

# Lancashire Constabulary

## **OPERATION DELVE**

### *Crime & Disorder Reduction Category*

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## SUMMARY

### OPERATION DELVE

An on going review of working practices, incident logging and intelligence sources revealed numerous vehicles being driven on the division's roads, without tax, mot insurance. Furthermore the people using these vehicles were involved in committing various offences e.g. crime, working whilst claiming benefits and breaking local taxi related bylaws.

The Traffic Wardens department then enlisted the help of partners from the Road Policing Unit, the DVLA Vehicle Inspectorate, the Taxi Enforcement Office and the Local Benefits Agency. All partners pooled their respective intelligence identifying potential offenders and locations for action.

All partners then agreed to resource several pre-planned enforcement operations aimed at addressing the problems, so as to improve road safety, and reduce accident casualty's inline with policing objectives.

Initially two four-day enforcement operations, involving all the above-mentioned partners, took place encompassing the identified target areas. Significant success and substantial publicity resulted from the synergy created through this multi-agency approach.

As a Result the DVLA issued 154 cle2/6 for vehicles without tax  
19 vehicles were taken off the road immediately by the vehicle Inspectorate for being un-roadworthy  
DSS interviewed 224 individuals as a result 2 signed off benefit and a further 26 are being investigated for fraudulent claims.  
155 Hord were issued and 95 fixed penalties  
55 Taxis/ drivers were checked resulting in 2 summonses and a further 23 verbal warnings.

All partners remain enthusiastic about this multi-agency approach and indeed committed themselves to supporting further similar operations in the future.

## OPERATION DELVE

The main objective of the operation was to provide a high profile, high visibility, and multi-agency response to problems repeatedly reported by concerned members of the public and the agencies involved. Over 75% of calls to the Traffic Wardens office are complaints of vehicles without road tax. Our partners at the DVLA local office confirmed this.

Most of the forms (CLE216) issued by Traffic Wardens in the course of their duties are unnamed and therefore the DVLA can only confirm a 28% successful prosecution rate. Also a number of the vehicles without tax are not registered, therefore no one can be brought to task for the offence committed. If the owners or drivers could actually be caught with the vehicle then the success rate would obviously go up. (if the vehicle is not taxed or registered, is the vehicle in a roadworthy condition, has the driver any insurance or MOT, or even a drivers licence? Is the car stolen?) In cases like this the likelihood of further offences committed increases and the Ministry of Transport Vehicle Inspectorate was brought on board for vehicle examinations.

As the various problems rolled out, Taxi Licensing Officers were contacted regarding stop checks for cabs and private hire vehicles. They were very keen to be part of the operation. Finally the local Benefits Agency office was contacted, and as we would also be targeting light goods vehicles, were also enthusiastic to get heads together for a joint approach to enforcement.

After consultation with Operations Planning Inspector Baxter and the Road Policing Unit at Preston, a meeting involving all the agencies was held at Preston Police Station to discuss an overall strategy.

Stop checks at the roadside were put forward as the best method to involve all the agencies, and using statistics and information from RPU routes and sites best suited to stop checks were looked at. The points to be considered were:- *officer* safety, road user safety, traffic volume, and car crime hotspots. All decided the most suitable areas were NEW HALL LANE (close to motorway and major route), GARSTANG ROAD (major route north) STANLEY STREET (best site for safety as its off the road) and finally the Pedestrian Zone (busy market area).

Next, the type of vehicle to be targeted. Apart from the obvious sign of no tax disc, or out of date disc displayed, using information from the Vehicle Inspectorate, saloon cars of F registration and earlier were most likely to fail the emissions tests. Benefits agency officers would check any vans, both drivers and passengers with regard to benefit claims. Heavy goods vehicles were ruled out due to a lack of space within the checking areas, so a limit of 3 tons was decided on.

The benefits agency set up a dedicated office, with staff fully equipped to respond to

instant checks at the roadside, and to avoid unnecessary delays to the general public and, after consultation with supervision at Preston communications, a dedicated channel for PNC checks was also set up.

With all this in place, the first operation was set up to run for two days on the 15th and 16th of January 2001, with the second part of the operation to run two weeks after, on the 28th and 29th of January.

