

Disrupting crack markets

A practice guide

Acknowledgements

Robin Burgess of the Drug Strategy Directorate (DSD) at the Home Office wrote this guide, with help from Naomi Abigail, Michelle Lacriarde and Jacob Hawkins.

We should also like to thank colleagues, too numerous to mention individually, in law enforcement agencies – notably members of the *Best practice in disrupting drug markets advisory group* within DSD – who contributed text and assisted with editing.

Sarah Muir, David Arnold and Diana Symonds are also thanked for their help.

Further copies of this guide can be obtained by police officers, other law enforcement officers, Drug Action Teams (DATs) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership co-ordinators from Prolog on 0870 241 4680.

Home Office 2003

Disrupting crack markets

Who is this guide for?

- Police
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Drug Action Teams (DATs)
- Law enforcement agencies

The purpose of this guide is:

- To offer practical suggestions to help the police and their partners disrupt crack markets
- To help the police and their partners understand how crack is sold and used, and how buying is financed
- To offer practical advice on mapping a crack market
- To offer advice on tactics that may help disrupt a crack market
- To offer advice on how to evaluate the success of police action
- To stimulate more action against crack markets using a variety of methods

Written for police and partnerships in England and Wales, this guide may also be applicable to situations in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The guide will be supported by additional material produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) drugs business area. These publications will be produced during 2003 and should be used in conjunction with this guide.

There may be legislative change during 2003 which could affect the legal powers available to control or disrupt certain aspects of crack markets, such as crack houses. Until any such proposals are put forward and approved by Parliament the legal situation as described here applies.

Contents

	Introduction	vii
	Where to find key themes – a quick guide	viii
	Section 1 How crack markets operate	1
1.1	How cocaine gets to the UK	1
1.2	How crack gets to street dealers	3
1.2.1	Shipped imports	3
1.2.2	Couriered imports	3
1.3	How middle markets operate	4
1.4	How street markets operate	4
1.4.1	Open street markets	5
1.4.2	Closed street markets	5
1.4.3	Crack houses	5
1.4.4	Crack dealers	6
1.5	Crack users	7
1.5.1	Combined crack and heroin users	7
1.5.2	Primary crack users	7
1.5.3	Race and ethnic status	8
1.6	Crime and crack use	8
1.6.1	Sex work	8
1.6.2	Other crime	9
	Key learning points from section 1	9
	Further reading	9
	Section 2 Preparing for action against crack markets	10
2.1	Middle markets	10
2.1.1	Police intelligence	10
2.1.2	Non-police sources	10
2.2	Street markets	11
2.2.1	Police intelligence	11
2.2.2	Non-police professionals	14
2.3	Managing data streams and information	15
2.3.1	Compiling data	15
2.3.2	Intelligence handlers	16
2.3.3	Data protection	16
2.4	The team and its partners	16
2.5	Resident information and support	17
2.5.1	Groups that promote community engagement	18

2.6	Planning against community disorder	19
2.7	The media	20
	Key learning points from section 2	20
	Further reading	20
	Section 3 Action to tackle markets	21
3.1	Work to stop cocaine getting to the UK	21
3.1.1	Producer countries	21
3.1.2	Transit countries	22
3.2	Disrupting middle markets	23
3.2.1	Identifying middle-market suppliers	23
3.2.2	Disruption tactics	23
3.2.3	Links with other forces and upstream agencies	24
3.2.4	Foreign nationals	24
3.2.5	Asset tracking and recovery	24
3.2.6	Multiple hits	25
3.3	Disrupting street-level markets	25
3.3.1	Witness intimidation	29
3.4	Disrupting open street markets	29
3.4.1	Aims of action	29
3.4.2	Outcomes	30
3.5	Disrupting crack houses	30
3.5.1	Action to prevent crack houses developing	30
3.5.2	Action against crack houses using criminal law	31
3.5.3	Closing a property using civil powers	33
3.5.4	Community action	36
3.6	Disrupting 'arrange-to-meet' markets	36
3.6.1	Methods of disruption	37
3.6.2	Considerations	37
3.7	Tackling crack-related crime	38
3.7.1	Acquisitive crime	39
3.7.2	Sex work and prostitution	39
3.8	Overcoming community conflict and hostility in black minority ethnic areas	40
3.9	Displacement	44
3.9.1	Buffer zones	44
3.9.2	Benefits of displacement	45

3.9.3	Negative aspects of displacement	45
3.10	Reducing demand	45
3.10.1	Prostitutes	45
3.10.2	Buyers	47
3.10.3	High-risk groups	48
3.10.4	Reducing demand after enforcement action	48
3.10.5	Work with offenders at arrest and within the criminal justice system	50
3.10.6	Reducing demand in an area marked by excessive deprivation	52
	Key learning points from section 3	53
	Further reading	53
	Section 4 Assessing the impact of police action against crack markets	54
4.1	Aims of police action	54
4.1.1	Police and professional groups	54
4.1.2	The local community	54
4.2	Indicators of success	54
4.2.1	Outputs	54
4.2.2	Outcomes	56
4.2.3	Process indicators	57
4.3	Constructing the evaluation process	58
	Key learning points from section 4	58
	Conclusions	59

Introduction

The sale of crack is one of the most acute problems in policing. Uncontrolled crack markets have a propensity for violence and intimidation that affects whole communities. The criminality associated with crack houses and street markets can be a profound bar to regeneration activities and can depress and further stigmatise deprived areas.

This guide shows how the police can work with partners to implement a range of actions that will reduce demand and control, shrink and close crack markets.

The guide is designed for those working within England and Wales, especially at street level. Whilst its primary audience is the police and law enforcement partners, it is also aimed at partners who assist them with local control and disruption strategies.

This guide does not suggest that disrupting supply is the only way of addressing crack problems in the UK. However, demand-reduction measures, such as treatment and education, are on their own unlikely to lead to the decline of drug markets in the short term. Enforcement tactics and the disruption and reduction of opportunities to sell crack are an essential part of any local action to tackle crack problems.

Nevertheless, action to reduce demand should also be developed to support enforcement activity.

Drawing on best practice from the UK and beyond, this guide brings together tried and tested approaches to controlling crack markets. It builds on the hard work and commitment of the police and law enforcement and community workers everywhere to show that a body of effective work is emerging. Where possible, project examples are included.

Note: the problems of crack have been more acute in the United States than any other country. As a result the US has had more time and experience in managing the problem. US research literature has been reviewed and US experts have been consulted for relevant learning. However, differences in culture, patterns of crack use, demographics, and in the US criminal justice and police system, mean that not everything that has worked in the US can be easily applied in the UK nor with the same results. Where possible, this guide identifies and cites UK best practice.

Where to find key themes – a quick guide

Topic	Where it is covered	Other relevant sections
<i>Market dynamics</i>		
How crack is produced and brought to the UK	Section 1.1	Disrupting international supply, section 3.1; foreign nationals, section 3.2.4
How crack markets work	Sections 1.3-1.4	Section 3.2, specific market disruption tactics; and section 2 for how to gather information on markets
How cocaine is turned into crack for street sale	Section 1	Section 3.4, disrupting middle markets; and section 2.1.1, mapping
Why is there a crack market in a particular area	Section 2	Section 3, Project Linctus
Mapping a market	Section 2.2	
Gaining community intelligence	Section 2.2	Section 3.8, handling community conflict; section 4, measuring success using community feedback
Non-law enforcement professional intelligence and information	Section 2.3	Section 3.5, disrupting crack houses
Building police intelligence	Section 2.4	Section 3.3, handling sources; 3.2, tackling middle markets; section 3.6, tackling 'arrange-to-meet' markets

Where to find key themes – a quick guide (continued)

Topic	Where it is covered	Other relevant sections
<i>Disruptive tactics</i>		
Choosing tactics for different markets	Section 3	Section 1, how markets operate
Disrupting crack houses	Section 3.5	Section 1.4.3, crack houses
Disrupting street markets	Section 3.3	Section 3.8, handling community disorder
Disrupting 'arrange-to-meet' markets	Section 3.6	Table 2.1, handling sources
Disrupting middle markets	Section 3.2	Section 2.1.1, intelligence
Disrupting international trafficking	Section 3.1	Section 1.1, how cocaine gets to the UK; foreign nationals, section 3.2.4
Using Immigration powers	Section 3.1.2	Section 3.2.4, foreign nationals
Using civil powers	Section 3.5.3	Section 3.7.2 controls on prostitution
Seizing assets	Section 3.2.5	

Where to find key themes – a quick guide (continued)

Topic	Where it is covered	Other relevant sections
<i>Aids to market disruption</i>		
Sources	Table 2.1	
Forensics	Sections 2.1 and 2.2	
Surveillance	Section 2 as part of mapping markets	Section 3 as part of disrupting markets
Intelligence	Section 2 as part of mapping markets	Section 3 as part of disrupting markets
CCTV	Section 2.2.1	
Media	Section 2.7	Section 3.2, street selling; section 3.8 handling community disorder
Upstream agencies	Sections 3.1 and 3.2	Section 3.2.4, foreign nationals
<i>Issues in market disruption</i>		
Displacement	Section 3.9	
Community disorder	Section 3.8	
Swallowed drugs	Section 3.8	Section 3.4 disrupting street markets and 3.6 disrupting 'arrange-to-meet' markets

Where to find key themes – a quick guide (continued)

Topic	Where it is covered	Other relevant sections
Bail	Section 3.5.2	
<i>Related criminality</i>		
Tackling sex work	Section 3.7.2	Section 3.10, reducing demand and section 1.6.1
Tackling gun crime	Section 3.7, Atrium case study	Trident case study, section 3.8
Stolen goods	Section 3.7.1	
<i>Reducing the demand for crack markets</i>		
All client groups	Section 3.10	Section 2.5, linking enforcement to other action in an area
Sex workers	Section 3.10.1	
Offenders	Section 3.10.5	Section 3.7.1, handling stolen goods
<i>Assessing the impact of crack market disruption</i>		
Distinguishing outputs, outcomes and other indicators	Section 4	
Matching indicators to the expectations of key stakeholders	Section 4	Section 2, gathering community intelligence

How crack markets operate

1.1 How cocaine gets to the UK

Crack sold in the UK is imported as cocaine and turned into crack by dealers (see box: What is crack?). Crack itself is rarely imported. Cocaine is produced mostly in Latin America, especially in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

Figure 1.1 (overleaf) shows the main routes by which cocaine is imported to the UK. The majority is shipped from producer countries via Spain, Portugal or countries in West Africa and then onto France, the Netherlands or Belgium, before arriving in the UK. Between 10 and 15% of all cocaine imported to the UK is brought in by couriers travelling by air. A significant route for this method is via Jamaica. This is because, of all the Caribbean islands, Jamaica is closest to the Latin American mainland.

