

**THE NATIONAL TILLEY AWARDS 2003**

**CRIME and DISORDER REDUCTION**  
**CATEGORY**

**'CALM RESTORED'**

**LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY**

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# **'CALM RESTORED'**

## **OPERATION CALM**

### **SUMMARY**

OPERATION CALM has ran throughout the summer months for the last two years. It was designed to combat the identified problem of under-age drinking in public places across Leyland and the resulting 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 both across and outside Leyland were congregating every Friday and Saturday evenings in what became designated 'Hotspot' areas.

Complaints to police 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 and also receiving complaints of nuisance from tenants .

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 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 which were available.

All Off-licensees in Leyland were visited by high profile patrols to provide support to the staff and deter youths gathering nearby and attempting to obtain alcohol. A campaign for leaflets to be supplied to all Off-licensee customers was also promoted at this time.

Residents local to the 'Hotspot' areas were given an opportunity to discuss their concerns before, during and after the operation with 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.

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

During the operation 115 referrals, the majority regarding the 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.

Analysis of last years Operation Calm revealed a further 1% reduction of complaints when compared to the same period the previous year. The number of youth referrals regarding possession of alcohol had also been reduced to 89.

Feedback from partners and victims, also used in assessing the operation, was extremely encouraging, along with positive reporting in the local press.

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 those issues requiring a long term approach, however, the success achieved and long term solutions have dictated the operation be repeated again this year.

# **SOUTHERN DIVISION**

## **LEYLAND SECTION**

### **OPERATION CALM**

#### Objectives of the Project

Problem identified.

Scanning of police records revealed alarming levels of alcohol induced juvenile nuisance, crime and disorder across the Leyland geographic area.

Youths were regularly congregating in large groups, numbering 60 to 70 on occasion, every Friday and Saturday evenings throughout the summer in 'Hotspot' areas openly drinking alcohol in public.

Police would become inundated with complaints from local residents regarding the youths and their behaviour.

Confirmed by.

The problem was confirmed by complaints received by the local M.P. and local councillors, with the issues constantly raised at community forums.

The Local Borough Council and Housing Associations were receiving complaints and suffering damage to their property.

The objectives of the project became clear, to reduce drinking of alcohol in public by juveniles, reduce the number of incidents of juvenile nuisance, crime and disorder and to provide reassurance to local residents and community stakeholders.

## Definition of the Problem

Analysis of the problem was undertaken from a number of sources.

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 were all referred to.

Various agencies, community representatives and individual residents were approached and consulted, many of whom subsequently became involved in the operation. This consultation assisted in the analysis and identified further aspects and root causes of the problem.

Some difficulties were experienced in defining incidents of alcohol related juvenile nuisance from those of general nuisance with close scrutiny of the reports required.

Analysis revealed :-

### LOCATION

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

Local Authority and Housing Association parklands and plantations, which offered some visual seclusion, often attracted the youths. However, the majority of these areas were surrounded by residential properties.

The youths were also congregating on the street in the vicinity of local Off-licence premises. At these locations they would gather in numbers to intimidate staff and pester adults to purchase alcohol on their behalf.

### VICTIM

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

Local Off-licesees were victim to harassment, intimidation and abuse of themselves, their staff and customers all which impacted on their business.

The Local Authority and Housing Associations had cost issues arising from repairs to damage to their property and general maintenance of the areas. South Ribble Council having to employ private contractors to carry out the regular clean-up of empty bottles, cans and broken glass from their 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 to the Problem

### 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 Off-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.

# 'CALM RESTORED'

## OPERATION CALM

### Evaluation of the intervention

#### 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'<sup>1</sup> 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 / 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.

The second year of Operation Calm saw a further 1% reduction in incidents of juvenile nuisance.

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 headteachers and other members of staff regularly accompanying police saw a dramatic reaction from the youths.

The implementation of the new Youth Referral Scheme had a positive impact. During the first year of 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. The second year of the operation saw the number of referrals for youths in possession of alcohol reduced to 89.

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 competitions organised by police in both years were 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'<sup>1</sup> 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'. Confirmation comes from reports of youths in possession of alcohol being dropped off 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.

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 / 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 headteachers and other school staff attending felt there were obvious educational issues to be addressed in the schools. The local M.P. and Councillors who attended also gained greater insight into police efforts to combat the problem from which they benefited when dealing with constituents.

The local off-licences 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 their various events raising £3,000 towards their cause over the past two years of the operation. 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-licencee 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-licences, 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, 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 being sought to involve the outreach workers in a role in which they feel more comfortable with in working with police.