

PROJECT: CALIBRE

Endorsed by the Chief Constable

Category CRIME & DISORDER REDUCTION

Lancashire Constabulary

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PROJECT CALIBRE

Scanning

Objectives:

- *To reduce anti-social behavior by youths associated with the consumption of intoxicants.*
- *To remove intimidation by juveniles consuming intoxicants in public places.*
- *To reduce incidents of assault, criminal damage and other like offences associated with the consumption of intoxicants by juveniles.*
- *To improve community safety.*
- *To reduce repeat visits by Police Personnel to HOT SPOT areas.*
- *To stop the incidents of purchase (direct & indirect) by juveniles.*
- *To improve the perception of the town centre by the community.*
- *To bring together all key partners to achieve the objective of the initiative.*
- *To effectively use media coverage to promote and report on the scheme.*
- *To reduce the "fear of crime" within the town centre community.*

Background:

Using the scanning process the problem was identified by the use of Police data via CRS logs, for incidents reported in and around the town centre area with specific time bands. Other information was drawn from the Sleuth crime database, the Youth Referral Scheme, actual crimes committed, this helped to identify age groups and location of offences.

Further Information was obtained from letters of complaint from the town centre community and from Parish Council Meetings and public forums in the Geographic area.

By liaising with the Local Authority Community Safety Team it was established that they too were receiving a large volume of complaints from the public relating to anti-social behaviour in specific areas of the town centre. These complaints identified key times and locations and also identified incidents of criminal damage mirroring the same time bands and locations.

Further liaison with retailers and licensees selling intoxicants, identified a related problem with juveniles intimidating customers into making purchases of intoxicants on their behalf, with a resultant loss of trade.

The local schools provided specific information relating to the times and nature of incidents relating to criminal damage, supporting police intelligence that these premises were the resulting targets of these groups

Analysis

Location

The primary location where large groups of juveniles congregate is the poorly lit town centre bus station. This area is easily accessed by the rail network, which brings juveniles in from the surrounding Merseyside area. The rail and bus stations are connected via a poorly lit shrub lined pathway that also gives easy unseen access to a local school. As a direct result this school experienced a high volume of criminal damage.

Recreational areas such as town centre parks and retail outlets selling intoxicants as well as local public houses are also easily accessible from this location. Although there is a town center CCTV camera in close proximity, the current design of the bus station and poor lighting restricts the cameras effectiveness thus allowing juveniles to congregate unseen in hotspot areas.

The general publics are, in the main, intimidated by the presence of the juveniles and are therefore reluctant to use the interconnecting pathway between the bus and train stations.

Offenders

The offending juveniles were identified as mixed sex in the age group ranging from 11-17 year olds, consuming intoxicants from midday to midnight mainly Friday Saturday and Sundays. These days extended during school holiday periods. Offenders were identified not only as locals, but also migrant juveniles from surrounding areas, who used the rail and bus public transport network to get to and from the town centre and who generally do not pay for this service. On most occasions the groups totaled between 30-50 individuals mostly congregating either at the bus station or fragmenting into smaller groups of around 20 persons or so at other town centre hotspot areas.

Victims

The profile of victims is broad based. It includes victims of assault and criminal damage, but the analysis also highlights the unseen effects on retailers, public services and other local businesses who loose trade and customer confidence.

. Potentially there was also the added concern that company's not already trading in the town would be reluctant to invest.

The later of these elements fall into a category we could class as unseen victims of the anti-social behavior we were experiencing.

The problem also reaches out to educational establishments and the reputation of local schools is badly affected where pupils are identified as being involved.

Ormskirk town and its residents also become victims purely by the public's tainted perception.

Response

Planned Police and Partner Response

Stage I - identify the source(s) for the supply of intoxicants to juveniles

- In liaison with Licensing Department and Trading Standards a series of controlled purchases of intoxicants was carried out at local retailers.
- Potential weak retailers were identified
- The Geographical Inspector and Licensing Sergeant liaised with the retailers identified to offer advice and support.
- Liaison with Crime Prevention and Youth Involvement Officer to formulate actions

Stage II - identify key partners for Operation Calibre

- Establish close working partnership with West Lanes District Council including key agencies such as **Housing, Education, Community Safety, ASBO (Anti-Social Behavior) team**. Linking to key workers such as town centre **CCTV operators, Community Wardens, ASBO officers, local Councilors**.
- All intoxicant retailers visited by the POP co-ordinator who appraised them of the proposed operation calibre and its objectives.
- Media (radio & press) brought on board to support and promote operation.

Stage III - Lead in to Operation Calibre

- Local media used to inform the public of the problems being experienced; the objectives of Operation Calibre and its start date.
- In partnership with Local Authority poster designed for use in all highlighted retail outlets and at specific HOT SPOT areas, (part funded by donations from the retailers involved).
- Specific mailbox line provided by Police as a HOTLINE for retailers to contact the Police with information relating to the juveniles and their whereabouts. This provided the facility for callers to remain anonymous.
- Credit card sized HOTLINE contact details provided to retailers.