What is crack?

Crack is a smokeable form of cocaine. It is a white or cream wax-like solid, which is usually sold at street level in small lumps or 'rocks'.

To produce crack, the following are needed:

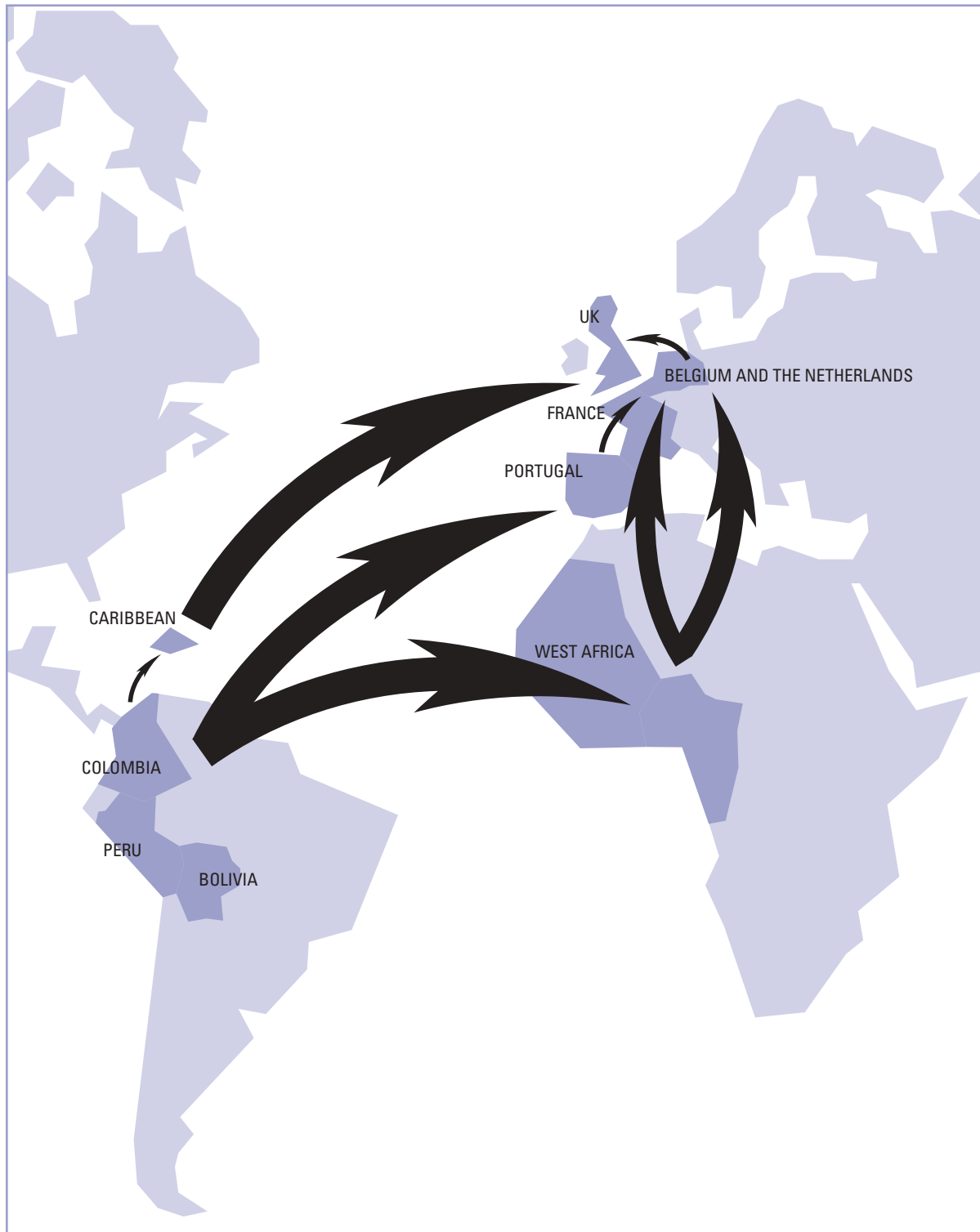
- Cocaine hydrochloride
- A heat source, such as a microwave or a hot plate of a cooker
- An alkali, such as ammonia solution or sodium bicarbonate

The most common way of producing crack is to dissolve the cocaine hydrochloride in hot water and then add the alkali. The water evaporates and the insoluble cocaine base settles as a clear or yellowish oil. On cooling, a solid mass is formed, and the liquid layer is discarded. This method produces a product which, apart from the presence of added cutting agents (for example lignocaine), will be free of sugars, salts or related substances.

The solid material can be 'cracked' out of the container and broken up into lumps or 'rocks' for distribution. The name crack may also be derived from the cracking sound that is made when rocks are smoked.

Smoking crack has euphoric effects, producing an intense but short lived – no more than half an hour – rush of pleasure. This is followed by an equally rapid come-down, or feeling of depression, which is followed by intense craving for the euphoric reaction.

Figure 1.1 **How cocaine gets to the UK**

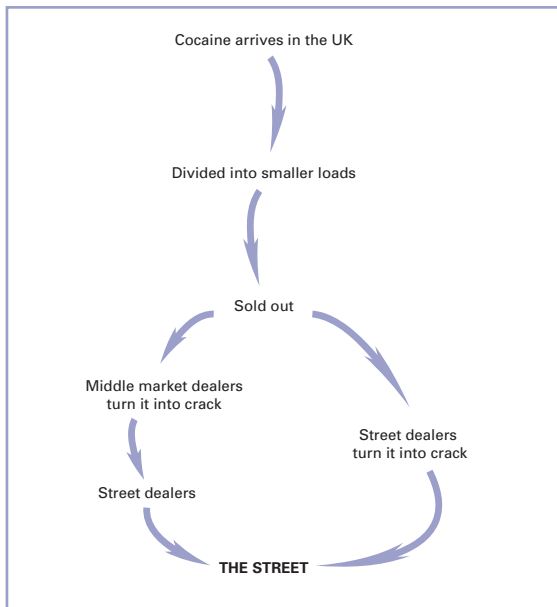


1.2 How crack gets to street dealers

1.2.1 Shipped imports

Shipped cocaine is concealed and brought through UK ports or imported directly from small boats outside of points of customs presence. It is then divided into smaller loads and sold on to middle-market or level 2 suppliers who turn it into crack and sell it to lower-level street dealers (see box: Drug markets). Alternatively they sell the cocaine to level 1 street dealers, who then produce crack. In general middle-market suppliers are probably responsible for turning cocaine into crack in order to make greater profits.

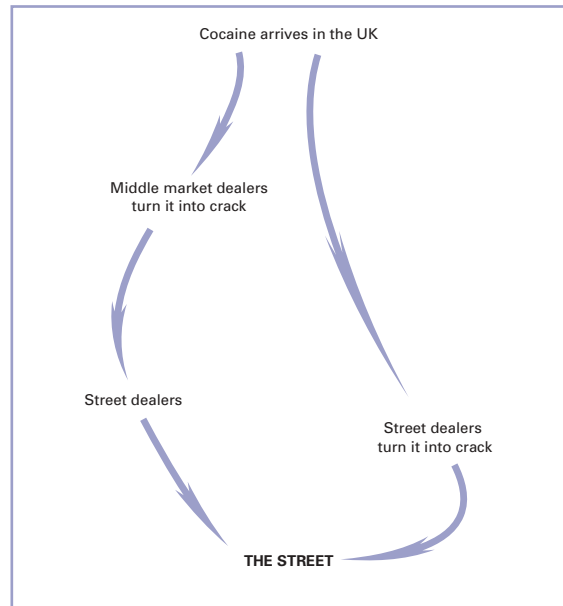
Figure 1.2 Cocaine imported by ship



1.2.2 Couriered imports

Importers in transit countries recruit couriers who ingest condoms filled with cocaine and then fly to the UK. Couriers pass it onto local dealers or middle-market suppliers, who turn it into crack to sell directly to the street or to street dealers. Street dealers may be involved in direct importation and the chain from Jamaica to the street is very short (see box: Couriers).

Figure 1.3 Cocaine imported by air



Drug markets

The following levels are used to describe different crack markets and the people involved at these stages.

Level 1: Street markets: street dealers sell crack to users.

Level 2: Middle markets: middle-market suppliers buy from importers or brokers and sell on to street dealers.

Level 3: Import markets: importers or brokers are involved in large-scale importation of cocaine.

As explained in **sections 1.3 and 1.4** the difference between different levels is fluid. Street dealers may also act as middle-market suppliers or be directly involved in importation.

Couriers

Couriers are frequently Jamaican or other Caribbean Island citizens, but also can be UK nationals conducting a reverse trip, or nationals of other transit countries, notably Nigeria. A significant number of couriers are young women with dependent children.

Couriers are often poor, desperate and usually have no detailed knowledge of the complete operation. They may:

- Not understand what they are doing
- Need the money
- Believe the penalties in the UK are very slight
- Not understand the risk to health
- Have a dependent relationship with the trafficker

- Understand the risk and the penalties and still want the money or the relationship with the dealer or trafficker

The risks they face include:

- Violence and intimidation from dealers
- Condoms filled with cocaine bursting inside them, which can be fatal
- Legal action, which can result in high prison sentences to be served in the UK.

It is too simple to regard them as always being innocent victims, although many will prove to be.

Detailed interviewing of detained couriers is essential for intelligence purposes (see **section 2** on gathering and managing data).

1.3 How middle markets operate

In large-scale importation, middle-market suppliers operate between street sellers and importers. However, the definition of a middle market is elastic. The boundaries between importers, middle-market suppliers and street dealers are quite fluid. Street dealers may sometimes replace the middle market and buy directly from importers.

In practice, middle-market suppliers can:

- Be on the fringe of major importation
- Be actual importers
- Sell to street dealers or
- Sell directly to users themselves

In direct importation via couriers, street dealers can replace the need for a middle market. Dealers, who may be foreign nationals themselves, may have contacts in Jamaica or other transit countries, who recruit couriers. Dealers meet them at the airport, retrieve the drugs and then sell them on the street. They may only supply their local area.

Most middle-market suppliers handle and sell on quite small quantities of cocaine or

crack (certainly less than 5kg at most times, and sometimes less than 1kg), and a variety of other drugs. Their immediate distribution network may be over a wide area, but is unlikely to be a market monopoly for any area. Some middle-market suppliers may sell to a number of street dealers in any one city or area.

