

TITLE

BERWICK UPON TWEED's
PARTNERSHIP
SHOPWATCH AND PUBWATCH
SCHEME.

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SUMMARY

BERWICK UPON TWEED SHOPWATCH AND PUBWATCH LINKED SCHEME:

The above named project is a developing scheme aimed at reducing theft and violence towards retail staff in the tourist town of Berwick - Upon- Tweed. It is also designed to encourage a partnership approach towards reducing crime and violence in and around the town centre pubs to ensure a safe environment for tourists and residents.

It encourages trust and co-operation between participants and recognition of each partners differing roles and priorities , but working together towards the agreed aims.

The scheme commenced in 2000 following the inception of problem solving policing in Northumbria Police. Pc Keith Marchant became the town centre CBM and researched the level of crime and violence located in and around retail premises.

From this research the level of unreported incidents caused concern. He spoke with staff and resurrected a shopwatch scheme integrating a radio system into the project and utilising the CPO , local authority community safety officer and outside partners. He addressed concerns of fear from retail staff , through high visibility patrols and continuity of contact. He set about improving co-operation and joint working with the police.

He sent out quality of service questionnaires after an initial period and found an improvement in relations and published the results at quarterly meetings. As a result of discussions with retailers concerns, improvements, such as an exclusion scheme, was integrated into the SHOPWATCH. Retail staff , previously concerned about giving statements began to trust Keith and eventually made statements and attended court for hearings ; a major breakthrough for the police in tackling the regular offenders .

Following the growing success of SHOPWATCH , Keith set about organising a PUBWATCH scheme. Again the same radio system was integrated into this project. Regular pub checks were made by CBM's and known troublemakers were prioritised for attention by police and licensees. The scheme has seen a growing membership , to the extent that there is now a cross border partnership approach to PUBWATCH being developed at a local level , with joint meetings to be held as from March 2004.

The aim in 2004 is to develop a CHILDSAFE scheme by Easter , again integrated into the above two schemes , to cater for the number of lost tourist children each year.

The project is subject to continuous monitoring of crime and violence figures which are published at the regular meetings but also takes account of tourists , local residents, licensees and retailers , observations in assessing the success of the project. To date , despite the introduction of NCRS the levels of theft and violence towards retail staff together with crimes and levels of violence in around licensed town centre premises has fallen. The reporting of incidents has increased which is due to the proactive reporting by staff involved in the schemes.

BERWICK UPON TWEED SHOPWATCH and PUBWATCH LINKED SCHEMES.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2000 Pc Keith Marchant became the CBM for the tourist town of Berwick . This coincided with Northumbria Police introducing problem solving policing .

Previously a shift officer, he had become concerned at the level of shoplifting and harassment towards retail staff. Keith set about finding out the extent of the problem.

IDENTIFYING + ASSESSING THE PROBLEM

Initially , conducting regular high visibility foot patrols around the retail premises providing continuity and reassurance , he spoke with staff and management to assess the levels of shoplifting and harassment not reported . There was a significant difference between the police data and unreported incidents. Reasons given by the staff for the differences were; no police support , fear of reprisals, lack of support from others retailers, shopwatch not working, acceptable stock loss levels by companies.

The principle problems identified were theft from shop , harassment of and violence towards staff , lack of support from police and other retailers and the shopwatch scheme not working.

RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM

Pc Marchant responded by informing ALL retailers it was the intention of the police to reduce thefts , reduce levels of harassment and violence , gain the trust of the retail and customer community to be able to shop in a safe environment and to prosecute offenders with retailers assistance. He reinforced this with high visibility foot patrols and good communication .

He organised a meeting of retailers, included the CPO and resurrected SHOPWATCH, invited APEX , a radio company to work in partnership with the police and retailers providing radio links to all members. He encouraged reporting of all incidents. Approximately 6 months later staff concerns over reporting and providing statements were addressed and staff began giving statements . As trust improved , statements were provided and court appearances by staff grew. They realised there was genuine police support and had a single point of contact in Pc Marchant.

Shopwatch now holds quarterly meetings.

A few months later a quality of service questionnaire was distributed and police arrest and prosecution results published , as a direct result a shop exclusion scheme was introduced , a SHOPWATCH committee elected , targeting on repeat

offenders and a greater commitment from retail staff was undertaken . Trust in the police had improved .

Consistent breaches of exclusion orders were prosecuted using the Harassment Act and a lower level of tolerance towards harassment was adopted area wide. More prosecutions followed and offenders realised their behaviour would not be tolerated.

EXPANDING THE RESPONSE

At this time PUBWATCH was invoked by Pc Marchant and the CBM team, following concerns about levels of disorder and underage drinking in the town centre. Again by regular foot patrols and pub checks it became apparent that the level of violence was greater than reported incidents.

To address the problem regular pub checks were conducted by CBM's , the defunct PUBWATCH scheme was resurrected and APEX provided radio links for ALL member pubs . PUBWATCH members excluded troublesome customers and police targeted known troublemakers .

Monthly LVA and PUBWATCH meetings are now held with support from the police and membership has grown. Seasonal campaigns are undertaken, supported by the LVA members with specific aims to reduce underage drinking , drink driving etc.

SHOPWATCH developed further with local authority car park attendants being provided with APEX link radios , assisting the police with lost children and dogs left in cars as well as reporting suspicious incidents. The local authority employed a CSO who accessed support funding for items such as the currency detector scheme and thumb print identification , which is now fully operational.

Currently PC Marchant is developing similar to the successful PUBWATCH and SHOPWATCH schemes a CHILDSAFE scheme , which will allow lost children / parents of , access to a safe shop /public house with a radio , to circulate the missing child and notify police.

This has come about due to the level of lost children during the tourist season and those premises with radios have become an integral part of the scheme acting as early warning to the police and have become the eyes and ears of the community. The Berwick retail community have taken responsibility for what happens within their community as a direct result of Pc Marchant's support.

Berwick PUBWATCH has developed to the extent of cross border co-operation with Scotland . Recent meetings between the two countries , at local level , have developed a willingness to amalgamate the two schemes monthly meetings to share information and tackle underage drinking and drunkenness and the associated activities , in partnership.

The PUBWATCH scheme has seen rapidly increasing membership , structured meetings and approaches to tackling issues , cross border co-operation , support of the proposed designated area drinking ban , exclusion orders and prosecutions and the areas licensees taking responsibility for what occurs within their community as a direct result of CBM and in particular Pc Marchant's support.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

This project will be constantly monitored to ensure that it continues to meet the retail and licensing and local communities needs.

Initially in 2001 the police figures for theft increased due to improved reporting , detection rates remained low due to fear. In 2002 the effects of the scheme started to impact with less incidents but a higher percentage detected , as retailers realised the support was in place and fear reduced. The reduction in offences continued in 2003 , with a far greater increase in detection rates as retailers became more proactive in prevention and more confident in assisting the police with arrests, prosecutions and court appearances.

The effects of the pubwatch scheme has been to improve the level of reporting of violent crime as licensees became more trusting that the police were looking to work with them in reducing it rather than objecting to their licences . Crime within the town centre pubs has reduced . Violent incidents , after an initial increase as a result of improved reporting , then maintained a plateau through greater confidence in the usage of the PUBWTACH radios .Violence has now started to reduce again. Regular monitoring of the figures allows identification of premises still having problems. Figures are available to support this information.

The project is now well established and has been enhanced with uniform shift personnel playing their part in the project by carrying a SHOPWATCH / PUBWATCH radio and conducting regular pub checks , as they see the benefits of early intervention and prevention through high visibility.