

Organisational Support

Implementation of Problem solving across the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

In 2001, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Godwin produced a model of policing for London. A central element of the model is problem solving. It will be used to reduce crime, the number of repeat calls and to improve quality of life for Londoners. It is also acknowledged as the best method of encouraging and supporting partnership working.

Implementation of the problem solving element began in November 2001. It was piloted in five Boroughs for six months. A refined package is now being rolled out across the MPS. The implementation team is made up of a Chief Inspector, an Inspector and four sergeants. The team has four main functions:

A To provide people with a practical problem solving process

The team produced a simple process that could be applied to really *solve* problems in the complex policing context that is London. Having considered previous research and problem solving models, the **Problem Solving Process (PSP)** was designed.

B To support those responsible for establishing problem solving

This process calls for two key roles; a Senior Management Lead who will identify and support opportunities for problem solving, and a Problem Advisor who will link the intelligence process to practical problem solving delivery

C To provide people with the necessary knowledge and skills

The team undertook a Training Needs Analysis and developed a training package for problem solvers. The training programme is modular to accommodate flexible workers.

Module 1 - Understanding the Problem Solving Process.

Module 2 - Forming and strengthening partnerships.

Module 3 - Examining local problems and reaching solutions.

Module 4 - Managing problem solving sessions.

D To support people undertaking problem solving and to record their work so that others can benefit.

As well as site visits, the team has produced a job description and a template which is stored within a Borough's IT system. This allows the capturing, monitoring and further dissemination of good practice, while complying with the National Intelligence Model (NIM) requirement.

Documentation

The team believes that all documentation, training handouts and website should be easy to understand and have applied to the Plain English Campaign for a 'Crystal mark.'

Conclusion

The appetite for change has focused our activity to meet these challenges and pursue the mission of our organisation to make London the safest major city in the world.

Organisational support for Problem solving in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

Introduction

This essay details how the MPS Territorial Policing Problem Solving Team (PST) is facilitating organisational change within the MPS through the introduction of a new problem solving process. The team's main functions cover four areas (listed as A-D below). Each function requires the use of a range of intervention styles, management of relationships, professional expertise, a consultative cycle, and management and organisational support.

Why problem solving is being re-introduced into the MPS

In 1985, Commissioner Sir Kenneth Newman unsuccessfully attempted to introduce problem solving as the MPS's *modus operandi*. In 2001, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Tim Godwin produced a model of Policing, comprising six elements, to be used across London's Boroughs. It was decided that one element - Problem Solving - should be more widely used to reduce crime, reduce the number of repeat calls and to improve the quality of life of Londoners. Problem Solving is acknowledged as the best method of encouraging and supporting partnership working.

Implementation of problem solving

Implementation of the problem solving element began in November 2001 and will be completed by April 2004. The PST consists of a Chief Inspector, an Inspector and four Sergeants who deliver training.

A summary of research undertaken

Information about Problem Solving was taken from various sources including the Internet and Government Reports. Interviews were undertaken with people across the country as well as with MPS officers. Information from non-police sources has also helped to provide a good definition of problem solving:

"It is transforming one set of circumstances into another, preferred state"
Michael Stevens - 'How to be a better problem solver'.

Partners

The PST works with a number of partners who have a London-wide responsibility:

- The Crime Reduction Unit - Government Office for London
- The Home Office - Policing Standard Unit
- The Project Lion (London Information on the Net) team
- Elected and non-elected members of the Metropolitan Police Authority
- Transport for London / Mayor's Walking Plan - The Greater London Authority

Functions of the Problem Solving Team

A To provide people with a practical problem solving process

The first task was to produce a simple process that could be applied to really *solve* problems in the complex policing context that is London. Having considered previous research and problem solving models, the **Problem Solving Process (PSP)** was designed. The MPS will use only this method.

