's report highlights, can lead to an escalation of other problems and criminal behaviour involving young people. One of the main advantages of this project is the encouragement given to the police and other agency workers to speak with the young people in the area. This informal consultation allows them to hear first hand what they perceive to be the problems and discuss solutions they might offer to tackle these problems.

This project adopts a completely different method of assessing savings made as a result of the Problem Solving Policing activity delivered. The monitoring and evaluation of the project is, demonstrating what savings are being made in respect of not only the consequential costs of crime, but also as a result of crime reduction investment to prevent recurrent crime. These savings will be justified and will accrue to the project to allow it to continue in its existing format in future years.

The project is measuring levels of :-

- recorded crimes of vandalism and the costs associated with these relative to council property;
- incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded by the police;
- areas identified where there are recurring problems;
- children diverted to positive sporting and leisure activities;
- reported incidents of under age-drinking;
- reported licensing offences;
- reported cases related to the misuse of controlled drugs by young people.

The project will also, in the longer term, through an invest-to-save process, begin to demonstrate where savings are being made in costs related to the replacement and repair to damaged property.

The information from young people in Angus as laid out in Professor McKeganey's report, would not have been evidenced by way of crime pattern analysis, whether related to the number of incidents or associated costs. The Partnership's intention is therefore, to pursue funding from other sources to allow Professor McKeganey to carry out a further evaluation to provide a more accurate measure of project achievement.

In the interim period, evaluation of the project will be by means of an internal audit undertaken by Angus Council.

## **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

### **Aim**

To influence and reduce the incidence of alcohol and drug use among young people in Angus, and to develop opportunities for young people who present a perceived threat to community safety.

### **Objectives**

- to reduce the level of drunkenness among S1 to S4 school pupils by 10% per school year;
- to reduce the number of S1 to S4 school pupils using cannabis by 10% per school year;
- to reduce Police reported incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people by 10%;
- to reduce reported crimes of vandalism to Tayside Police and Angus Council by 10%.

### **Joint Risk Management I Crime Management Function**

This is one of the most innovative features of this project and enhances the Problem Solving Policing approach of Tayside Police.

Angus Council have implemented a corporate system across all council departments to record the incidence of crime and associated costs. A dedicated member of personnel within the Council's Finance/Risk Management Section is responsible for collating the information and providing management information on recurring crimes affecting the council. This information is then shared and analysed in conjunction with information held by the Divisional Crime Management Unit relating to vandalism, under age drinking, misuse of drugs and incidents related to anti-social behaviour involving young people. Analysis ensues to identify where the problems are occurring and what the underlying causes or characteristics may be. The information is relayed on a regular basis to the Project Management Group who assess and implement the range of interventions at their disposal to effect a remedy.

The options for intervention will include a number of successful multi-agency initiatives already adopted in Angus -

### **INVEST-TO-SAVE**

Through analysis of the Tayside Police integrated computer system and the Angus Council cost of crime audit mechanism the project is helping to identify where savings can be, and are being, made as a result of crime reduction investment. Early intervention to carry out repairs to vandalism, removal of graffiti and increase legitimate use of identified problem areas are being implemented. Examples of activity in this area include using offenders subject to Community Service Orders as an early response team to repair minor acts of vandalism/ graffiti, or provide additional facilities to make areas more attractive for the community as a whole.

### **DRY UP**

The findings of the report on the extent of licit and illicit drug use within secondary schools in Angus clearly shows the increase in the use of alcohol and drunkenness

between S1 and S4, and the subsequent link towards antisocial or criminal behaviour.

The Divisional Community Safety Unit are co-ordinating a rolling programme of the DRY UP intervention across Angus where under age drinking has been identified as a recurring problem. This part of the project targets those acting as agents in the purchase of alcohol for those under age, licence holders selling alcohol to young people, and intervening where youngsters are found to have consumed alcohol.

### **LEISURE TREASURE**

A joint initiative between Tayside Police, Angus Council Recreation Services and local businesses designed to develop leisure and recreational opportunities for young people. This part of the project targets young people who are gathering in public places where crimes are occurring or where there is a perceived fear of crime. As an alternative pursuit young people are encouraged to participate in more positive leisure and recreational activities. Examples of this popular initiative are:

- two for the price of one leisure activities for all 8 to 18 year olds;
- subsidised or free leisure and sporting activities.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

A dedicated community development worker attached to the Council Community Education Department works alongside the local community liaison constables in areas where problems have been identified and uses established community development field work techniques to:

- profile local needs;
- strengthen community capacities and give local people the ability to develop ideas to tackle problems themselves;
- develop opportunities for constructive leisure opportunities for young people.