Stage IV - Implementation of Operation Calibre

- Official launch via media (front page coverage) with all partners including retailers and local Councilor for Crime and Disorder {portfolio holder.} Weekly updates in press issued jointly.
- Posters placed at retailers and identified "HOT SPOT " areas to highlight the operation.
- At known problem times/days specified Officer in CCTV monitoring suite specifically to identify offenders and obtain evidence to secure conviction, if needed.
- Deployment of Community Wardens/special constables both as a high visibility-deterrent and also as covert spotters and evidence gatherers using mobile CCTV and digital cameras.
- Local retailers purchased "shop watch" radios to enable them to have immediate access to CCTV monitoring station and Police.
- HOT SPOT areas improved with the removal of obstructions such as large bushes and trees to ease observation and CCTV monitoring.

- Increased police foot patrols at shift overlap times, (covert and overt), to enforce the operation and improve public confidence and reassurance in the service provided.
- Local Authority newsletter included an article on Operation Calibre to engage
And inform the community
- Police Helicopter deployed via Operation Caretaker, during summer months, provided the operation with an additional high visibility deterrent, but also provided intelligence on persons gathering on educational premises.
- Police and Community Wardens and special constables identified regular juveniles involved and details were obtained and passed to other agencies to allow for follow up action to be taken
- Follow up course of action taken with letters and home visits to parents of juveniles identified, with reference to video footage available for them to view.
- In liaison with the ASBO team potential candidates for ABC contracts or ASBO orders are identified and joint home visits carried out.
- Increased vigilance from retailers in relation to age screening and the purchase of alcohol on behalf of juveniles. This was reinforced by the close contact provided by the shop watch radio and with the CCTV monitoring station- who could identify persons approached by juveniles to make purchases on their behalf.

Assessment

The success of this operation is not purely measured on arrests and statistics this initiative set out primarily to remove the ability of juveniles to purchase intoxicants for consumption and to reduce the associated crime committed and to improve the HOTSPOT locations making them less attractive to the individuals concerned.

A local businessman was, however, reported for the supply of intoxicants to juveniles on two counts and was dealt with by the Magistrates Court a second case is pending. The local media positively reported this story.

This operation has raised public confidence in the Police, and its partner agencies, in the services provided. This is substantiated with the positive media coverage and feed back, verbally and written, from the general public and local Councilors. The effective inter-agency working partnership has given a long-term solution to a locally based community problem, which at this time continues, in place with a minimum of Police involvement.

The problems identified relating to the design of the bus station have been positively received and actioned by the Local Authority. In liaison with the Crime Prevention Team the bus station is to be redeveloped in late 2003 and will take into consideration the highlighted problems.

The redevelopment will include the complete demolition of the bus station and shrub lined pathway to the train station. The bus station will be redeveloped using the secured by design principle and the new lay-out will include a new user friendly pathway to the train station incorporating CCTV coverage, improved lighting, a cycle path and most importantly CCTV help points. This is a major financial commitment from the Local Authority.

After close liaison with Police/ Crime Prevention Officers a partner school, particularly subjected to high incidents of criminal damage from the intoxicated juveniles, has secured funding and implemented a £35,000 security system including CCTV coverage (linked to the LA monitoring station). This direct action has stopped incidents of criminal damage to date, at this location.

The success of Operation Calibre is best measured on:

- A 20% reduction in reported offences of anti-social behavior, assaults and criminal damage by intoxicated juveniles in the HOT SPOT areas, with an overall reduction of 38% of associated crime when compared to the same period in 2001.
- A decrease in the complaints received to the Police and the Local Authority relating to the congregation of intoxicated juveniles - there was a 21% decrease in juvenile nuisance, drunkenness, street disturbance and other disturbance incidents reported (when compared to the same period during 2001)
- All of the retailers reported a decrease in the number of juveniles approaching their retail outlets to purchase intoxicants
- The retailers, and the CCTV suite reported a decrease in the number of attempted "indirect" purchases.
- Decreases in the necessity for Police repeat visits to hot spot areas - a 45% decrease in incidents of street disturbance in the targeted area was achieved during the operation. Likewise a 50% reduction in reported assaults, a 44% reduction in reports of criminal damage and a very pleasing 100% reduction in drug related incidents.
- An increase in positive public perception of the Police and other partner agencies in the service they provide.

- An increase in community safety around areas such as the bus station - as juveniles are no longer congregating in large numbers and intimidating the public - a reassuring 86% reduction in other incidents and 27% reduction in other disturbance were achieved.
- A reduction in the damage at educational premises - a partner school has experienced a 100% reduction in criminal damage whilst in total a 44% reduction was achieved in the targeted area.
- An increase in positive media coverage has enabled us to inform and reassure the Community. Whilst officer attendance at public forums and Parish Council meetings has allowed us to directly engage the community.
- The operation ran for an expense of £1000 for this minimum cost it has had maximum impact on the problem; this funding was obtained via Community Safety Partnership and contributions from the retailers involved.
- The positive response to this operation has been immense in building long term inter-agency partnerships.