Violence may well accompany selling. The use of guns and other weapons is increasing. Violence is used to enforce debts, intimidate rivals and potential witnesses, and to punish those who challenge a supplier's dominance. Middle-market suppliers can operate across a range of commodities (such as weapons and tobacco) and the volume of cocaine or crack they handle can vary. They may also be involved in other serious and organised crime.

1.4 How street markets operate

Crack dealers then turn cocaine into crack immediately before the point-of-sale, sometimes in crack houses. They may operate open or closed markets.

Increasingly dealers will not deal in crack alone but also sell other drugs. In the largest urban centres there is greater market divergence with different dealers for crack and for heroin. In out of city centre estates, or in smaller cities, dealers will supply both heroin and crack, sometimes in 'pick and mix' bags, as users often use both drugs.

1.4.1 Open street markets

An **open** market is one where a dealer will sell to anyone. Open markets can be:

- On the street, where several street dealers can congregate offering drugs or waiting to be approached
- Off the street, at premises which can be approached by anyone. These can be crack houses or clubs, cafés and pubs

Street markets for drugs are the most vulnerable to the simplest enforcement tactics. As a result they are in decline. Nonetheless they are very damaging to neighbourhoods where they still exist.

Street markets usually occur in the public entrances to buildings such as bus, tube or train stations, or in other semi-enclosed settings. Such markets often operate where the behaviour of dealers can be absorbed into larger crowds or groups using those premises, or where buyers are abundant. For this reason they are usually located in busy urban and inner city areas where dealers and users can try to blend in with the crowd, or where there are lots of transient, homeless people or prostitutes.

Some street sellers may carry out some other function or work, which is why they are present on the street – for example prostitutes or people who are begging.

Street sellers may well carry crack in their mouths and swallow it when apprehended. They will not usually carry large quantities of crack, but will store drugs to hand, regularly topping up their supplies. Hiding places might be a nearby flat, or even abandoned furniture in the street.

Some prostitutes selling drugs or acting as runners may have the drug concealed in various orifices and may require intimate searches if apprehended. The procedure for carrying out an intimate search is prescribed in the Codes of Practice in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

Open street selling and crack houses (see below) are likely to have the most visual, perceptual and crime impact on a community.

1.4.2 Closed street markets

A **closed** market is one where a dealer will only sell to users who are known or introduced to them. Closed markets can be:

- On the street, at meetings arranged via mobile phones
- Off the street, at premises from which drugs are sold only to known or introduced users, but which are not places where users can stay and consume
- Crack houses, which only admit introduced buyers, where users can also use, and from which other goods and services, such as sex, can often be obtained

1.4.3 Crack houses

Apart from open street selling (see above), crack houses are likely to have the most impact on a community.

Crack is sold from a wide range of buildings, which can be residential, uninhabited or semi-derelict. A building from which crack is sold can be open or closed, but it is likely that a degree of control over who is admitted is applied so that only users known or introduced are allowed in.

The term crack house is used as a catch-all term to describe a range of properties from which drugs are sold. Someone who sells crack from their house to a closed group of people is not really operating a crack house.

Table 1.1 shows some of the features of crack houses.

Table 1.1 Features of crack houses

Attributes	Ownership and tenancy	Users
<p>There are controls at the door and security controlling access</p> <p>Other services such as gas and electricity may be cut off and then illegally supplied</p> <p>They are often occupied for a short time until enforcement catches up with them</p> <p>They may be used as centres where other goods can be obtained, such as stolen goods, guns and other weapons</p>	<p>Crack houses are often rented or social housing premises (housing association or local authority)</p> <p>The crack dealer may have forced the rightful tenant to use the house (see box: People whose houses are taken over for crack supply)</p> <p>The house may be illegally sub-let. The rightful tenant may not be present and has not been forced to allow the house to become a crack house</p> <p>The house may be a privately rented property where the owner is absent and has no knowledge of who is occupying the premises</p>	<p>Users may be able to stay for extended periods, even days or weeks, in the house, using drugs and obtaining other services, such as commercial sex</p> <p>Prostitutes often act as introducers for new buyers</p>

1.4.4 Crack dealers

There is no straightforward profile of a crack dealer but in general terms there is a distinction between those who sell crack as one of several commodities to poly-drug users and those who sell just crack to primary crack users (see section 1.5 for descriptions of different kinds of crack users).

Primary crack dealers (dealers who mainly or only sell crack) may well use crack themselves but at times of acute and binge use are unlikely to be fully capable of dealing successfully. Some may not be users at all, even if their runners, cooks (those who turn cocaine into crack) or enforcers are.

All crack dealers are likely to use excessive violence to patrol their patch, compete with other sellers and intimidate witnesses and users, especially people who owe money. Crack dealers are:

- More likely to use violence, guns and other weapons than dealers of other drugs – some of this aggression arises from using crack
- Sometimes involved in other crime including:
 - pimping, where drugs are used to subdue and make prostitutes compliant (see **sections 1.6 and 3.7.2** on crack and sex work);
 - handling stolen goods;
 - gun crime associated with supply; and
 - acquisitive crime

People whose houses are taken over for crack supply

It is difficult to categorise these people. Undoubtedly dealers use intimidation to force people into letting them use their properties. This coercion can range from relationships where one person is slightly stronger and more persuasive than the other, right through to bullying, extreme violence and cruelty.

Typically people whose houses have been taken over will have at least one of the following:

- Crack or other drug problems
- Mental health problems
- Drink problems
- Learning difficulties

or are likely to be:

- Elderly
- Young women, often single parents, who have some dependency on the dealer
- Prostitutes

The tenant may know the crack dealer well. They may buy from them, use crack with them or have an ongoing or previous sexual relationship with them, for example, the tenant may have children by the dealer although the main relationship may have ended.

The dealer may gradually spend more time at the residence until eventually they run the house. The tenant may go along with what is happening and may believe that they get something out of it, such as sex, drugs, money or association with powerful people. Ultimately they are powerless and not in control. They may be just irritated by the situation rather than afraid or concerned. They may have personal histories of minor crime, be users themselves or be prostitutes, and may not be morally opposed to what is going on.

In other cases the tenant is gradually seduced into using their property. They may be vulnerable and the dealer or his associates (prostitutes for example) may be seen initially as friends; only later do they realise they have been duped and are now completely powerless.

Careful assessment of the role of the residential tenant or occupier in properties used as crack houses is useful in planning action and in the phase after arrests and closure have been made.

See **sections 3.5.1** Action to prevent crack houses developing, **3.5.2** Action against crack houses using criminal law and **3.5.3** Closing a property using civil powers.

1.5 Crack users

Crack users do not all exhibit the same traits and behaviours. It should be stressed that many users will not exhibit the level of problem behaviour described below, especially where crack is only one of several drugs used or if their use is more occasional.

1.5.1 Combined crack and heroin users

Some – possibly the majority of crack users – have dual dependencies on both crack and heroin. Their crack consumption is usually less than primary crack users (see below) and the heroin can actually tone

down the stimulant or aggressive effects of crack. However, research suggests that those using crack and heroin together will have the highest level of expenditure on drugs and be most likely to be involved in acquisitive crime (Sondhi et al, 2002).

1.5.2 Primary crack users

Primary crack users consume only or mainly crack and tend to have peaks and troughs of acute binge use. Crack use does not cause the same kind of pattern of effect and long-term dependency as heroin. Short-term crack use may have little immediate impact on a user's behaviour but as their

consumption of the drug increases, their acute dependency and need may become more chaotic and desperate. A severely dependent crack user can have acute periods of almost constant craving where normal restraints on their behaviour are relaxed. At the height of a binge, they may be buying crack almost 24 hours a day for several days or even weeks. However, at other times they show little obvious signs of dependency, sometimes going several weeks between purchases.

Primary crack users can exhibit violence, lack of control and occasional psychotic episodes. Most of these episodes cease if crack use is stopped but for some, problems will persist and may require psychiatric treatment. Neither violence nor mental illness will be present for many users with greater control over their use.

1.5.3 Race and ethnic status

The vast majority of crack users in the UK are white. Many of those who use crack in the white community combine their use with other drugs, such as heroin.

Research shows that African–Caribbean communities use crack at the same level or slightly above that of white and Asian communities. It is not clear what percentage of primary crack users are black compared to white users. However, unlike white users, African–Caribbean users are much less likely to use heroin.

Asian communities use all drugs less than white communities. The Asian community shows limited evidence to date of involvement in selling or using, but data on Asian crack use is weaker than that for any other group. Whilst there are few trading links direct from the cocaine producer countries to Asian communities in the UK (which there are for heroin) the patterns of deprivation in some Asian communities provide the environment that could engender the growth of crack problems.

All studies of the use of different drugs by different racial groups are to some degree inaccurate. There is, however, convincing evidence that crack use is disproportionately more damaging and prevalent in African–Caribbean communities, within cities in which the majority of crack users will still be white (Sangster et al 2002).

This is often because African–Caribbean communities are more likely to be located in the poorest and most deprived inner city neighbourhoods, where some types of crack markets are more likely to be located. Because of the trading links to Jamaica, a percentage of sellers are of Jamaican origin or are themselves Jamaican. However, this does not mean that most or all sellers are African–Caribbean.

See **section 3.8** Overcoming community conflict and hostility in black minority ethnic (BME) areas.

1.6 Crime and crack use

1.6.1 Sex work

There is a strong association between crack and sex work. Some of the reasons are:

- Pimps often sell crack
- Crack leaves no track marks and less visible signs of drug use which could put off punters and those who run off-street prostitution
- Sex work provides enough financial return to enable crack to be bought
- Crack helps prostitutes to cope as it is a stimulant drug and reduces inhibitions

See **section 3.7.2** on sex work and prostitution and **section 3.10.1** on reducing demand from prostitutes.

1.6.2 Other crime

Crack users who commit crimes to support their habit, other than sex work, are most likely to be involved in shoplifting and other acquisitive crime. See **section 3.7.1** on acquisitive crime.

