

Tilley Award 2006

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the Guidance. Please complete the following form in full and within the word limit. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to Tricia Perkins; patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on Friday 28th April 2006. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262. Any queries regarding other aspects of the awards should be directed to Michael Wilkinson on 0207 035 0247 or Lindsey Poole on 0207 035 0234.

Please tick box to indicate whether the entry should be considered for the main award, the criminal damage award or both;

Main award

Criminal Damage Award

Both Awards

1. Details of application

Title of the project - **Operation Jupiter – A multi agency approach dealing with poor quality drugs/alcohol rehabilitation centres and Houses of Multi Occupation in North Somerset.**

Name of force/agency/CDRP: **Avon and Somerset Police in conjunction with members of the North Somerset Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership.**

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors):

Detective Inspector Alex Game

Email address: **alex.game@avonandsomerset.police.uk**

Full postal address:

**Weston-super-Mare Police Station
Walliscote Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UU**

Telephone number: **01934 638296 (Mobile 07881 835126)**

Fax number **01934 638134**

Name of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Steve Mortimore**

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Assistant Chief Constable**

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s) **Avon and Somerset Constabulary, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QJ**

2. Summary of application

Operation Jupiter

A North Somerset Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership response to issues of poor quality Houses of Multi Occupation and Drug/Alcohol rehabilitation establishments.

In September 2004 significant public concern existed regarding poor quality Houses of Multi Occupation (HMO) and referrals from outside North Somerset for drug/alcohol rehabilitation treatment. This was manifested at public meetings, complaints to service providers and media coverage. Local agencies were aware of problems associated with their particular area of business such as crime, poor housing, benefit fraud and probation offender management issues. However, no single organisation held the overview or understood the full nature and impact these issues had upon the local community.

A problem profile was developed in consultation with the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). The Police intelligence unit co-ordinated multi agency data, analysed intelligence, presented a strategic overview and developed recommendations.

Consequently, Operation Jupiter was initiated and a series of multi agency tactics developed to tackle the problems. This included multi agency visits to problematic premises and the exchange of intelligence across the agencies leading to co-ordinated law enforcement action. Briefings were delivered to referring agencies from outside North Somerset, which were sending clients into wholly unsuitable premises. The tactics have been overseen and developed by the Community Safety Drugs Action Team (CSDAT), Community and Reducing Supply Group, which reorganised to meet the demands of the new initiative. A regular reporting mechanism to the CDRP was established to ensure the continued full support of all partner agencies.

The top 20 problematic premises were identified and targeted using a multi agency approach. Key successes include:-

- 31% reduction in demand for the emergency and local services
- 6% drop in associated crime
- 6 premises have closed
- 7 premises subject to change of use

Other streams of work include the development of an accreditation scheme for North Somerset Drugs and Alcohol service providers to drive up standards.

A major success of the scheme has been the ability to compare multi agency data enabling a thorough assessment to be made about sub standard operations. A number of premises have failed to achieve the required standards and their public funding has been withdrawn. This has improved the quality of life for local residents who were suffering from increased crime/anti social behaviour problems and ensured that a better service is provided to those in genuine need of care for addiction and emergency housing issues.

3. Description of project

North Somerset is home to over 188,000 people and covers 145 square miles. Weston-super-Mare (WSM) is the largest town within North Somerset and one of the largest tourist resorts in the West Country. WSM contains two wards which are within the top 10% most deprived in the country.

As a result of the decline in the UK seaside tourist trade, many large Victorian properties are no longer used as hotels or guest houses and have been converted into Hostels, Residential Homes, Drug Rehabilitation Centres and Houses of Multi Occupation (HMO). A report commissioned as part of the process to secure central government funding for an urban regeneration project in 2000 concluded that `this change of use has significantly altered the social makeup of the area and caused social and community problems`.

During early 2004 it was apparent that there was significant public concern and a lack of understanding about the issues concerning HMO and Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centres. This manifested itself at public meetings such as neighbourhood watch and public council meetings at which several councillors and members of the public expressed concern about the issues. There was also a high level of local media interest which resulted in the below headlines being published:-

`New drug addict numbers worry`

`No help as residents tell of Hostel Hell`

`Don't dump your drug addicts here`

This combination of events succeeded in creating a negative perception within the community that the town was afflicted with a series of insurmountable problems making it less attractive as a place to live, work and invest in.