### **DEFINING THE PROBLEM**

The problems which this project deals with are not isolated but have proven intrinsic links and an identifiable 'cause and effect' feature. This is why a multi-faceted project such as SAFE is needed to take a holistic approach in providing a range of solutions.

The project focuses on:

- unacceptable levels of under-age drinking and drunkenness, 12 to 16 year olds;
- escalation in the misuse of controlled substances, 12 to 16 year olds;
- recurring incidences of vandalism involving young people;
- incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people;
- the perceived fear of crime linked to groups of young people gathering in public places.

Our research highlighted escalating trends related to the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs among young people in Angus. For example, 4.2% of S1 pupils had experimented with cannabis compared to 41 % of S4 pupils; and 27.2% of S1 pupils reported having been drunk at some point as against 76.1% of S4 pupils. The report draws a correlation between the extent of the association between problem behaviour and illegal drug use. For example 62% of illegal drug users admitted to being involved in vandalism or graffiti compared to 27% of non-illegal drug users. 62.9% of illegal drug users admitted to being in trouble with the police compared to 24.3% of non-illegal drug users. In fact the report concludes that on the basis of the data gathered, it appears that illegal drug use amongst young people in Angus tends to be part of a broader spectrum of problem behaviour rather than an isolated occurrence in its own right.

### **Police Statistics**

Tayside Police in Eastern Division have been running the Dry Up initiative since 1998. During this period 112 children under the legal age to consume alcohol, have been found to be under the influence of alcohol and taken home to their parents. Five of these youngsters were in a condition where they required to be hospitalised for a period of time.

Evaluation of a Public Reassurance Goal for Tayside Police in Eastern Division shows a 25.8% rise in reported incidents of annoyance caused by young people.

### **Angus Council Vandalism and Costs of Crime (Confidential Copy enclosed)**

Since 1996 vandalism has cost Angus Council in the region of £280,000. The most recent figures available show that vandalism costs rose to £102,000 during the financial year 1998/99. Historically, a significant proportion of these costs are attributable to acts of vandalism to schools, and this has been assessed at about 70% of the overall total. Much of the damage is committed outwith normal school or office hours and there is clear evidence that the misuse of alcohol and/or controlled drugs is a related factor in the damage caused.

### **Local People and Local Press**

Several Angus Community Safety and Crime Prevention Panels have carried out surveys of the extent of crime in their own areas. In the coastal town of Carnoustie for example 86% of respondents expressed concern about under-age drinking, 87% were worried about drug taking among young people, and 86% referred adversely to groups of youths congregating on the streets.

News stories about young people involved in under-age drinking, drug misuse or vandalism, or simply about perceived problems caused by young people gathering in groups in public places, are fairly frequently reported in the local press. These provide an anecdotal insight into the ongoing nature of the problems that the SAFE project tackles and the way these problems are perceived by people in our local communities.

Close links are already established with the Angus Youth Congress. A recent 2-day conference for the Youth Congress hosted by Tayside Police at the Scottish Police College at Tuilliallan revealed interesting information about how young people in Angus perceived drug and alcohol use.

## **DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM**

At an early stage it was evident that a range of interventions were required as opposed to individual agencies working in isolation of each other to try and deliver a piece meal response to a range of intrinsically linked problems.

Analysis of the problem revealed that:

- youngsters were gathering in groups within local communities;
- youngsters tended to gravitate towards these areas on a regular basis;
- there was a perceived fear of crime particularly among elderly people;
- under age drinking was occurring;
- there was evidence of misuse of drugs and solvents;
- vandalism and graffiti was occurring;
- there were reports of anti-social behaviour and disturbances;
- there were other linked minor crimes and offences to these same areas.

At the same time there was a clear indication that not all young people gathering in these areas were involved in any of the aforementioned types of behaviour but were simply gathering there because their peers were.

In dealing with these problems experiences suggest that no one intervention will remedy the diversity of the underlying characteristics.

In the project's fullest form we have implemented a systematic response to dealing with these problems by:

### **Effecting the enforcement phase DRY UP by:-**

- reporting those detected for licensing offences;
- reporting *those detected as acting as agents for young people in the purchase of alcohol*;
- taking youngsters home who are under the influence and raising awareness of dangers associated with alcohol to youngsters and parents alike in an effort to prevent a repetition;
- corresponding directly with the parents of non-offending young people found to be forming part of such groups and potentially at risk of involvement in substantive criminal behaviour.