Key learning points from section 1

- Crack is trafficked mostly by sea with smaller amounts carried by couriers travelling by air
- Crack is produced close to the street in fairly small amounts which means that the market is dynamic and can respond to change quickly
- Crack is sold on the street, from crack houses and by arrangement via mobile phone
- Crack dealers are particularly aggressive and violent and likely to engage in gun crime
- Crack dependent users may not have long-term dependencies but peaks and troughs of acute binge use
- There is a strong association between crack and sex markets
- Crack has been disproportionately harmful to African–Caribbean communities, but most crack users are white

Further reading

General studies of markets, including crack: Jacobs, B.A., 1999. "Crack to Heroin? Drug Markets and Transition", *British Journal of Criminology* 39:4, pp. 289-294

On middle markets: Hobbs, D., and Pearson, G., 2001. "Middle Market Drug Distribution", *Home Office Research Study 227*, London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate

On sex markets and drugs: May, T., Edmunds, M. and Hough, M., 1999. "Street Business: The Links Between Sex and Drug Markets", *Police Research Series 118*, London: Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit

On market location and relationship to poverty: Lupton, R. *et al*, 2002. "A rock and a hard place: drug markets in deprived neighbourhoods", *Home Office Research Study 240*, London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate

On crack houses: UK: Evans, R., 2002. "Rural Crackdown: What a Rural Force is Doing to Tackle the Menace of Crack Cocaine", *Police Review*, 05/07/02, pp.18-19
US: Geter, R.S., 1994. "Drug User Setting: A Crack House Typology", *International Journal of the Addictions*, 29:8, pp. 10-15

On race and crack: Sangster, D., Shiner, M., Patel, K. and Sheikh, N. (2002). "Delivering drug services to Black and minority ethnic communities", London: Home Office

On offending and crack: Sondhi, A., O'Shea, J. and Williams, T., 2002. "Emerging Findings from the National Arrest Referral Monitoring and Evaluation Programme", DPAS Paper 18, London: Home Office

Preparing for action against crack markets

This section describes the preparation that is needed before action can be taken to disrupt crack markets. This preparation includes: gathering and handling data to understand and map crack markets; putting together a team and partners to plan operations; and engaging with local communities.

2.1 Middle markets

The first stage of preparation means understanding the crack market that you want to act against. The key features of middle markets are described in **section 1.3**. Middle-market suppliers can operate across force boundaries, or just within the boundary of a Basic Command Unit (BCU). They can handle kilo loads or a few grammes. Middle markets can only be fully understood through:

- Enforcement activity and intelligence
- Information supplied by informants or convicted dealers operating at middle-market level

2.1.1 Police intelligence

Police intelligence and information should be gathered: during investigations; during ongoing beat policing; during the course of an operation through debriefs of arrestees at the lower, middle or upper levels; and post conviction where convicted dealers may be prepared to co-operate in describing general market patterns or agree to become sources.

The key sources of police intelligence for middle markets are:

- Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS)

- Street dealers who buy from middle-market dealers
- Importers who sell to middle-market dealers
- Middle-market dealers
- Couriers

Outreach workers and users can usually contribute very little information and almost no concrete intelligence to help police and upstream agencies working at middle-market level. Any knowledge provided by users gets progressively weaker the higher the level of the dealer.

Data should also be routinely sought and held from those detained or interviewed at level 1. Such data must flow up from level 1 sources.

2.1.2 Non-police sources

Upstream agencies

Data from upstream agencies such as Customs, NCIS and NCS can contribute to understanding the relationship between level 3 brokers and level 2 suppliers. This requires formal and informal links with these agencies. These can be facilitated through attachments, secondments etc. Regular sessions where Customs spend time with CID, or where police spend a period at airports or ports, help to build trust and are opportunities for exchange of information.

Drug agencies

Regional data from drug agencies can help track trading routes and provide general trend analysis.

2.2 Street markets

Predicting the number of crack users in an area and the pattern of demand

The size of the community of users is a determining factor in determining the size of the local market. It is difficult to assess the numbers of crack users as in any given area there will be dual-drug crack users and primary crack users. The number of active street prostitutes is one crucial sub-section of these communities. Drug agency data or intelligence may help clarify the size of the user market, its location and its demography, but it is likely that the problem will be underestimated.

Demand for crack is very often a 24-hour process and those involved in selling, using or finding the money to buy crack will work round the clock. The presence of a 24-hour sex market is a very strong indicator of the size of the local crack scene.

The key features of street markets are described in **section 1.4**. Intelligence to understand street markets and to assist operations can come from a much wider set of sources than for middle markets. There is generally more background information about the market that can be used rather than having to rely on police intelligence as the main data source. This extra information is essential for the visual mapping of crack hotspots.

2.2.1 Police intelligence

Beat officers and sector teams can supply relevant information about local markets, sellers, users and buyers, from observation, their local sources and investigating other crimes. It is essential to ensure that all staff are aware of the need for all suitable sources of data to be channelled into the intelligence picture.

Database systems, such as the West Midlands Police Flints system, can put this map together, but it requires the data to

have been acquired in the first place. It can't be stressed enough how important it is to acquire intelligence during the course of interviewing and source handling. Intelligence at this level can help strategically develop operations against suppliers at all levels.

Users and dealers

Most of the published studies of markets have been structured on individual interviews and discussion between researchers and dealers. Asking users how a market works and how they buy is essential. Some will become sources or CHIS (see box: Handling users as sources on p 12).

Dealers can provide the best picture, especially those prepared to act as covert human intelligence sources. Information obtained routinely as part of interviews and debriefs with arrested dealers and those connected with them should be collated to help police identify a map and set of relationships between different sellers.

Users, who may have been arrested for other acquisitive crimes, can identify dealing locations even if they will not name dealers or be prepared to act as sources. It is essential that data is taken about their drug use and where they have obtained drugs. These data sources form an important pool of data for market analysis. Information must be taken at the time of arrest and recorded properly.

Surveillance – covert or overt – can identify street-level sellers and the patterns of selling.

Forensic analysis of seizures – Forensic analysis of drugs or adulterants and packaging can add to the understanding of drug markets and middle-market trafficking routes. Chemical drug profiling, as it becomes more widely available, offers potential to trace supply routes and to link drug dealers. Currently, this is most developed for heroin; however it can also be considered for cocaine and crack.

Table 2.1 Handling users as sources

Users of crack should be able to contribute good information about how drugs are sold generally and how individuals sell their drugs. However, there are pros and cons which are summarised here.

Pros	Cons
They have the best insider knowledge	They may be unreliable
They may be willing to expose certain dealers	They may be easily intimidated
They may have been involved in selling themselves	Their knowledge may be restricted to runners
Their other offences may act as an incentive to become a source	Their addiction and possible mental health problems may weaken their usefulness
They may have nothing to lose	They may be dependent on dealers for more than just drugs
They may be willing to co-operate	They may be anti-police
Opportunities to access treatment or housing may offer incentives	They may require a lot of handling and even witness protection

There is no easy formula. At certain times, certain people may be exactly right, but handling users may be a lot of work for very little gain. For certain types of market however, such as closed settings, they may be essential.

Price and purity data can be useful in estimating market size and levels of dealers arrested. The higher the purity of the drugs held by a dealer, the closer they are to the top of the chain. This may also illustrate general local availability. Lower prices indicate a higher availability of crack and cocaine.

Returns on seized drugs should be made to NCIS and to Forensic Services who can supply regional and national pictures.

CCTV can identify street dealing.

Upstream agency data may complement police data on street markets, although mostly it will be useful for middle-market disruption.

Local sources, including anonymous phone lines, can provide intelligence about individual sellers, and especially locations, such as crack houses, at an early stage in their establishment. All of this relies upon public engagement. However, experience has shown that local anonymous phone lines are only effective for a short amount of time following intensive publicity. Some forces already have agreements with Crimestoppers who are well established and can generate the necessary publicity. It is advisable for the police to work in partnership with them.

Understanding the environment of crack markets: the problem-solving approach

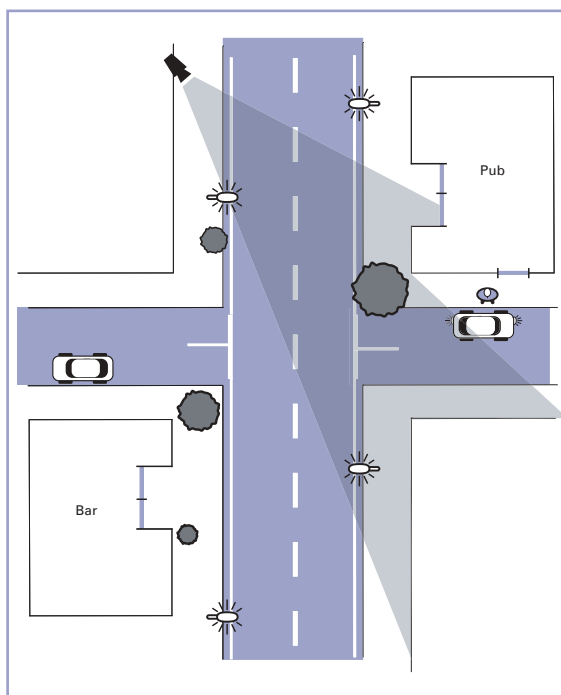
A problem-solving approach analyses the links between the buyer, seller, drug and location to find out:

- How crack is sold
- Who is buying
- Where it is sold
- The reasons why it is able to survive in this location

This kind of analysis needs specialist skills. Non-uniform environmental officers could provide this analysis as operations kick in.

Example

Residents report that drugs are being sold at a street junction of a main road and a side street. Cars arrive and a person comes to meet them. An exchange is made without the buyer leaving their car. The seller only appears when the car pulls up and the car does not have to wait long. The purchase always happens on one side of the junction in the side street rather than on the main road. This is illustrated below.



From this information, the following questions can be answered:

How is this selling being arranged?

Almost certainly the buyer is calling the seller or an accomplice's mobile phone. The buyer is directed to this corner. The seller is either in a residential property or a pub, café or club nearby. If selling occurs

for short periods of time, they may just be hanging around in the street or have a vehicle nearby.

What circumstances make this sales point attractive?

The buyer can arrive by car and doesn't have to get out. Transaction time is limited which reduces hassle to both buyer and seller. The side street probably offers less open surveillance, such as from CCTV cameras on the main road, and may have less lighting. There may be trees or awnings or bushes that obscure CCTV filming there.

The site is:

- Poorly observable
- Has little hassle factor for buyer and seller
- Is a partly closed selling point – people have to know the number
- Used by hard-to-track buyers, contacting the seller by mobile phone

Further questions need to be asked to show how street dealing relates to its environment. Selling stands out more in certain neighbourhoods. Selling happens when there is a market in an area where crack can be sold with minimal impact on the people or businesses living and working nearby. If they are affected, they are more likely to make reports about drug-related activity, which means more likelihood of disruption. Questions to be answered include:

Who is buying?

- What does observation tell us about the buyers?
- What race, age, class, cultural and gender group do they fall into to? Can this be identified?
- How do they know the number to ring?
- Are they known drug users?
- Is there a pattern of crime associated with these buyers?
- Are they local or travelling there to buy?

What impact does this have on the environment?