During multi agency meetings set up under the Community Safety Drugs Action Team (CSDAT) structure it was clear that individual agencies including Police, Housing Standards, Supporting People, Housing Benefit, Emergency Housing Teams Avon and Somerset Probation and NHS Primary Care Trust were aware of the problems. No single agency had the strategic overview, consequently it was not possible to determine collectively what the problems were, what effect this was having on the wellbeing of local society or how to deal with such issues.

To address this knowledge gap and determine a clear future direction that all agencies could subscribe to, the Police Intelligence Department drew up a terms of reference in consultation with partners. The BCU Commander took the proposal for the paper, entitled `An investigation into the effects of residential drug/alcohol services and HMO upon Weston-super-Mare`, to the CDRP at executive level. It was agreed that all partners would assist by providing the required access to their data and the Police would co-ordinate and draft the paper within a three-month timescale.

Objectives of the project

- Conduct analysis of multi agency data to determine the overall nature and scale of the problem and develop a multi agency strategy to deal with the identified issues
- Identify and target the top 20 identified problem HMO through an intensive programme of multi agency supervision. A combination of tactics including enforcement of legislation and education landlords will be utilised.
- Gain an understanding of where, how and why people from outside the area are attracted to WSM.
- Media campaign to be devised to capitalise upon early progress to keep the public advised and provide encouragement for other landlords to raise the quality of their own properties. In the medium term it is hoped to use the experience gained during this project to develop an accreditation scheme for Landlords to further raise and maintain standards in the sector.
- Repeat the analysis after one year on the problematic premises to determine the success of the project.
- Develop an accreditation scheme for drug and alcohol service providers to regulate, monitor and improve standards

Definition of the problem

The issues surrounding drug / alcohol treatment and housing are extremely complex and a collective approach to understand local issues had never before been undertaken. The research team were not specialist in the field of drug and alcohol referral and treatment or matters pertaining to Housing / Environmental issues. The overall objectives for the analysis of the situation were as follows:-

1. Who is providing drug and alcohol treatment services in the WSM area and to what standard?
2. What are the referral and funding routes into the North Somerset area for homeless people and drug/alcohol treatment?
3. What are the consequences for local services and residents?
4. Identify where the problem HMO and Drug/Alcohol treatment providers are by evaluating different agencies data
5. Produce recommendations and a control strategy
6. Propose a multi agency management structure for delivery of a control strategy.

The report was completed in January 2005 following consultation with aforementioned key partner agencies.

In order to address this knowledge gap the following was conducted: -

- Relevant literature and existing research relating to drug/alcohol issues and the homeless were researched to provide current understanding of the issues, legislation and procedures. Reliable sources for this information were Home office reports, Department of Health and the Audit Commission data.
- Primary research was a fundamental element of this project. A data collection plan was compiled and a series of interviews conducted with key practitioners in the following organisations, Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), Avon and Somerset Probation, Supporting People, Housing Options, Housing Standards, Trading Standards and care professionals within the treatment services.

After the consultation and initial data collection it became evident that the research would consist of two stages as follows.

1. Analysis of premises involved in housing individuals with drug / alcohol addiction or homeless issues

The media were regularly suggesting that premises housing individuals who are either homeless or with drug/alcohol issues have an undesirable impact on local services. A crucial segment of the research was to investigate if this was the case.

Primary research enabled 48 premises to be identified that were involved in housing individuals with drug/alcohol issues or the homeless. These premises fell into three categories, Registered Residential Rehabilitation Centres, Dry Houses with "Supporting People" Contracts and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The research team required a methodology that would provide results that were reliable, comparable, valid and which involved data from a range of organisations. The methodology had to be repeatable to allow for evaluation at a later stage. It was therefore determined that the impact of the identified premises would be measured in terms of the interaction that each had with the key organisations in North Somerset. The following organisations which provided data were:-

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- North Somerset Council
- Trading Standards
- Avon Ambulance Service NHS Trust

The time frame for the interaction was over an 8-month period.