The initial results were staggering. Out of three hundred vehicles stopped and checked, 154 had no tax.<sup>21</sup> were immediately taken off the road, condemned as unsafe by the Vehicle Inspectorate and RPU officers, 5 were reported for summons for minor motoring offences in regard to vehicle safety and maintenance, and 1 driver was arrested at the scene due to being wanted on warrant. Traffic Wardens issued some 95 fixed penalties to motorists within the Pedestrian Zone contrary to the local road traffic order. 178 HORT1 forms were issued for the production of documents.

The Taxi Licensing Officers checked 55 cabs. Of these,<sup>2</sup> were summoned before the Licensing Office Committee, and 23 were given verbal warnings for minor licence breaches. The Benefits Agents checked 224 individuals.<sup>2</sup> signed off benefits at the roadside, and a further 26 were investigated regarding benefit entitlement.

After this initial success, another informal meeting was set up amongst the partners for any feedback and to see if there was room for improvement. All the partners gave only positive feedback, and were extremely happy with the results. They also stressed the importance of keeping the partnerships up and running, as the high profile of the operation was a bonus for all concerned. None of the partners involved at the outset of the operation had enforcement officers out on the street; neither did they have the power to stop moving vehicles.

After consultation again with Ops Planning, it was decided that Operation Delve would be set up on a regular basis to accommodate all parties concerned. The last operation was run from the 17th to the 19th of April 2002 with results as follows:

227 vehicles checked; 1 driver arrested wanted on warrant by GMP. 67 vehicles had no or out of date tax; 38 HORTi forms were issued for document production; 41 fixed penalties were issued for minor motoring offences such as no seat belt; 1 person signed off benefits at the side of the road and 5 were under further investigation

From the first operation to the last, due to the high visibility aspect, there has been a significant reduction in the number of offences disclosed in the target group during the checks.

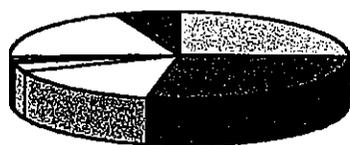
Operation Delve has been successfully run six times since its conception and all the partners continue to show their support and enthusiasm for the project, resulting in it becoming a regular part of an overall approach to the original problems encountered. There have also been some unanticipated benefits attributable directly to the project.

The DVLA now has 4 enforcement officers who patrol the streets in the company of Traffic Wardens, not just in Preston, but also in Western and Eastern Division, concentrating on specific target areas. Also, Taxi Enforcement Officers work with the RPU doing nighttime checks on cab ranks in the city. Another, separate partnership has been set up between the Traffic Wardens and the Benefits Agency looking into fraudulent use of disabled persons badges within the city centre.

These various partnerships are now on going and continue to be fruitful, with all partners maintaining their enthusiasm. They are assessed as an ongoing process, with feedback being given to the partners as well as us.

The results from all the operations are attached.

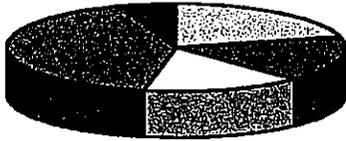
January 2001



- CLE 26
- HORT1
- Fixed Penalty
- PG9
- VOS
- Arrested
- Taxi Enforcement (Summons)
- Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)
- Benefits Agency (Signed Off)
- Benefits Agency (Investigated)

Type	Recorded	Total Cars	Percentage of Total
CLE 26	154	300	51.33333333
HORT1	178	300	59.33333333
Fixed Penalty	95	300	31.66666667
PG9	21	300	7
VOS	3	300	1
Arrested	1	300	0.33333333
Taxi Enforcement (Summons)	2	55	3.636363636
Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)	23	55	41.81818182
Benefits Agency (Signed Off)	2	224	0.892857143
Benefits Agency (Investigated)	26	224	11.60714286

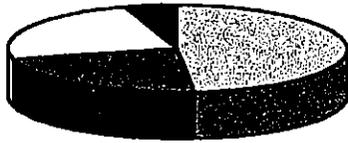
May 2001



- CLE 26
- HORT1
- Fixed Penalty
- PG9
- VOS
- Taxi Enforcement (Summons)
- Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)
- Benefits Agency (Signed Off)
- Benefits Agency (Investigated)