- Does the main road have shops or businesses and if so how busy are these?
- Are they open at night?
- Is selling done when they are open?
- Is it a 24-hour selling point? Are local people walking by?
- Is it mainly residential property nearby?
- Is there drug debris?
- Is sex sold commercially nearby, on or off street?
- Do only a small percentage of local businesses or residents report that dealing is taking place or is it widely reported?
- Why do they not report? Are they unaware or do they not care?

CASE STUDY

Bristol's Drug Markets: A Market Snapshot (March 2002)

Previous reports concluded that Bristol had a 'free' drugs market, in that there were enough users to allow new dealers to begin dealing unopposed and unnoticed. However, the report *Bristol's Drug Markets: A Market Snapshot* (March 2002) showed that the current market structure in Bristol is more complex. As well as a 'free' market, there are separate 'closed' and 'open' markets.

The 'free' market

In general, drugs sales in pubs and clubs to 'recreational' drug users are part of the 'free' market. Users buy their drugs from friends or from known or untried dealers. The price will vary according to the location and how well the buyer knows the seller, with regular customers expecting to pay less.

The 'closed' market

The 'closed' market mostly supplies 'problematic' users, principally with heroin and crack. Typically, this type of market is controlled and defended by established dealers. In general, the drugs supplied through a 'closed' market are sold only to known or introduced users. Closed markets are therefore difficult to combat through test purchase operations.

With the exception of the three district sectors of Ashley, Cabot and Lawrence Hill,

the whole of Bristol could be described as a 'closed' market, or more accurately a series of 'closed' markets with drugs being sourced by local dealers and then sold on to the local drug user population. Local dealers obtain about 20% of their drugs from outside Bristol, including London, Birmingham or Manchester. However, around 80% is sourced from the 'open' market in the centre of Bristol, where drugs can be obtained conveniently and easily, and at a very low price.

The 'open' market

Bristol's 'open' market is located in Ashley, Cabot and Lawrence Hill, with its centre around the St Paul's area and is controlled by intimidation, violence and fear. It is responsible for supplying heroin and crack, not just to local dealers and users, but also to a large area of the South West and South Wales, making the centre of Bristol the drug hypermarket for the region. As well as supplying 80% of the heroin and crack consumed in Bristol, it is estimated that it also supplies 70% of the heroin and crack used in the Avon and Somerset force area, roughly 30% of both drugs used in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and southern Wales, and 25% of both used in Devon and Cornwall. The supply to Dorset is thought to be via Wiltshire. The market is estimated to have a customer base of 12,500

Other local tradespeople, such as shopkeepers, taxi drivers and others active on the street, can be sources of information. Some may play key roles to support dealing, such as taxi firms, who may transport dealers or drugs.

2.2.2 Non-police professionals

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)

consult the local community about a range of matters including crime, nuisance and antisocial behaviour. This can identify buildings from which drugs are sold, streets with young people hanging around and the size, position and nuisance caused by sex markets.

'problematic' users of Class A drugs. Bristol itself has around 4,500 'problematic' users, or roughly 1% of the city's population, which is in line with the national average.

The rapid growth in Bristol's open market appears to have come about as a result of drugs being readily available at low prices rather than a deliberate strategy by suppliers. However, intelligence suggests that the open market is reaching saturation point, and there have been clear signs of groups attempting to expand their markets to other cities in this region. This can weaken their presence in an area and encourage other groups to attempt to take their current market share, which in turn can lead to violent clashes.

Policing policies in operation within the area of Bristol's open market, including an emphasis on community liaison, are directly responsible for reducing levels of violence. However, drug-related violence can always potentially increase if groups begin competing for territory in response to market saturation.

Assessing the physical environment where selling occurs is essential for the police to understand and continue to plan their response to Bristol's crack markets.

Drug agencies, working with users or young people, can give generalised pictures of market operation which can identify local hotspots and locations, if not specific individuals. They can help suggest how large key consumer groups are – for example highlighting the number of otherwise 'invisible' prostitutes working off street who may be crack users.

However, agencies that provide a helping service to drug users (particularly those from Health backgrounds) may be unwilling to co-operate in providing sensitive data about individuals. There are good reasons for this and they are more likely to have data on users rather than dealers. Work to motivate them to co-operate will require long-term discussion and negotiation. There is no reason why data exchange cannot be agreed once cultural opposition has been overcome. From a data protection perspective, data can be cleaned of its personal indicators and discussion restricted to more general information. For more information on data protection see **section 2.3.3** below.

Housing organisations are one of the best sources for identifying street markets. They can provide information about crack houses and pass on reports about drug-related antisocial behaviour; resident suspicion about neighbours or people hanging around their properties, who may be selling crack at prearranged meetings; and information about where sex markets operate.

See **section 2.3** for how to manage data from these various sources.

2.3 Managing data streams and information

Information and intelligence about drug markets flows from many sources. Once gathered, intelligence needs specific handling and organisation to ensure that it flows and informs action.

2.3.1 Compiling data

Linking different police intelligence can sometimes be a problem. Systems are needed to process, store and link data to map and understand the nature of crack markets.

The key requirement is for intelligence handling capacity. Ideally this should be placed within the local BCU and not solely at beat level. Local data handling capacity

is essential, but it must be closely linked to and compatible with Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) level capacity. This resource should be able to handle intelligence and supporting information from many sources, not just the police.

Once gathered, data should be capable of being displayed in various formats, including map-based systems (such as GIS) showing incident concentration and location which can help plan interventions from various partners. These formats do not release sensitive information, so that they can be shared beyond police circles.

The intelligence picture should also be compatible with broader force-wide intelligence and upstream requirements. The NCIS may have a key role in compiling regional or indeed local intelligence pictures and threat assessments, especially at level 2 within the National Intelligence Model. Their database on price and Forensic Science Services (FSS) data on purity are useful sources for market understanding. These products should be readily available and included in any market analysis or report produced for planning purposes.

2.3.2 Intelligence handlers

Intelligence handlers need not be police officers but need the right skills, aptitude and outlook. They must know how to scan multiple data sources and specific police crime databases and be able to follow leads.

2.3.3 Data protection

There are data protection issues when using data from other agencies. There are various ways that data from potentially sensitive sources can be gathered that does not breach data protection protocols. A useful Home Office guide available from the Government office for the East Midlands Home Office team (tel 0115 971 2733) sets out these methods. For

example, certain data cleaning software can strip data of its sensitive elements but retain its usefulness for intelligence purposes.

2.4 The team and its partners

Tackling crack supply is fundamentally a police matter, supported by partners who complement police activity by gathering additional data, using civil powers or reducing demand.

How the team is put together is a local organisational decision. The police skills needed in any team might include:

- Intelligence handling and assembly
- Communications skills
- Community liaison
- Financial investigation
- Problem solving
- Crime environment analysis
- Undercover skills and credibility (for test purchase)
- Equipment handling skills (for surveillance)

Not all of these are going to be available at BCU level and capacity may need to be brought in from force-wide or specialist units.

The following non-police skills will also be required:

- Housing management
- Management of antisocial behaviour
- Outreach and detached work, especially with young people
- Arrest referral skills for arrested users

Partners who may also contribute include:

- Neighbourhood or Community wardens
- Traffic wardens
- Caretakers
- Housing management staff and their legal teams

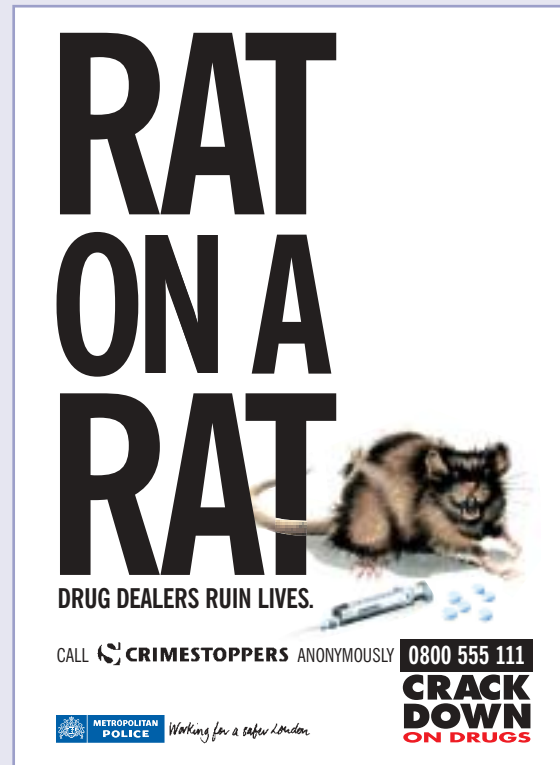
CASE STUDY

The Metropolitan Police's 'Rat on a Rat' campaign was relaunched in 2001. The advertising campaign, which supports Operation Crackdown – the Met's anti-drug initiative, followed a similar drive in 1999, which caught the public's imagination and helped generate more than 2,000 calls to the Crimestoppers unit at New Scotland Yard.

The information gathered from the advertising campaign assists operational activity in targeting drug dealers and those who supply dealers.

The Rat on a Rat message was displayed on perimeter fence panels at football stadia, in football programmes and on roadside poster sites. The message was displayed in washrooms in pubs and clubs, and also on beer mats. Local press, ethnic press and radio stations were also targeted by the campaign.

Calls received led to 300 arrests and the recovery of £27,144,491 worth of drugs.



2.5 Resident information and support

Involving residents is not just about gathering intelligence; it is the cornerstone of effective practice against drug markets. Local people need a sense of being engaged in policing and other action against crack markets. This helps deal with potential resistance and disorder that can ensue from drugs raids. It is essential to engage the trust of residents and provide multiple channels of communication for them to use.

Reasons why local people may not trust the police with information include:

- A belief that the police will not respond to or prioritise calls from their area

- A hostility to the police arising from local norms and values, some of which may be cultural
- Fear of reprisal from dealers
- A culture of not grassing
- Not knowing how to pass on information

These attitudes can be addressed in the following ways:

- Putting the request for information through local people who are trusted by the community
- Creating confidence with high-profile, communicated action
- Providing witness protection
- Educating young people in schools to overcome local norms and values in the case of serious crime
- Ensuring the police are visibly working in

the community manner. They should have extensive local contacts, visibility and track record of delivery, providing local services for young people, local police stations and openness to local people

- Making anonymous telephone lines available
- Having identifiable senior officers (who are expected to stay in the post for the long term) who will participate in the community in public meetings and hold surgeries with community groups

2.5.1 Groups that promote community engagement

Citizens' juries

A citizens' jury is a panel of local residents set up to comment on local policies and how the police or other bodies go about their work.

For: They can help organisations such as the police to communicate what they are doing and can make residents feel involved. They can help assess performance, for example, juries can give feedback on the

effectiveness of police or local authority work – see Newark case study.