Analysis of the interaction with the identified agencies revealed the following key findings:-

- **A small proportion of the properties accounted for a disproportionately high amount of the interaction with the 4 organisations.**
The top 12 properties accounted for 75% of the overall response from all organisations. All of the 12 properties were classified as HMO, 7 of which were used to house the homeless by the Housing Options Team. Premises that indicated a high demand profile from a Police perspective tended to have had interaction with the other organisations, the majority of the top 12 had interaction with 3 of the 4 organisations. It was therefore evident that problem premises are inclined to cause concern for a number of organisations and this re-emphasised the merit of a multi agency approach to rectify these issues.
- **An Ambulance was required to attend HMO more frequently than any other type of accommodation.**
The most frequent ambulance call outs were to HMO with the prominent reason stated for ambulance attendance being 'overdose / poisoning (ingestion)'.
- **HMO experienced higher levels of recorded crimes than any other type of accommodation**
A high number of the HMO experienced higher levels of recorded crime, with the most common offences being Theft, dwelling burglary and violent offences.
- **The Registered Rehabilitation Centres generally did not have high levels of interaction.**
The Registered Residential Rehabilitation Centres are well regulated, inspected and have to adhere to strict guidelines. The conclusion of the research is that this area is not a cause for concern for any of the organisations.

2. Impact of DTTO's / Criminal Justice Referrals on North Somerset.

The research revealed that individuals on Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTO's) from outside North Somerset were a significant problem for the community. There is no formal system in place to provide details of individuals who have been sent to North Somerset on a DTTO; this was recognised as an information gap. The only available source was the Police intelligence system. This was interrogated to obtain details of individuals who had come to Police attention and were subject to a DTTO.

Analysis of this limited data revealed that a number of these individuals were residing in problematic HMO and only a third of the individuals were resident in a registered Residential Rehabilitation centre or premises with a "supporting people" contract. This was concerning given the requirement of a DTTO is to address drug misuse. A number of the individuals were known to have subsequently committed crime within the North Somerset area with offences ranging from Burglary and Assault to supply of Class A drugs. This represented an area that required further work. It was apparent that individuals on DTTO's were being placed in unsuitable accommodation. In addition to this the situation was exacerbated because the local Probation Service were not being notified that they were in the area. Probation Officers from other areas were stepping outside of National Probation guidelines regarding case transfer instructions. This therefore prevented North Somerset Probation Officers from advising upon the suitability of accommodation and drug rehabilitation services.

Conclusions of Analysis

The analysis identified 20 problematic premises that were at the root of the problem. These included poorly managed HMOs and unregistered Drug / Alcohol Rehabilitation establishments. The CDRP agreed that these premises would be the focus for a rigorous multi agency approach to address the underlying issues.

The concern relating to the level of individuals being sent to North Somerset on DTTO from outside the area is not an issue that could be solely addressed locally. It was therefore forwarded to National Probation to progress at a National policy level. At a local level, close liaison between North Somerset Police, Avon and Somerset Probation and the treatment providers has resulted in an enhanced knowledge of those individuals arriving in WSM for the purpose of a DTTO.

The report identified the issues from a multi agency perspective and therefore secured the essential CDRP executive level endorsement for the way forward.

Response to the problem

Traditional policing methods to tackle these problematic premises, their landlords and occupants had failed to deal adequately with the situation and were not considered to be effective. A co-ordinated multi-agency approach would therefore be required.

It was felt that there was a wide range of legislation available to the various agencies involved in the regulation of HMO and Drug Rehabilitation establishments. Therefore this existing legislation could be utilised to adopt a robust and effective approach to deal with the problems in order that the premises were either brought under control and up to standard or closed down.

The report provided the evidence and justification for funding to be obtained from the "Weston Super Mare Regeneration Bid" (SRB6) budget. This resulted in the creation of a new full time Police Intelligence officer post. To compliment this investment in the post, the North Somerset Council dedicated a Housing Standards Officer to the project. It was agreed by the CDRP that these two posts would work in partnership to ensure a strong tactical capability for the project. The roles are fundamentally about co-ordinating the activities of those agencies who can influence the nature and quality of HMO. The development of these posts acted as a catalyst bringing a multi agency approach to tackle the issues in line with the requirements of Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act.

The funding for this project was secured from a variety of different partner's resources including Central Government SRB6 funds. As such detailed project plans and quarterly accounting returns, which have been subject to independent verification, have been undertaken.

Under the direction of the Community Safety Drug Action Team - Communities and Reducing Supply group (CARS), a series of tactics were developed to target the identified problematic premises. Landlords, owners and managers of all problematic premises were informed about the legislation relating to the management of HMOs. They were warned that all relevant legislation would be rigorously enforced. The top 20 premises were pro-actively targeted and all received regular visits from the dedicated Police and Housing Standards Officers.