The Problem Solving Process

The Demand. Who or what identified that there is a problem? (Crime figures. MP letters)		
What is the problem? Identify and contact suitable partners. Identify a Problem lead. Include partners at every stage.		
What is your Aim? What is it you want to achieve?		
Research —Victim	Research - Offender	Research — Location
Analysis —Victim	Analysis - Offender	Analysis — Location
Problem Solving Session(s). This is where police officers, analysts, partners and other people, who are either local or who can make a contribution, meet and develop a range of options to resolve the problem by using the research, analysis and local knowledge.		
Options — Victim	Options — Offender (Include short and long term options for each)	Options — Location
Response — Victim	Response — Offender	Response — Location
Evaluate — Victim	Evaluate — Offender	Evaluate — Location
Review — Has it met the Aim and can it be applied elsewhere		

B To support those responsible for establishing problem solving

The Process calls for two key roles; a Management Lead who will identify and support opportunities for problem solving, and a Problem Advisor who will link the intelligence process to practical problem-solving delivery.

The Management Lead and Problem Advisor are supported through regular contact by phone and e-mail. They are visited once a month and provided with a monthly update of progress MPS-wide. A monthly meeting of Management Leads is held where they are given the opportunity to meet for mutual support and learning and to discuss further development of the Process. The PST identified that they would be introducing change on their boroughs and would need project management skills. Therefore, after appropriate research, an excellent *Video Arts* training package was purchased to meet this need. All documentation regarding the development of the PSP is sent to them for review and for their observations. This has already proved useful. The development of the PSP, its integration with the National Intelligence Model (MM) and the development of a method of recording problem solving activity, have all benefited from this method.

The PST identified that the newly conceived post of Problem Advisor required a role specification to ensure MPS-wide consistency. This was formulated and has been developed to its current state of maturity:

MPS Problem Advisor job description

What rank should the person be and who would they be answerable to?

It should be either a constable or sergeant and they would work to the head of the Intelligence Unit.

Where do they work?

Ideally they become part of the Borough Intelligence Unit.

When are they expected to work?

This would depend upon the type of problems that the Borough identifies and any other requirements of the post. Local arrangements and negotiations would apply.

What do they do?

Support problem solving as a means of reducing crime, repeat calls and the factors that are detrimental to the quality of life of people living and working in the Borough. With a good knowledge of the PSP and experience of real world problem solving, they will collect intelligence from officers, community groups and members of crime reduction partnerships. They will ultimately be the conduit between the intelligence process and real-world problem solving activity. They will be both proactive and reactive in seeking and using available intelligence which identifies where a problem solving approach is needed and supports activity of a problem solving nature.

How do they do it?

- Support either one-to-one or a group in applying the Problem Solving Process
- In consultation with others, review the PSP submissions and, where applicable, make contributions to the tasking forms.
- With the approval of the SMT, contribute to the Borough Policing Plan, the Community Safety Strategy, and other strategic approaches to an area or subject.
- By maintaining a Problem Solving Forum on the Borough

What knowledge, skills and aptitude would make a good Problem Advisor?

- A good all round and up-to-date involvement in 24 hour response operational policing, enforcement or prevention measures against crime.
- A working knowledge of Criminal and Community Intelligence.
- An ability to form good working relationships inside and outside the police service.
- Innovation to improve the processes and to assist with problem solving.
- An ability to support others that are new to problem solving, both police and partners.
- An ability to develop and maintain partnerships that assist in problem solving.

C To provide people with the necessary knowledge and skills

The PST undertook a Training Needs Analysis and developed a training package for problem solvers. The training programme has been developed in modules, to enable flexible working police and partners to receive the training, meeting equal opportunities requirements.

The PST believes that for problem solving to be effective, partners need to be involved at the very earliest stages. The training reinforces that belief and has been designed using examples based on 'non-police' subjects. In this way, partners are fully included in the sessions. The course is described below:

Standard Course — Problem Solving Training

Module 1 - 'Understanding the Problem Solving Process'.

Module 2 - 'Forming and strengthening partnerships'.

Advanced Course — Problem Solving Training

Module 3 - 'Examining local problems and reaching solutions'.

Module 4 - 'Managing problem solving sessions'.

Mechanics of the training

Training on a Borough is spread over 8 weeks; four days are allotted for the standard and four for the advanced. In this way abstractions from the workplace are kept to a minimum.

Tailored courses

The PST also provides tailor-made courses for partnership teams. A Needs Analysis is undertaken and a course produced and delivered to meet the requirements. Examples include the Lewisham Town Centre Team, the Waltham Forest Partnership and Southwark Mediation Service.