Against: They may not help prepare the ground for acceptance of how market operations work. They can be cumbersome, expensive and time consuming.

Residents panels

For: Face-to-face consulting can build real trust and confidence.

Against: The group involved may not be representative, or be out of touch with the real community. They may be seen as the usual great and good who always get asked. Panels do not engage the community as a whole.

Outreach work

For: Outreach work reaches hard to reach groups such as users and young people. It is visible and engages people.

Against: It is costly and there are personal safety issues for researchers.

CASE STUDY

This case study provides a possible template for community engagement, which can be used for a variety of community issues, including crack.

On Thursday 25 May 2002, the Newark and Sherwood District Council Waste Management Team were in the dock answering questions about recycling, street cleaning and rubbish collection. This was the first of a series of Citizens' Juries to be held this year as part of a fundamental review of the services the Council delivers to people in the District.

The Waste Management and Transport Manager led the proceedings by introducing the service and gave factual and statistical information. The 12 volunteers on the jury

were a cross section of members of the public and other representatives including a Parish Council Clerk, District Councillors, a representative from Keep Britain Tidy, contractors involved in delivery, an officer from another Council and representatives of service users.

After a thorough questioning session in the morning, the jury discussed their recommendations for the service. After a full hour of deliberation, members of the jury had agreed a total of 19 recommendations and presented these to the Waste Management Team. All recommendations were taken seriously both by committee and the team reviewing the provision of the waste management services.

Integrating police action with other initiatives (with example)

A neighbourhood with a crack market is a neighbourhood with other social problems. The following example shows why police action needs to be planned alongside the work of other local regeneration strategies that help neighbourhoods to overcome wider social problems.

Kirkside (fictional name) is a deprived outercity estate with a large unemployed young population who come from families who have not worked in two generations. Policing is difficult, as resident confidence in them is low. Burglary and joy riding, alongside general disorder, antisocial behaviour and vandalism are rife.

Much of the housing managed by the council is in poor condition and the estate has a high number of teenage single parents. There are few local community or youth facilities.

Kirkside has a thriving drug scene, with houses occasionally used as crack houses but most drugs are sold by runners (some as young as 11) at pre-arranged meets, organised by mobile phone. Sellers and buyers are both resident on the estate.

Police intelligence could soon identify the sellers. Test purchase could gather evidence, backed by covert surveillance. Operations could be mounted against dealers' houses to seize drugs and other stolen goods, weapons and money.

Questions that should be asked:

- What DAT plans are there for extended treatment services for the estate? When will they take effect? How could they support the police operation?
- What GP prescribing or shared care schemes are there in development?
- What is the local authority doing about community facilities, housing improvement, local street lighting, CCTV in the shopping centre, youth clubs etc?
- Are there any plans for estate re-design or demolition that will affect the places drugs are sold in?
- Are there any plans for housing allocation policy changes?

These and other factors need to be considered when planning operations.

This does not mean giving precise details of operations out to sources of potential leaks. It does mean that police action should be informed by what else is happening in an area. This needs to be built into the planning stage of an operation. Telling the DAT the day before an operation starts is of no use. They need time to plan. Telling them several months previously that the Kirkside estate is an area which actions will be planned at some point in the future, dates of which will be advised closer to the date, is much more practical. This goes against police instincts but it may be the right way to proceed.

2.6 Planning against community disorder

In the crack context, the potential for violent disorder as a reaction to police action is a very real prospect. This is particularly the case where the right community liaison has not taken place and there is not widespread confidence and support in the community for policing.

There should be capacity for impact analysis to identify:

- Specific triggers for disorder
- Specific locations where reaction might be centred
- Particular individuals or groups who might be central to any activity
- Any groups who may choose to incite activity – for example, the BNP

In practice good community liaison should enable local community representatives to understand that there is a need for local action, and that it may happen at any time. When it does occur, they should have an overview of the likely tactics and types of intervention that may be applied. For example, when street crack sellers hold drugs in their mouths, they have to be held and the drugs manually released (see box: Handling crack-related risk of disorder, p.45). Local communities are much less likely to react if they understand the purpose of a range of police tactics. It is unlikely that this groundwork will affect the effectiveness of a specific operation or give away its time and location.

2.7 The media

A proactive media strategy is useful in tackling any form of crack market, for the following reasons:

- It encourages a belief in the community that something is being done
- It stimulates community intelligence
- It reassures elected members
- It helps destabilise dealers
- It offsets later media criticism and labelling
- It helps reduce involvement in using drugs as well as selling
- It creates a negative impact of dealing and offsets negative role models
- It helps communicate the reason for certain tactics

For these reasons any major initiative should be supported from the start with an active media campaign. Press officers should be fully involved at an early stage.

Key learning points from section 2

Preparation for action to tackle crack markets requires:

- Market mapping using a problem-solving approach, which identifies how drugs are sold and analyses the factors that sustain and support that method of selling
- Capacity and systems for handling and mapping multi-agency information
- Team capacity with a wide range of police and non-police skills
- Working in the context of broader, multi-agency approaches to tackling the problems of an area
- Neighbourhood community consultation

Further reading

On how to map markets:

www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/im00.htm

www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits3/dr/dr030202.htm

Further resources for planning and engaging communities:

“Winning the Race: Embracing Diversity: Consolidation of Police Community and Race Relations”, H.O. Publications, 2000

Data report from East Midlands:

“Data Exchange and Crime Analysis for Crime and Disorder Partnerships”, H.O. Guide, 2002

Action to tackle markets

The previous sections have focused on the dynamics of crack markets and how action against these can be planned. This section looks at action that the police can then take and the practical difficulties involved in tackling crack markets of different types. It also looks at the role of partners who can help with demand reduction or use civil powers to disrupt crack markets.

3.1 Work to stop cocaine getting to the UK

The routes by which cocaine is imported to the UK and converted into crack are summarised in **section 1.1**. The UK Government supports and assists with work along this route to:

- Reduce the production of cocaine in the producer countries
- Disrupt trafficking along the routes of transmission, including through handling countries
- Intercept drugs and traffickers at UK ports of entry

The Concerted Inter-Agency Drug Action group (CIDA) brings together the key law enforcement agencies to devise work across these aims.

Cocaine is produced in any quantity in only three countries in the world: Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. Cocaine is imported to the UK and turned into crack just above street level – see **section 1** for details of this process. Action against cocaine is concentrated on producer and transit countries.

3.1.1 Producer countries

Action to tackle the growing of coca (the plant from which cocaine is produced) includes:

- Offering alternatives to growers to encourage them to grow other crops
- Development aid to communities which produce coca, to reduce incentives and the desperation that encourages the growing of coca for conversion to cocaine
- Destroying crops

Other disruption involves infiltrating gangs involved in producing cocaine and intercepting their supplies before they reach ports or airstrips. Much of this action is carried out by the army and police of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, with assistance and support from the UK and especially the US governments. The UK secret service and Customs staff are deployed to gather intelligence on supplier gangs to help local customs to intercept at points of export; and more specifically, to intercept cargoes after they have left the producer countries.

Drugs pass through many hands on their way to the UK. Therefore intelligence gathered on importers in Colombia is useful to upstream agencies – the Security Services, Customs and the NCS – but it is of less value to police operating in the UK, because there is such a remote relationship to the people selling on the street. Police in the UK will interview people who have only recently acquired the drug, probably from someone else who bought the drug, either as users or dealers, within the UK itself. The UK police have little reason to engage in dialogue or co-operation with their Bolivian, Peruvian or Colombian colleagues

as they have very little to share. However, it is a different matter when it comes to transit countries.

3.1.2 Transit countries

About 40 tonnes of cocaine are thought to be targeted for the UK annually. The majority is trafficked in bulk shipments brought by sea to the European mainland, then brought through the channel ports. A much smaller percentage goes through transit countries – mainly Jamaica and West African countries, especially Nigeria.

We do not know exactly what percentage of the cocaine that is turned into crack in the UK comes from either the Jamaican or the European route. It is almost certain, however, that the majority comes via the European route, but it is only the latter stages of this supply chain that may become known to the local police through interviews of arrestees. However, there is clearly scope for close work with Dutch or Belgian law enforcement colleagues.

A complicating factor is the presence of Jamaican dealers in the UK. Whilst Jamaicans are overly represented amongst street dealers in the UK, especially in the south of England, this does not mean they are selling crack derived from cocaine that was trafficked via Jamaica.

Working with the Jamaican authorities

Cocaine trafficked through Jamaica has a short supply chain. Street sellers may have close connections with those who organise couriers. Therefore action to disrupt trafficking from Jamaica is of much more relevance to police in the UK than action to disrupt trafficking from producer countries.

There is scope for communication, intelligence sharing and joint work between the Jamaican authorities and the police in the UK. Through this, UK police forces can gather valuable intelligence on specific dealers who may be involved in transit countries.

The UK authorities work closely with their Jamaican counterparts to train them in disruption and interception and screening out couriers at airports. This involves a variety of strategies, including:

- Ionscan, which detects cocaine on the skin and belongings
- Borderguard, a computerised passport identification service linking international Customs records
- Baggage X-ray facilities
- Educational campaigns to raise awareness of the UK penalties for smuggling, aimed at would-be couriers

These strategies act as a deterrent as traffickers are much less likely to get their cargo through.

UK police can also:

- Attach officers to UK or Jamaican airports, identifying shared targets
- Liaise with Jamaican police and organise exchange visits
- Help with training

Working with upstream agencies

Police data about crack trafficked through Jamaica is of value to upstream agencies and vice versa. For example, foreign nationals detained by police at level 1 should be carefully interviewed for the data they hold on importing routes. The supply chain may be shorter or more flexible, so that local police and upstream agencies may be pursuing the same or closely related targets. There is a clear requirement for close co-operation between domestic forces and their colleagues in National Crime Squad and Customs, actively supported or delivered through NCIS.

In areas of Britain where direct importers are located – predominantly London, Kent and Merseyside – there is co-operation on a routine basis between forces and upstream agencies dealing with these organised gangs, as local forces can gather information about their operations.

This highlights the vital need to manage

intelligence well throughout all levels of policing.

3.2 Disrupting middle markets

Disrupting crack markets that operate above street level is essentially about systems of handling intelligence, processes for identifying targets, co-operation between forces or command units and resources available across force areas or between forces.

Middle markets are sometimes tackled by beat policing. Officers may stumble across the transfer of large quantities of drugs in the course of routine policing. However, disrupting middle markets is not functionally part of sectoral or beat policing. The main way to achieving middle-market disruption is through intelligence.

Most of the resources required to disrupt middle markets need to be structured around the gathering and management of intelligence. Operational capacity must include surveillance capacity, as this is likely to be extensively used once targets have been identified. Sources are also likely to require some degree of management-handling capacity within the middle-market team itself.