Identified representatives from each agency involved were allocated specific tasks in relation to their involvement with housing matters and each became accountable to the CARS group. This allowed action taken to be reviewed on a monthly basis against the objectives of the project, process-mapped and evaluated.

The partnership approach to date has involved 8 multi-agency visits to problematic premises as well as numerous other visits by Police and Housing standards officers. These visits have revealed evidence of poor management, poor housing standards and poor quality drug treatment. Concerns surrounding two poor quality drug rehabilitation establishments led to a co-ordinated investigation being undertaken by a number of agencies. Multi agency reports were produced detailing the specific concerns about the two premises, which were supplying poor quality drug treatment to over 200 individuals per annum. These reports were submitted to local probation and as a result all criminal justice referrals nationwide to these two problematic premises were ceased. Both premises are scheduled to close in the near future.

As a consequence of the project there has been enhanced intelligence gathering opportunities specific to the large number of criminals relocating to Weston Super Mare for access to drug treatment, counselling and support. Intelligence has been gained in relation to the following:-

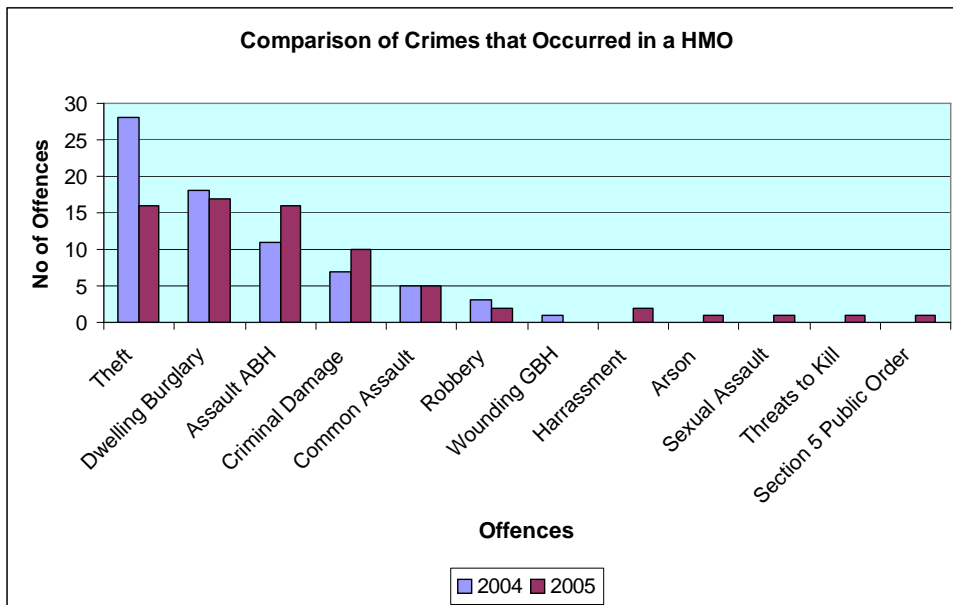
- The project team has now established that there are around 500 beds in the Weston super Mare area, which are used for drug treatment, counselling or support.
- Most individuals attend an initial 12 week programme. Therefore it is estimated that around 2000 individuals from other areas (predominantly London) come to Weston Super Mare for access to drug treatment each year. A large proportion of whom have a significant criminal history.
- Analysis has identified that 56% of those offenders brought to justice for dwelling burglary, between 01/04/04 – 31/12/05, were criminals from other areas who had come to Weston Super mare for access to drug treatment.

Evaluation of the intervention

An evaluation of the project was undertaken after 12 months of actions. The same methodology was adopted to allow a year on year comparison. This enabled the progress achieved to be determined and directed the development of new tactics for the next phase.

Analysis of the problematic premises identified the following key findings:-

- The level of interaction between the targeted premises and the identified organisations has reduced by nearly a third.**
 Comparison between the current levels of interaction against the previous level has revealed that overall a reduction of **31%** has been achieved. This equates to **187** fewer interactions amongst the identified organisations.
- Most premises have experienced decreases in the level of interaction with the identified organisations**
 The majority of the premises currently being targeted by the initiative have experienced a decrease in their level of interaction. The level of the reduction for each premise ranges from **10%** to **96%**.
- Recorded Crime at HMO has decreased**
 The level of recorded crime that occurred within an HMO during this period has decreased by 6%



As the above graph demonstrated decreases were evident in the following offences:-

- ◆ Theft
- ◆ Dwelling Burglary
- ◆ Robbery
- ◆ Wounding GBH

Theft offences - previously the most common offence within HMO - have decreased significantly during the period of the Project. This is believed to be as a consequence of Crime Prevention Advice and close liaison between Police, Housing Standards Officers and the Landlords of the top 20 problematic premises.

