

Lancashire Constabulary

OPERATION CALM

Crime & Disorder Reduction Category

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LANCASHIRE COSTABULARY

SOUTHERN DIVISION

LEYLAND SECTION

OPERATION CALM

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OPERATION CALM

SUMMARY

OPERATION CALM was designed to combat the identified problem of under-age drinking in public places across Leyland and the accompanying juvenile nuisance, crime and disorder.

Analysis of the problem was undertaken using various police records and consultation with outside agencies, members of the public, their local representatives and community groups.

The Analysis revealed that large groups of youths from across and outside of Leyland were congregating every Friday and Saturday evenings in what became designated 'Hotspot' areas.

Complaints of juvenile nuisance, various criminal and public order offences from local residents would then follow. Consultation also revealed the problem to be affecting other agencies. Off-licensees were experiencing difficulties running their businesses due to the activities of the youths attempting to obtain alcohol. Housing Associations and the Local Authority were incurring costs from damage to property.

From the analysis a response was formulated which would approach the problem on three fronts.

The identified 'Hotspot' areas would be targeted by high profile police patrols accompanied by partner representatives to approach the youths in a non-confrontational manner. Officers were encouraged to engage with the youths and gain their views whilst also expressing the concerns of local residents and agencies, spread awareness of the consequences of anti-social and criminal behaviour and promote alternative activities available.

All Off-licensed premises were also visited by high profile patrols to provide support for the staff and deter youths attempting to obtain alcohol.

Residents local to the hotspot areas were given opportunity to discuss their concerns throughout the duration of the operation and persistent complainants particularly targeted, with a view to providing reassurance, removing the fear of crime and nuisance and promoting tolerance.

The response was reviewed on a weekly basis to ensure the aims and objectives were continuing to be addressed, to ensure the correct areas were being targeted and to monitor *any* displacement.

Analysis of police records once the operation was concluded revealed a 15% reduction in juvenile nuisance compared to the same period the previous year. The period of analysis was later extended an extra two and a half months in order to see any longer term benefits, this analysis revealed a 19% reduction.

During the operation 115 referrals, the majority regarding possession of alcohol, were made under the Youth Referral Scheme, of which 9 were secondary referrals. No juvenile was referred on a third occasion under the scheme.

Feedback used in assessing the operation, from partners and victims identified in the analysis, was extremely encouraging. Educational issues were identified by both the schools in respect of their pupils and the local M.P. and councillors in respect of their constituents.

Problems were experienced and have been highlighted in the assessment, some of the issues will require a long term approach, however, the success achieved and long term solutions have dictated the operation be repeated this year.



SOUTHERN DIVISION

LEYLAND SECTION

OPERATION CALM

SCANNING

Problem identified

Scanning of police records revealed disturbing levels of alcohol induced juvenile nuisance and disorder across Leyland.

Youths were regularly congregating in large groups, on occasions numbering 60 to 70 in total, at 'Hotspot' areas openly drinking alcohol in public.

Complaints to police from local residents regarding juvenile nuisance increased dramatically on these occasions.

Confirmed by

The problem was confirmed by the increase in complaints received by police from residents local to the 'Hotspot' areas. The problem was also raised on behalf of residents by the local M.P. and Councillors, and also at local community forums.

Of licensees were also able to confirm the problem and the effect it was having on their businesses.

The local Borough Council and Housing Associations were also receiving complaints.

Local Schools and the Youth and Community Services were aware of the problem.

ANALYSIS

The analysis was undertaken from scanning of police records of juvenile nuisance complaints, arrest reports, letters sent to parents regarding sub-criminal behaviour by youths, prior to the youth referral scheme, and records of alcohol seized from under-aged drinkers.

Some difficulties were experienced in defining incidents of alcohol related juvenile nuisance complaints from those of general nuisance, however, close scrutiny of the reports revealed a number of aspects regarding the problem.

Various agencies, individuals and community representatives were approached to assist in analysing the problem, most of which became subsequent partners. This involvement revealed further aspects and root causes of the problem,

Analysis revealed :-

LOCATION

A number of 'Hotspot' areas across Leyland Town were identified which tended to fall into two categories.

Local Authority and Housing Association parkland and plantations which offered some visual seclusion appeared attractive to the youths, however, the majority of these areas were surrounded by residential properties.

The youths were also congregating on the street close to areas in which a number of Off-licence premises were situated. At these locations the youths would gather either attempt to purchase alcohol direct or pester adults to buy alcohol on their behalf

VICTIM

Residents local to the 'Hotspot' areas were identified as the primary victims, identified from police records and following consultation with councillors, housing associations and other community representatives.

Local Off-licensees were victim to harassment and abuse from youths attempting to purchase alcohol or pestering customers, which impacted on their business.

The Local Authority and Housing Associations had cost issues arising from damage being caused to their property and maintenance of the areas. South Ribble Borough Council had to employ private contractors to carryout the clean-up of empty bottles, cans and broken glass from their childrens playground areas.