There may also be a requirement for additional technical facilities such as wide use of ANPR (automated number plate recognition) and mobile phone interception facilities.

The role of upstream data, the handling role of NCIS, and the development of good intelligence flowing up from level 1, cannot be understated. In practice the development of level 2 capacity is about effective functioning of Regional Tasking and Co-ordination structures developed through the National intelligence Model, but to do this requires an intelligence structure at level 1 that obtains the right information from sources and suppliers that feeds the level 2 picture.

3.2.1 Identifying middle-market suppliers

Study of the behaviour, contacts, lifestyle and circumstances of middle-market suppliers can gradually build up a picture of their activity. Some dealers thought to be operators at the lower level may well emerge as higher-level operators through study of their apparent wealth and lifestyle. Source data will help to identify specific handling of drugs and surveillance will confirm the offences being carried out.

It is possible that some middle-market suppliers will diversify and trade in other commodities, such as weapons, cigarettes and alcohol or be involved in human trafficking. Some will also have considerable records for other serious crime, other than drugs. Intelligence assembly should reflect this.

3.2.2 Disruption tactics

Arrests will normally occur through pre-planned raids to specific locations based on intelligence that drugs are being held or transferred and that other assets and equipment are on site. Opportunistic observation and area policing methods will not apply to this level of criminality.

Operations should be structured with a view to maximum disruption. Arresting suppliers or the seizure of the drugs need not always be the intended outcome for each operation. For example if a substantial sum of cash can be obtained, a raid may be worth carrying out even if there are no drugs to be seized or no major dealer who can be arrested. This may alert a main dealer that they are under surveillance. This could be interpreted as an operational weakness in chasing assets rather than individuals, but in practice causing the dealer to change their tactics may in itself be a substantial outcome. The benefits of simply seizing assets in lieu of 'bodies' needs to be carefully examined in each case, and should not be routine, but it can

help with disruption. See **section 3.2.5** on asset recovery.

Once again, the value of detailed debriefs of all those arrested is essential for the combined intelligence picture that underpins future operations of this type.

3.2.3 Links with other forces and upstream agencies

Many middle-market operations rely on the sharing and pooling of intelligence across force boundaries and with upstream law enforcement agencies. The right systems, structures and protocols that allow information exchange are an essential part of this.

Within policing, tackling level 2 crack markets is very closely linked with the level 2 of the National Intelligence Model (NIM). Cross-force operations require that regional Tasking and Co-ordination groups effectively address higher-level supply and receive intelligence on which to plan police activity.

The increasing focus on delivery of policing at level 1 within a BCU means that some forces do not have enough force-wide intelligence and operational capacity to work at force level, let alone across force boundaries. The Home Office has been funding an experimental cross-force middle-market team in the West Midlands region. An evaluation of that operation's early period of work is published by the Home Office in 2003. Other forces are strongly encouraged to work collectively in their regions to establish regional capacity of this type.

3.2.4 Foreign nationals

The high percentage of foreign nationals working at all levels as dealers requires the police to liaise closely with Customs and Immigration officials. Checks on immigration status should be routinely

undertaken and a decision made as to whether to charge or pass to the Immigration service, or both. Obtaining fingerprint records from Immigration can be difficult as the Immigration Service only takes these for information, not criminal purposes; yet they are useful in determining the status of individuals apprehended – the same person can reappear with a different identity. Sometimes details cannot be obtained from the Immigration Services in the time that a suspect can be held.

Building close links to these services is essential and over time can greatly assist detection and identification of foreign nationals. Attaching officers to major points of entry to the UK, such as Heathrow, are very useful. Officers not only get to know Customs staff and procedures, they identify individuals who appear at other times.

Attaching police officers from supplier countries to UK forces can also be useful. For example, experienced Jamaican police officers can readily identify Jamaicans operating in the UK from their personal knowledge of these individuals in Jamaica.

3.2.5 Asset tracking and recovery

Recovery of assets is possibly the single best way of dismantling criminal gangs. Raids and operations may tackle lower-level traffickers, couriers and runners, but tracking the assets of those who were not apprehended is a 'remote' way of controlling the operations of gangs. Specialists in asset recovery and tracking should be part of any middle-market team, and from an early stage in the operation part of the surveillance should include asset tracking in a non-intrusive way. Alongside operations to seize drugs and apprehend suspects, action should commence to obtain assets and compel forfeiture. This should include assets seized at point of

arrest and other hidden assets. This process should of course run alongside criminal prosecution and it should not be seen as an easy option against those who cannot be pursued through criminal prosecution. In time the Asset Recovery Agency will take on the role of pursuing assets after conviction, and in appropriate circumstances without conviction for supply. All financial investigators used by police forces should have received their accredited training.

However, above and beyond this, taking out large amounts of cash in transit, even where only a minor courier or handler is carrying them, is an essential part of disrupting middle-market suppliers.

3.2.6 Multiple hits

There is a strong advantage in trying to synchronise action at level 1 and 3 with middle-market work. It means co-operation and revealing information that may get leaked because more people are involved. It is also resource heavy. However, Customs or NCS action at level 3 against people thought to be suppliers of level 2, combined with some street-level enforcement, can deliver a substantial blow to dealing networks and haul not just drugs but also a great deal of intelligence. This works best where dealers live or are importing. Otherwise there needs to be extensive negotiation and liaison with other forces. In London, Kent and Merseyside, or indeed any port environment, this has proved to be a good tactic.

3.3 Disrupting street-level markets

Different types of street-level crack selling require different kinds of police action. Tactics that work with street selling may not work with crack houses. Table 3.1 shows a range of police and civil actions that can be usefully applied against different markets. Action against the main ways in which crack is sold at retail level – that is open street markets, crack houses and ‘arrange-to-meet’ sales – are explored in more detail in following sections.

Factors which apply to all types of activity to disrupt drug markets

Forensic analysis

Forensic analysis of drugs or adulterants and packaging can add to the understanding of street-level markets. See **section 2.2.1** for more details.

Price and purity

Price and purity data of seizures from all sources should be obtained and logged. Returns should be made to NCIS and to Forensic Services. They are vital for broader regional analyses.

Weighing seizures

Recording the volume of seizures of any drugs, including crack, is crucial. With small quantities – individual rocks for example – sending them for forensic analysis may mean that the actual weight is difficult to assess. In all cases seizures should be weighed at the station before forensic analysis and then again after that is complete, and all amounts properly recorded and witnessed. Noting the exact number of rocks is also useful.

Table 3.1 A summary of methods of disruption

Type of selling	Method of disruption likely to have effect	Considerations
Proactive street sellers approaching people	Visible street patrols Passive dogs Stop and search Jump-ons – sudden hold on to suspected dealers to retrieve drugs before they are swallowed CCTV – fixed and mobile Environmental work Section 18 searches	Visible uniformed (and non-uniformed) police presence has a valuable role in disrupting street sales, but less impact in achieving prosecution. It has preventative value
Runners delivering drugs to buyers who have arranged to meet	Visible street patrols Stop and search CCTV – fixed and mobile Covert surveillance Test purchase Source intelligence Environmental work Section 18 searches	As above Source information is more useful against the often unseen main dealer for whom runners work
Prostitutes providing drugs to consumers – ‘punters’ – on the street	CCTV Criminal controls on prostitutes Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) Section 18 searches Street and Environmental work Demand reduction initiatives	Intimate search provision is required The removal, discouragement and inconveniencing of punters is useful

Table 3.1 A summary of methods of disruption (continued)

Type of selling	Method of disruption likely to have effect	Considerations
Crack houses	Surveillance Warrants and raids Test purchase Civil controls – eviction Source intelligence Vulnerable tenant support schemes/treatment Drug dogs	Test purchase may not be safe as officers may be expected to use the drug
House-based crack sales	Surveillance Source intelligence Test purchase Warrants and raids Civil controls	As above
All	Work with Immigration Service and Customs re foreign nationals in the UK Presumptive drug sample testing ¹	Indicates the number of foreign nationals involved in crack markets Presumptive testing enables people to be taken straight to court and not bailed pending analysis

¹ This refers to the process of rapid testing of samples of drugs seized for the purposes of determining bail.

CASE STUDY

For a general overview, the Project Linctus case study summarises some of the steps which dealers take to develop crack sales in new locations and try to dominate the market in competition with existing sellers.

From December 2000, the NCIS cocaine Intelligence Unit were involved in Project Linctus which researched the UK crack market. Much of this research involved looking at a certain pattern of crack dealing which can best be termed as being operated by Crack Dealing Groups (CDGs). This term is designed to describe criminals who have cultural or familial ties with the West Indies region or its peoples. These were chosen because of the volume of evidence from many forces highlighting their participation in this type of criminality. It has to be stressed that this is not an indication that these criminals originate solely from the West Indies, but the term is used to refer to those groups, irrespective of ethnicity, who associate themselves with the Caribbean, and involve themselves in this type of criminality.

During the course of this research a number of indicators were identified that were present at different stages of emerging or established crack markets dominated by CDGs.

Below is a list of these indicators, in the general chronological order that they often occur. This list is in no way definitive, and may not necessarily follow the specific chronological order in each instance. It is intended as a template of the type of incidents/crimes that may be encountered when a group of CDGs target an area to infiltrate the drugs market.

The following list is being further developed and prepared for publication in a relevant NCIS National Intelligence Model document, for dissemination to all police forces.

- Identification of new markets following market saturation elsewhere
- Local criminals start to associate with CDGs
- First reports of new sources and increased availability of crack in local market
- Increased seizures of crack locally
- First reports/notification of potential crack houses
- Identification and use of sex workers by CDGs
- Taking over the homes of vulnerable people
- Awareness of the existence of one principal figure within the CDGs group, *sometimes female*
- Utilisation of existing heroin market to introduce crack
- Low prices for crack until dependency established, followed by price increases
- Violence and intimidation is used to maintain market domination
- Arrests of principals leads to gaps in law enforcement intelligence concerning replacements
- Rise in the number of assaults within the general population
- Increase in volume crime and kindred offences involving fraud
- Signs of social/financial costs appear *Social services/drug rehabilitation schemes etc seeing rise in addicts and effects of addiction*
- Evidence of activity of CDGs around nightclubs, bars and pubs
- CDGs start to take over other criminal activity, e.g. the supply of firearms, ripoff robberies etc
- Near fatal assaults/murders
- Exchange of gunfire with law enforcement

3.3.1 Witness intimidation

Witness intimidation is known to be a particularly prevalent feature in cases of domestic violence, racial crime, homophobic crime, harassment, repeat victimisation, sexual offences and antisocial behaviour. Intimidation is also known to occur in areas more typically associated with high rates of crime, such as inner cities, high-density population areas and areas where co-operation between communities and police has traditionally been poor.