Supporting Literature

All handouts produced to support the training have been written to the standard required by the Plain English Campaign.

D To support people undertaking problem solving and recording their work so that others can benefit

This starts with a site visit to review procedures and documentation relating to the problem. This is followed by the identification of partners, their role and contribution. Discussion takes place about the research, analytical work, and the range of options and tactics considered. Suggestions are made and best practice and contacts are provided. Problem solving sessions are run where the Advisor applies a range of problem solving methods to the situation. All work undertaken is recorded onto a corporate IT system called Library, allowing access to all staff.

An example of this can be seen in the minutes of the problem session held at Southwark Police Station.

Elephant and Castle - Southwark Borough

The **purpose** of the meeting, on the 19th April 2002 between 09.30 and 11.30, was to direct the application of the Problem Solving Process to the Elephant and Castle area.

A steering group has been formed and a meeting held with people directly involved in policing the area and others who can provide assistance.

Persons present:

Inspector Steve Burgess - Southwark Sector
Sergeant Dave Slade – Southwark Sector
Sergeant Dave Payne – Problem Advisor
Graham Cobdan PC 185 MD
Myles Weatherley PC 904 MD
Rob Gwinner – Robbery Analyst
Chief Inspector Matt Bell TPHQ
Neil Henson PS 39TP HQ

The **position** is that Southwark have identified a number of crime hotspots on their borough. One of these is the Elephant and Castle area. This has a shopping centre, Underground Station, and is at the meeting of a number of main roads. It is subsequently the pick-up point for numerous buses. It also has the South Bank University, various licensed premises, (public houses and night-clubs) and schools.

The **situation** is that Southwark have created dedicated crime hotspot teams. They have invited the Tactical Advisors from the Territorial Policing PST to work with the Elephant & Castle hotspot team, using the MPS PSP.

The **demand** for this work came from the Borough Senior Management Team. The Borough Intelligence Unit analysts identified that the Elephant & Castle is a crime hotspot for **street robbery**. Further demands came from the bus companies operating in this area. Their staff suffer the problem of disorderly youths committing offences and attacks on themselves and their passengers.

Problem definition

Even though robbery was identified as the main problem, time was taken to examine what other problems existed in the area. This was to establish any links, patterns or consequences of the problem, any other problems, and their likely impact on robbery. A number of other problems were identified which have been listed below in no particular order. A discussion took place, whereupon each was examined.

- Youths causing disorder in the area around the bus stops and the walkways above the bus stops.
- Rough-sleepers in the subways.
- Drug use, mainly Cannabis, taking place in a closed market.

Two further topics were discussed relating to identified suspects who did not have a link with the main problem. (Details of this are held by Graham Cobdan PC 185 MD).

Problem Identification

It was decided that, until research proves otherwise, robbery is the main problem. Consideration was given to whether the problem would be geographically displaced or whether offenders would switch to

other offences. No obvious area or alternative offences became apparent. However, this factor will be reviewed regularly.

The Aim

To reduce robbery in and around the Elephant & Castle.

Research

Research will be recorded under the headings: Victim(s), Offender(s) and Location(s).

Offender Profile

A discussion took place to identify the profile of those committing the Robberies. It was established that the main offenders were youths aged 14–18 whose favourite method was to tackle victims in large numbers.

A good source of information regarding offenders would be officers working on the Robbery Squad. It was decided that Sgt Dave Slade would interview officers from the Robbery Team.

Another potential source of information on how the gangs operate would be the bus drivers operating through the Elephant and Castle. These people will be approached by Myles Weatherley PC 904 MD

Rob Gwinner, Robbery Analyst provided information about the offenders. Full details of this can be found in the Intelligence system.

Location Profile

A discussion took place to identify exactly where the robberies were occurring. The main shopping centre employs a number of staff and certain people were identified who may provide useful information. Sgt Payne will ask for their assistance. These findings will be recorded on the Intelligence System.

The Crime Prevention Officer's (CPO's) considerable expertise will be used. Inspector Burgess will task his CPO to walk the area, observe the features and record her findings. We were deliberately non-prescriptive at this research stage when we wish to explore all avenues. Later, CPOs will be tasked more specifically.