Dwelling Burglary is now the most commonly reported offence in HMO. However, overall these offences have also decreased. A third of the dwelling burglary offences occurred at one premise. Investigation into those offences highlighted that a number were allegations made between residents. Warrants were executed and following a multi-agency visit the premise has now closed pending redevelopment.

Improvements made to Response

Tactics and methods used to target problematic premises were reassessed in light of the evaluation. The list of the most problematic premises was reviewed and refined to ensure that the current most problematic premises remain the focus of intensive supervision.

Overall outcome of Multi Agency Action

The collective action taken by the numerous agencies involved in the initiative resulted in the following performance objectives being achieved:-

- 7 of the original Top 20 premises closed down pending redevelopment.
- 6 further premises subject of proposed sale to Registered Social Landlord.
- Reduction of 145 beds in poorly managed HMOs (This is 47% of the total number of beds within the top 20 problematic premises)
- 31% overall reduction in calls to top 20 premises
- Several properties brought up to standard and no longer of concern to the relevant authorities.
- 30 Arrests made as a direct result of Intelligence gained through the initiative.
- 8 positive Drugs / theft act warrants executed
- Stolen property, Class A, B and C drugs seized
- 2 poor quality Drug / Alcohol rehabilitation establishments no longer allowed accepting offenders either from prison or on probation.
- 20 Housing Standards enforcement notices served.
- Planning enforcement activity currently ongoing.
- Inland Revenue investigation ongoing into tax evasion concerning Housing Benefit matters
- Housing benefit payments now more strictly controlled.
- £36,000 "Supporting people" funding has been withdrawn from one premise.

Evaluation of the effect of the Operation on the local community.

The following points illustrate an encouraging series of outcomes from the perspective of the local community, specifically:-

- The public and media were effectively briefed for the first time from properly researched and presented data following full public release of the paper. As a consequence the media reporting became more objective, recognising that there were in fact some excellent addiction disorder facilities in the town which were a national asset and acknowledging support for a multi agency approach to tackle poorly managed HMO and drugs/alcohol treatment centres. This positive message was fed back to the public via a series of media releases immediately reassuring the public that their concerns were being listened to and addressed. Positive media coverage including National Radio 4 PM and the following local paper headlines – **`Joint action to sort problem hostels`, `Drug rehab centres face clampdown`, `Three homes in multi occupation closed down`, `War on the drug tourists`**
- Concerns regarding poor quality drug treatment (initially identified by Operation Jupiter) in North Somerset have been subject of debate in House of Commons. This has raised the profile to a National level.
- Anecdotal evidence from several local councillors and Neighbourhood watch meetings that the tactics employed by Operation Jupiter are making a tangible difference to the lives of local people.
- Data analysed by the Chairman of Weston-super-Mare Landlords Association demonstrates that their tenants are happier with the quality of their living conditions since Operation Jupiter commenced. The average tenancy has increased from 4.2 months (2004) to 16 months (2005). This greater stability has increased the quality of the resident's lives and helped raise standards of behaviour.
- In 2004 34 Drug Treatment Testing Order referrals were placed in local HMO. In 2005 this number reduced to zero following the endeavours of the Operation Jupiter team to ensure that probation officers outside North Somerset refer to appropriate accommodation.

The evaluation undertaken to date has concentrated on direct key performance indicators and aspects of the community impact. It has not been possible to directly extrapolate cost benefit analysis data due to the complexity of the issues involved.

The development of the North Somerset accreditation scheme for all premises that are involved with drug treatment, counselling or support is underway and scheduled for launch in September 2006. It has been subject to much consultation with multi agency partners, service providers and the National Treatment Agency. For the first time this will provide a high level of multi agency control across these businesses and monitor those individuals seeking treatment from outside North Somerset. A vetting procedure will be introduced to manage, monitor and regulate standards at each drug rehabilitation establishment North Somerset. This will ensure the required level of treatment and funding is secured therefore enabling individuals to receive the appropriate level of care.