### **Implementing the Community Development phase by**

Police community liaison officers working in conjunction with the Community Development Worker and liaising with the groups of young people to :-

- identify the needs of these young people;
- strengthen community capacities and give these young people the ability to develop ideas to tackle problems themselves;
- encourage these youngsters into more positive leisure and recreational activities.

#### **Implementing the Early Intervention I Invest-to-Save phase by**

- using those on community service orders as an early intervention team to carry out repairs at the earliest opportunity to vandalism and graffiti;
- carrying out works to increase the legitimate use of problem areas;

#### **Diverting Young People into more positive Leisure and Recreational Activities through the Leisure Treasure phase by:**

- Offering incentives and subsidies to young people through subsidised leisure and recreational activities.

The Community Safety Inspector who is co-ordinating the Dry Up part of the project and is an integral member of the Project Management Team and involved at every stage of each process.

The Community Safety Development Officer seconded to the local authority is the overall project manager and co-ordinates the efforts of the police, departments of the council, and the private sector.

There are also close links with the police problem management groups led by the Police Inspectors in each Angus town.

#### **THE COSTS**

Council Risk Management/ Invest to Save Post	£18,000
Early intervention and repairs to vandalism	£20,000
Community Development Post	£25,000

Costs were budgeted in support of the project in terms of activity absorbed within the existing service provision of Tayside Police as follows:

Operational Costs - Dry Up	£25,000
Crime Pattern Analysis	£ 1,500

Angus Council Recreation Services absorption of discounted leisure activity,

Management and administration	£ 4,000
Project Management team	£ 1,200

One key aim of the project is to demonstrate where savings are being made as a result of crime reduction investment and how that money will accrue for further community safety activity in the Angus area.

## **Overall the proposed project will help to:-**

- show where savings are being made as a result of crime reduction investment;
- show where early intervention is reducing the incidence and Cost of vandalism;
- encourage youngsters into positive leisure and recreational activities;
- encourage peer influence;
- raise awareness among parents, ref. under-age consumption of alcohol, misuse of drugs;
- raise awareness of health benefits of sensible use/avoidance of alcohol and drugs;
- raise awareness among licensed trade for responsible approach to sale of alcohol and to be vigilant to potential misuse of controlled drugs within licensed premises;
- reduce levels of vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour;
- identify areas where there are recurring problems of vandalism and anti-social behaviour;
- build on best practice and "what works";
- explore the potential for providing additional facilities for young people to increase legitimate use of problem areas.

## **THE LEVEL OF SUCCESS**

The project has a specific action plan with evaluation criteria linked to the expected outcomes. In summary these comprise:

### **Community Development**

#### **Outcomes**

- profile of local needs compiled;
- needs met;
- number of locally generated ideas to tackle problem;
- number of young people influenced into constructive leisure opportunities.

### **Leisure Treasure**

#### **Outcomes**

- number of young people influenced into constructive leisure opportunities;
- reported incidents of anti-social behaviour;
- reported crimes of vandalism.

### **Dry Up**

#### **Outcomes**

- number of incidents of under age drinking;
- number of licensees reported for contravention of licensing laws;
- number of information leaflets distributed including information about health;
- follow up evaluation about changes in drinking habits;
- intelligence and complaints received about under age drinking.

## **Invest-to-Save**

Through the use of a cost of crime audit mechanism and Tayside Police records identify where savings are being made as a result of crime reduction investment through early intervention to carry out repairs to vandalism, removal of graffiti and works to increase legitimate use.

## **Outcomes**

- savings related directly to the cost of crime;
- savings made through crime reduction investment;
- incidents of reported vandalism police/council;
- incidents of anti-social behaviour.

## **CONCLUSION**

The project although in its infancy is already demonstrating success as can clearly be seen in the ongoing evaluation of activity to tackle problems within a housing scheme in Arbroath. There was a marked reduction in the level of crimes reported in this area including a 62% reduction in theft, 75% fall in housebreaking, and 57% reduction in vandalism.

In addition people who live, work and visit the area are seeing improvements in their quality of life and the general appearance of the area. People feel more reassured in respect of going about their day to day business with one elderly resident commenting "I am having the best night's sleep I have had for three years." Although simplistic in its reaction this encapsulates the expectation of community safety and the degree of satisfaction derived from a simple but co-ordinated and effective focused project.