CCTV cameras cover the area and Sgt Payne will find out which, if any, cover the points where the robberies take place.

The companies owning the land will be identified by Sgt Payne.

Victim Profile

Four separate groups were identified as victims of robbery in the area. Work will be undertaken to identify the repeat victims.

- School children

The majority of bus routes pass through the Elephant & Castle causing a concentration of school children between 3pm and 5pm. Inspector Burgess will ask Alan Male, the School Beat Officer for his observations on which schools they come from and precise timings.

- Students

The University of the South Bank is nearby and its students use the local shopping centre, the buses and Underground.

- Commuters

The Elephant & Castle has an Underground station, British Rail station and is a nexus point for a large number of buses.

- Party goers

Those attending the large number of clubs and pubs in the area make use of the late night bus services, Underground and rail services to travel home. The timings are late evening and the early hours of the morning.

A more detailed break down of these separate victim groups will be undertaken by Sgt. Payne.

Partners

Suitable partners have already been identified. These have been listed with the name of the person who will contact them:

University and the Students Union - Myles Weatherley PC 904 MD
British Transport Police — Myles Weatherley
Bus Company — Myles Weatherly
Crime Reduction Officers from Government Office for London — Neil Henson
Transport for London — Safer strategy for pedestrians group — Neil Henson
Shopping centre - Dave Slade
Victim Support Scheme — Dave Payne

How we record our work

A frequent problem has been the failure of organisations to record problem solving activity for the benefit of those who follow. We have produced a template (see below) which is stored within a Borough's IT system. This not only allows the capturing, monitoring and further dissemination of good practice but it also complies with NIM requirements. Any sensitive information is stored in the Intelligence IT system. All entries are cross-referenced.

PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

1 Administration

	OCU , Sector & Ward/Beat	
	Officer leading. Name	
	Wt number	
	Telephone number(s)	
	Deputy — Name	
	Wt number	
	Telephone number(s)	
	Date started	
	Last Update	

2 The Problem

- 2.1 Who or what identified that there is a problem?
- 2.2 What is the problem?
- 2.3 Identification of Partners

3 The Aim

- 3.1 What is it that you want to achieve?

4 Intelligence Checks

5 Applicant

Applicant	
Name, Rank Wt. No.: Team or unit:	Date:

6 Authorisation

Unit Inspector
<p>I am the line manager and I do/do not support the need for action to resolve this problem. My reasons are: I recommend a review every:</p>

Problem Solving Advisor's Comments

7 Researching the problem

7.1 Victim(s)

7.2 Offender(s)

7.3 Location(s)

8 Analysis

8.1 Victim(s) profile

8.2 Offender(s) profile

8.3 Location(s) profile

9 Problem Solving Session(s)

10 Options

10.1 Victim(s)

10.2 Offender(s)

10.3 Location(s)

11 Response

11.1 Victim(s)

11.2 Offender(s)

11.3 Location(s)

11.4 Risk-Assessment

12 Evaluation

12.1 Victim(s)

12.2 Offender(s)

12.3 Location(s)

13 Review

13.1 Has it met the aim?

13.2 Can it be applied elsewhere?

Support material

The PST needed to provide support for officers (which includes reducing the time it takes to record their activities.) A guide was therefore produced to assist them:

Guide in completing the Problem Solving Process form

Purpose

This guide explains what needs to go into each section and where it needs to be recorded.

1 Administration

The importance of completing 'last update' is to ensure that you are looking at the most recent version of the form, particularly when discussing it with others. The URN (unique reference number) will be added to the form by your Problem Solving Advisor.

2 The Problem

Did the Intelligence Unit identify a linked series of crimes? Or did the Control Room identify repeat calls to a particular location? Or was it a local residents association, Councillor or MP that identified a quality of life issue?

Write a clear description of your problem. If you are writing more than two sentences, check to see if you have more than one problem. There should only ever be one problem per PSP form.

Record the names, organisations and contact details of anyone who is likely to assist.

3 The Aim

What do you want to achieve? Your description should normally be only one or two sentences long.

4 Intelligence Checks

You need to complete the necessary intelligence checks. Also consider other sources.