OFFENDER

Records held by police revealed that the problem was endemic across the whole of Leyland and the surrounding area, with youths apparently willing to travel away from their local area and even from outside of the town in order to gather in the 'Hotspots'.

Police records also revealed the age bracket for the youths appeared to be between 13 and 17 years of age.

ROOT CAUSES

A number of causes were identified :-

- Cultural attitude of parents and youths regarding under-aged drinking.
- Youths ability to obtain alcohol.
- Expectations of complainants regarding police action
- Traditional reactive response of police often resulting in confrontation with youths.
- Intolerance on part of persistent complainants.
- Lack of support for Off-licensees.
- Lack of facilities for the local youth.

PARTNERS

- Head Teachers from each of the four Leyland High Schools.
- All local Off-licensees and Off-watch members.
- South Ribble Borough Council.
- LCC Youth and Community Services.
- Local media.
- Local Councillors and Community Representatives.

RESPONSE

Planned Police Response

The police response was to approach the problem on three fronts, Analysis having identified not only the location of `Hotspot' areas but also the key times.

High visibility police patrols were to patrol the `Hotspot` areas at the relevant times. Due to the demand this placed on existing police resources an overtime bid was successfully applied for, allowing for two officers to be brought on early from the Night Duty patrols. Full use was also made from the Special Constabulary resources.

Having secured sufficient resources to patrol the hotspot areas it was intended that a representative from each of the partners would accompany the patrols.

The patrolling officers were to be instructed to adopt a non-confrontational approach with the emphasis being on engaging with the youths, providing education on the effects of alcohol abuse, an insight into how their behaviour was affecting the quality of life of local residents and the community as a whole. The possible consequences of their behaviour was also to be pointed out, not only of arrest for criminal matters, but also under the then newly introduced Youth Referral Scheme.

The forthcoming activities of the Youth & Community Services along with a police organised football competition were to be heavily promoted.

The second front was the regular visit of high visibility patrols to all Off-license premises. This was intended to provide support to the Off licensees and their staff, disrupt the activities of the youths gathering nearby attempting to obtain alcohol. A leaflet campaign distributed via the Off-licensees was also to be promoted.

The third front was an approach to the complainants, mainly residents local to the hotspot areas, with the intention of addressing their concerns, in an attempt to provide reassurance and reduce the fear of crime and nuisance.

Planned Partners Response

Partners, along with the local MP. were invited to accompany police patrols and due to the response a rota for their attendance drawn up.

The Off-licensees were to liase with one another via the Ofd watch Scheme to identify potential problems and inform police.

LCC Youth & Community Services whilst highly reluctant to accompany police for fear of compromising their relationship with the youths, provided a mobile contact number and when informed by police of youths congregating at a particular venue would provide a follow-up visit by outreach workers.

OPERATION CALM ASSESSMENT

WHAT WAS DONE ?

The root causes were tackled on three fronts.

The operation ran every Friday and Saturday evening between 1900 hrs and 2130 hrs throughout the summer months, all identified 'Hotspot' areas for juvenile nuisance in Leyland were visited during the hours of the operation by high visibility police patrols accompanied by partners. The youths at the various venues were approached in a non-confrontational manner and officers encouraged to engage with the youths, the activities of the LCC Youth & Community Service and a police organised 7-a-side football competition were also to be promoted. The youths were made aware of the nature of complaints received by police regarding juvenile nuisance in the area and also made aware of the new Youth Referral Scheme, and the consequences of their actions under the scheme.

The youths were not to be moved on, but allowed to remain in situ if no complaints regarding their behaviour had been received, again something that was to be promoted to the youths. However, a positive police response was expected if nuisance or underage drinking was found to be taking place or if offences were being committed.

All off-licence premises in the Leyland area were visited by patrols each day of the operation, again accompanied by partners, to provide support to staff and prevent youths congregating nearby pestering adults to purchase alcohol for them.

A campaign was also promoted via the off-licences whereby leaflets, sponsored and produced by a local newspaper, were supplied to all adult customers informing them of the operation and of recent changes to legislation, making it an offence to purchase alcohol with intent to supply to underage persons.

A letter-drop was made in the vicinity of known 'Hotspot' areas, prior to the operation, inviting local residents to contact police and discuss their views on juvenile nuisance and underage drinking. Those residents and persistent complainants, identified from CRS records, so wishing, then received a visit by police and partners during the operation to discuss their opinions further. The purpose of the visit was to reassure residents, take on board their views, put across the views of the youths and also attempt to re-educate these people as to the necessity of calling police whenever youths began to congregate at the venues.

A media campaign was also undertaken via the local press promoting the operation prior to commencement, giving regular updates once on-going and again inviting the public to contact police with their concerns regarding juvenile nuisance and identify any new 'Hotspot' areas emerging through displacement.

POLICE OUTCOME I RESULT

Initial analysis of CRS figures in relation to juvenile nuisance complaints received by Leyland police for the period of the operation show a reduction of 15% in comparison to the same period last year. Albeit that the operation was specifically designed to combat juvenile nuisance in respect underage drinking in 'Hotspot' areas a knock-on effect was hoped to be achieved for all juvenile nuisance throughout Leyland.