Type	Recorded	Total Cars	Percentage of Total
CLE 26	94	250	37.6
HORT1	76	250	30.4
Fixed Penalty	0	250	0
PG9	68	250	27.2
VOS	0	250	0
Taxi Enforcement (Summons)	0	20	0
Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)	15	20	75
Benefits Agency (Signed Off)	2	200	1
Benefits Agency (Investigated)	17	200	8.5

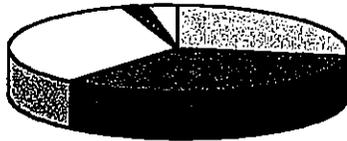
September 2001



- CLE 26
- HORT1
- Fixed Penalty
- PG9
- VOS
- Arrested
- Taxi Enforcement (Summons)
- Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)
- Benefits Agency (Signed Off)
- Benefits Agency (Investigated)

Type	Recorded	Total Cars	Percentage of Total
CLE 26	78	200	39
HORT1	36	200	18
Fixed Penalty	0	200	0
PG9	39	200	19.5
VOS	0	200	0
Arrested	0	200	0
Taxi Enforcement (Summons)	0	0	#DIV/0!
Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)	0	0	#DIV/0!
Benefits Agency (Signed Off)	6	150	4
Benefits Agency (Investigated)	0	150	0

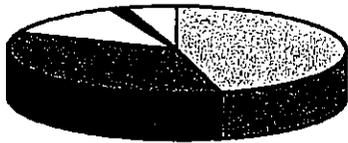
November 2001



- CLE 26
- HORT1
- Fixed Penalty
- PG9
- VOS
- Arrested
- Clamped (No tax)
- Taxi Enforcement (Summons)
- Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)
- Benefits Agency (Signed Off)
- Benefits Agency (Investigated)

Type	Recorded	Total Cars	Percentage of Total
CLE 26	29	225	12.88888889
HORT1	36	225	16
Fixed Penalty	0	225	0
PG9	36	225	16
VOS	0	225	0
Arrested	0	225	0
Clamped (No tax)	59		
Taxi Enforcement (Summons)	0	0	0
Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)	0	0	0
Benefits Agency (Signed Off)	2	200	1
Benefits Agency (Investigated)	3	200	1.5

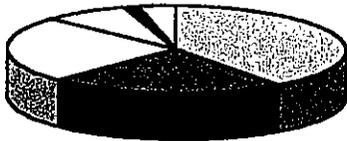
February 2002



- CLE 26
- HORT1
- Fixed Penalty
- PG9
- VOS
- Arrested
- Clamped (No tax)
- Taxi Enforcement (Summons)
- Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)
- Benefits Agency (Signed Off)
- Benefits Agency (Investigated)

Type	Recorded	Total Cars	Percentage of Total
CLE 26	72	200	36
HORT1	55	200	27.5
Fixed Penalty	0	200	0
PG9	20	200	10
VOS	2	200	1
Arrested	0	200	0
Clamped (No tax)	59		
Taxi Enforcement (Summons)	0	52	0
Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)	0	52	0
Benefits Agency (Signed Off)	0	175	0
Benefits Agency (Investigated)	7	175	4

April 2002



- CLE 26
- HORT1
- Fixed Penalty
- PG9
- VOS
- Arrested
- Clamped (No tax)
- Taxi Enforcement (Summons)
- Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)
- Benefits Agency (Signed Off)
- Benefits Agency (Investigated)

Type	Recorded	Total Cars	Percentage of Total
CLE 26	67	227	29.5154185
HORT1	38	227	16.74008811
Fixed Penalty	41	227	18.06167401
PG9	14	227	6.167400881
VOS	0	227	0
Arrested	1	227	0.440528634
Clamped (No tax)	0	227	
Taxi Enforcement (Summons)	0	1	0
Taxi Enforcement (Verbal Warning)	0	1	0
Benefits Agency (Signed Off)	1	180	0.555555556
Benefits Agency (Investigated)	5	180	2.777777778