5 Applicant

Complete this section and then forward the PSP form (by e-mail) to your Unit Inspector so that they can consider approving it.

6 Authorisation

The Unit Inspector will decide whether the problem is one that justifies the time spent on it. Some problems will only need a small amount of work each week or each month. Their decision and their reasons need to be recorded. This is then sent to the Problem Solving Advisor.

Your Advisor may also add their comments at this stage. The Problem Solving Advisor will then give your PSP form a URN and will place your form on the **Library** section of your local IT system. This will happen whether or not the application is approved.

If your application is approved, the Problem Solving Advisor will make an entry on the Intelligence System stating the problem, the aim and the fact that the work is being recorded in Library. The entry will be cross-referenced with the URN of your problem. Advisor will then let you know that your PSP is in library and available for updating.

From this point on, you can add to your PSP form whenever you wish but remember to update the **last entry** date on Page 1 each time you do. The one exception to this is the recording of **sources**. Personal details about your sources should only be entered on the Intelligence System (a more secure system) and cross-referenced with your PSP form in Library.

7 Research

You need to find out what work has been done elsewhere on your type of problem. You need to know what worked, what failed and the reasons why. Collect the contact details and information.

You need to research your own problem. Has any work been done before, who did it and what worked and what failed? You will need to collect as much information about who or what is causing the problem, who or what is being affected and exactly when and where is it taking place.

Exchanging information is not a problem if the necessary Protocols are in place. Advice about protocols, the implications of information about an individual, and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 can be provided by staff within the Borough Intelligence Unit.

8 Analysis

The Victim Profile is where you should record useful information such as: Where had the victim come from? Were they local? Had they just used public transport? Are all the robbery victims the same?

The Offender Profile is where you record the work undertaken by the Intelligence unit. You will need to include any relevant Crimint entry reference.

The Location Profile details the features of the area or environment.

9 Problem solving session(s)

This is where all interested parties get together and work through the problems using all the research, analysis and their own experience and expertise to develop and discuss options.

You need to record here the persons present, their name, contact details and the organisation(s) they represent. These details will prove useful for those developing the problem solving process in the future. Please also record here where the minutes can be found.

10 Options

Record here all the options considered and show whether they are short, medium and long term. *When considering the options you need to apply the Human Rights Act 2000.*

11 Response

These are the options that will be applied, short, medium and long term.

Any Police operations need to be submitted on a Tasking Form with the Ref. number entered in this section, with a one-line entry referring people to the specific Intelligence System entry.

Has a risk assessment been carried out? Record the Intelligence System ref number.

12 Evaluation

You will need to evaluate your responses throughout the life of the problem (Your Unit Inspector may have suggested review dates i.e. monthly, three-monthly etc.). Should your action(s) be stopped, changed or maintained?

13 Review

This is a final review, when action is complete. Has the solution worked in reducing your problem or containing it to acceptable level?

It is a common mistake to think that just because a solution worked in one place it can be applied elsewhere. The circumstances that made it successful may not be present. However, if it could be applied elsewhere, record the fact and why.

Finally, e-mail a copy of the completed review to your Unit Inspector and to the Problem Solving Advisor. Once it has been `signed-off, the Problem Solving Advisor will transfer the entire completed PSP form to the Intelligence System as a permanent, searchable record of police action.

1

Website

The PST has recently designed a Website on the internal MPS Intranet to assist Boroughs. It contains all the information a Borough needs to start problem solving and the documentation needed to maintain and capture the process of problem solving. It provides links to other suitable web sites and holds a number of downloadable Plain English guides.

Documentation

The PST believes that all documentation, training handouts and website content should be easy to understand and has applied to the Plain English Campaign for a `Crystal mark'.

Conclusion

Through the MPS Territorial Policing Problem Solving Process, the development of a new policing style for London has begun. Having acknowledged that it is only through working in partnership with other statutory, community and voluntary agencies that a reduction in crime and the fear of crime can be achieved, a straight-forward and robust method of implementing problem solving was required. Additionally, it was acknowledged that without a reliable means of capturing and presenting what had been achieved (and the `journey' leading there), any gains would be purely localised.

The appetite for change has focused our activity to meet these challenges and pursue the mission of the Metropolitan Police Service to make London the safest major city in the world.

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