As the operation also involved an educational element a more long term effect was sought, extended analysis taken until the end of the year showed a reduction in juvenile nuisance of 19% in comparison to the same period the previous year.

These reductions could be attributable to a number of factors resulting from the operation, displacement of the youths and the presence of partners such as head teachers and other members of staff regularly accompanying police, which saw a dramatic reaction from the youths.

The implementation of the new Youth Referral Scheme will have also had some impact. During the operation 115 Juvenile Referrals were made under the scheme, of which 9 were secondary referrals, however no juvenile was referred for a third occasion.

A vast amount of alcohol was seized from underage drinkers during the operation, the alcohol in opened containers being disposed of at the scene. The large quantity of alcohol found in unopened containers was taken into police possession, photographed for the purpose of the media campaign before then being donated to a local charity, the Leyland Youth Action Group.

The football competition organised by police was well attended and went some way to improving police/community relations and building a better rapport with the local youth.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Difficulties were experienced in overcoming certain cultural issues. Leyland has apparently always lacked adequate facilities for its youth therefore certain areas have traditionally been meeting places where the youth congregate in large numbers and in more recent times engaged in underage drinking. This became apparent when the youths were spoken to at the 'Hotspot' areas.

There is also an apparent acceptance on behalf of parents that their children are drinking underage but 'that's what kids do these days', or alternatively 'I used to do the same at their age and it never did me any harm', these beliefs are borne out with reports of youths in possession of alcohol being dropped of by parents at Hotspot areas.

The expectations of certain complainants also had to be overcome, those who complained to police whenever youths began to congregate, expected an immediate police response and the youths moved on albeit no actual nuisance, underage drinking or offences were taking place. Police have learnt from previous experience that continually moving the youths on only serves to create a merry-go-round of complaints and creates animosity and anger from the youths, which invariably led to nuisance and offences being committed.

It is recognised that the above issues are deep rooted and will not disappear overnight. These cultural issues were identified early in the analysis stage and it was always appreciated that a long term educational solution would be the only way of removing them. One of the main aims of the operation has been education.

Police expectations regarding the active involvement of LLC Youth & Community Section in the operation were sadly too optimistic. The Y&C Section were clearly unhappy at their outreach workers being directly associated with police as they felt it would jeopardise the relationship they were seeking to form with certain youths and would provide a lack of trust. A solution was sought but the reluctance of the Y&C Section was still apparent and failed to materialise.

PARTNERS OUTCOME 1 RESULT

Feedback from those partners accompanying the police patrols were extremely encouraging, the majority of which expressed surprise at the extent of the problem of underage drinking in Leyland. The head teachers and other school staff attending felt there were obvious educational issues, which could be addressed in the schools. The local M.P. and Councillors who attended also gained greater insight into police efforts to combat the problem, which they were able to convey to their constituents.

The local off-licensees reported fewer incidents of youths attempting to purchase alcohol directly or congregating nearby and pestering adults to buy alcohol on their behalf, and identified training issues for members of staff.

The donation of seized alcohol to the Leyland Youth Action Group was packaged into hampers and raffled at one of their fund raising events which produced £2,078 towards their cause. The group are raising monies to provide a centre and other facilities for local youths.

The winning team in the upper age bracket of the police organised football competition was made up from a particular group of youths identified as causing problems outside the Spar Shop and off-licence at Leyland Lane. The team was sponsored and had kit supplied by Peter Jefferies the off-licensee and manager of the Spar Shop who attended the competition to cheer the team on. Mr Jefferies has since had no problems from the local youths outside his shop.

The Leyland Guardian newspaper gave a positive feedback and are keen to work closely with police in the future on similar initiatives. Having financed and supplied

leaflets distributed via the off -licensees they also gave the operation regular positive coverage in the paper with their reporters accompanying officers on patrol.

COULD ASSESSMENT HAVE BEEN IMPROVED ?

The response could have been improved by earlier intervention into the schools prior to the operation commencing, thereby allowing the schools more involvement in providing education on alcohol abuse and a greater awareness of the impact juvenile nuisance and underage drinking has on the community.

The response could have also been improved with more involvement from the Youth & Community Section and their outreach workers, greater liaison is obviously required with police to overcome their concerns, reinforce police aims and objectives and encourage more enthusiasm.

Lancashire Constabulary

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29 May 2002

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The Tilley Award 2002

As Chair of the force 'Problem Oriented Policing Steering Group' I am delighted to forward Lancashire Constabulary's nominations for the Tilley Award 2002.

There has been an enthusiastic response from the force's divisions/departments in respect of this Award, therefore the Lancashire Constabulary is submitting a total of 19 applications, all of which have been quality assured.

I personally endorse each individual entry and commend each one on its own particular merit. Many of the nominations were used as case studies in the Constabulary's own Annual 'POP' Conference that took place in May of this year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.R. Stephenson QPM'. The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line underneath.



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