Speaking Up For Justice (Home Office, June 1998) suggested a number of initiatives for:

- Tackling witness intimidation within community safety strategies
- Developing multi-agency community-based schemes to encourage and support intimidated witnesses and/or those in fear of coming forward to report crime and
- Good practice guidelines for using professional witnesses

Positive action should be taken in cases of intimidation and harassment of witnesses. Police can exercise powers under section 51 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. In addition, in partnership, local authorities and the police may be able to use ASBOs to combat witness intimidation.

Key indicators of a witness intimidation problem, derived from local knowledge and information from Local Authority/Police Crime and Disorder Audits, are:

- Housing problems, such as large numbers of requests from tenants to move away from particular housing estates
- Residents experiencing difficulties obtaining insurance cover
- Harassment of ethnic minority groups

Best practice guidance on developing a local strategy for witness support schemes can be found in the Anti-Social Behaviour tool-kit released by the Home Office in

January 2001, available at: www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits

3.4 Disrupting open street markets

Disrupting street markets requires intelligence-led, problem-solving policing. Because they are open, street markets are quite susceptible to disruption, but it takes time, sustained work and attention to detail.

The police need to:

- Understand who is buying there
- Understand why the physical place encourages sales
- Understand the people selling
- Know which commodities are being sold

A wide range of international evidence suggests that a combination of the following will substantially reduce street selling and visibility:

- High-profile policing
- Jump-ons, where a suspected dealer is holding the drugs in their mouth and a formal approach will mean the evidence is swallowed and no charge can be brought. Hence the moment of apprehension has to be swift and decisive, ideally using several officers (see box on handling crack-related risk of disorder: street markets on page 45)
- CCTV
- Environmental work
- Test purchase

These approaches are summarised in Table 3.1. **Section 3.6** below on 'arrange-to-meet' markets covers a range of issues which also apply to open street markets.

3.4.1 Aims of action

These approaches are aimed at low-level dealers and couriers, many of whom are not major players and may be easily expendable. Using this as the only technique in seriously affected areas will lead to impressive arrest figures, but its main purpose is to:

- Establish law and order
- Discourage the trade more generally
- Reassure the local community
- Gather intelligence
- Discourage those who might see selling drugs as something that attracts no penalties
- Reduce related crime

Media exposure is necessary to reinforce these purposes. A proactive media strategy can help reinforce the desired message and raise understanding of the need and the tactics required.

See **section 2.7** on using the media.

3.4.2 Outcomes

The main results of this activity may be:

- A move to closed sales
- Displacing the market to another location – see **section 3.9**
- A reduction of visible street dealing
- A reduction in associated crime

The downside of this type of work, other than expense, is that it may require a lot of people to be stopped, only a percentage of whom will be offenders or will possess any drugs. In practical terms the volume of seizures may not be great. The continual police presence and action may also lead to community unrest – see **section 2.6** Planning against community disorder.

It is easy to go and find someone on the street who is selling. However arresting them, and doing little else, will not substantially disrupt the market.

Further action will be needed to prevent regrowth, and must be accompanied by other work to tackle demand and to address causative factors, including changing the immediate physical neighbourhood, covered in **section 3.6**.

3.5 Disrupting crack houses

As stated in the Introduction, the law relating to closure of crack houses is

currently under review and additional powers may be introduced in due course. Until this is the case, this section sets out the current position.

The characteristics of crack houses are defined in **section 1.4.3**. The problems that crack houses pose for effective police action are:

- They are usually closed places so sending undercover officers in for test purchase is very dangerous
- They are not quickly closed by use of housing law
- The extended network of dealers means they often close then reopen or move somewhere else
- Crack house dealers take wild risks that other dealers don't, because they know they are only going to be in business for a short time
- There are sometimes guns on the premises
- They are often fortified and difficult to break into

With these problems, it's easy to feel that nothing can be done, but there are good examples of effective action to close crack houses.

Note: The civil and housing powers described here can also be applied to houses used for crack supply, which are not strictly crack houses.

3.5.1 Action to prevent crack houses developing

Police partners can reduce the number of properties likely to become crack houses. As shown in **section 1.4.3**, many crack houses are places where vulnerable tenants are gradually bullied into a position where they are completely powerless to prevent the sale of crack. Agencies such as the local authority and housing associations can ensure that tenants at risk in areas of high incidence get the kind of help they need, including education and treatment.

Wardens, caretakers and groups such as Neighbourhood Watch can also report houses which may be becoming used as crack houses, or where vulnerable tenants are in particular need. This won't stop it happening but may reduce the number of properties likely to be taken over.

Closely related to this is good, hands-on local area housing stock management. This is about ensuring properties are sensibly allocated, well managed, secured and maintained. Housing organisations should look at and implement *Drug misuse in rented housing, a good practice guide* (Home Office and ODPM, 2002) which gives best practice in managing housing stock to avoid drug-related problems. One option for housing providers is to use introductory, shorthold or starter tenancies to those at risk, which will enable the property to be recovered more easily if a crack house develops.

3.5.2 Action against crack houses using criminal law

Enforcement action should aim to:

- Arrest the people involved in selling
- Recover drugs
- Seize other items and assets
- Disrupt the crack house and prevent dealers from returning
- Stop that property being used
- Reduce related crime

Not all of these may be possible to achieve at the same time. Closing the property can only happen if the tenant or owner chooses or is able to – if necessary using civil powers, see **section 3.5.3** below.

In most cases criminal action under the Misuse of Drugs Act will be enough to stop that premises being used as a crack house. The dealers may just move on somewhere else.

To allow for a warrant to be issued and to justify the expense and risk of breaking into a property, it is necessary to gain

intelligence and evidence from neighbours, sources, landlords or beat police. Covert human intelligence sources offer the best intelligence that the house is being used for crack sales, alongside external surveillance and reliable local information that will not tip-off the occupants. Covert surveillance inside the property is another option, although not easy to achieve.

Test purchase

Test purchase is very difficult within crack houses. Such houses are usually 'closed' and users only admitted on recommendation. They may have to smoke some crack to get in. Many officers will not fit the image of a crack user through age, or in some circumstances, race.

Use of corroborative identification evidence

Identifying people leaving and entering properties where they have sold drugs to undercover police officers has been successful in some cases. It can be necessary as light levels inside such properties may not be good enough to film covertly during a test purchase transaction. In some cases courts have accepted subsequent external covert surveillance of the individuals leaving or entering the property as evidence.

Risk assessment

A proper risk assessment should be completed before a raid takes place.

Section 3.8 on minimising community response to action against a crack house should also be consulted.

There may be several people in the house, including vulnerable tenants and possibly children. Breaking in will be difficult and must be accomplished quickly for maximum surprise and before drugs can be disposed of. External drains could be blocked to seize any drugs that are disposed of down toilets or sinks.

The house may well be fortified and guns and other weapons present, although normally guns are kept in other locations

and called up for specific purposes. In practice, many crack houses where guns are expected to be found, do not prove to contain them. Nonetheless, where the intelligence picture warrants it, it may be necessary to have the right firearms response available. This issue affects the timing, the ability to conduct simultaneous raids and costs.

Charges

The range of offences with which a tenant or dealer can be charged will depend on what is found and the circumstances. The evidence acquired during a crack house raid may not enable successful prosecution of the dealer – for example the occupants of houses may all throw their drugs down so that no specific individuals can be charged with selling as opposed to use. Therefore it is important for the raid itself to be supported by other evidence obtained prior to the raid from sources, surveillance or test purchase.

If there is a tenant who is knowingly allowing selling on the premises they can additionally be charged under section 8 (b) of the Misuse of Drugs Act.

It is important to try to press charges against the whole team of sellers occupying a crack house (if evidence allows) and to encourage the courts to withhold bail. These dealers will return otherwise and may be selling again from the same property within hours.

Bail

Courts may well grant bail to suspects held by the police and accordingly they may be back on the street selling drugs again within hours of release. Proactive work with the courts can be useful in encouraging them to recognise that release on bail in such circumstances will only lead to a resumption of selling. When specific cases arise, a strong case should be mounted to encourage the court to remand the individual into custody in view of the

seriousness of the offence and the harm they pose to the local community.

The property

The tenant and other people may want to return to the property. Ideally they should be offered other accommodation, rather than returning to the premises. Accomplices may well return, or even the dealer, if bailed. It is best if the property can be promptly closed and boarded up – see **section 3.5.3** on use of civil law – but this cannot happen if the tenant is unwilling. Even then the dealer may well seek to re-occupy the building so it should be boarded up securely. It may help to paste notices on the house to the effect that the property has been shut – clearly communicating to dealers and to the community that firm action has been taken.

Vulnerable people

It is important that arrangements are made for any vulnerable person to receive help from an appropriate agency and that they are not exposed to risk again in the short term or later. Dealers may try to take over their property again. This is particularly important where the person has some sort of relationship to the person, typically a sexual one. It is all too easy for the cycle to repeat itself. For this reason, the involvement of helping professionals may be appropriate. They may come from drug agencies if the person involved was a user, but other agencies may be equally appropriate, such as Social Services.

Users

The arrests may also sweep up several users. A decision will have to be made as to whether criminal charges are brought against them. Ideally most of these should be referred to an arrest referral worker and thus into treatment. Some may have mental health problems and may be known to mental health services. You should prepare these services so that they can handle these individuals straightaway.

You may wish to consider making post-action treatment or counselling services available in the local area for the period following the raid. See **section 3.10** on reducing demand.

3.5.3 Closing a property using civil powers

Civil powers should be used alongside the criminal powers available. They should be seen as part of one integrated range of powers that can be used, in sequence, to deal with specific crack problems.

Once intelligence suggests that a crack house is operating, the owner's role should be identified. They may be:

- A private individual who is connected to or tolerates the selling
- A private individual or social landlord who lets the property and has no idea if somebody is selling from the premises

The dealer could be:

- The owner
- A tenant with limited security of tenure
- A tenant with security of tenure
- An illegal sub-tenant
- A squatter
- Someone who has taken over a house where there is a tenant

Owners who sell or permit selling

There are currently no powers available to close a residential property for the selling of drugs. Owners who sell can be acted against on criminal grounds, both for selling or for knowingly allowing selling, under Section 8 (b) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. However, criminal powers against a dealer do not currently allow a property to be closed.

Owners who are unaware that tenants are selling drugs

Owners with tenants who sell can be advised that illegal activity is happening, and as a result the owner may tell them to leave or seek possession of the property. If they don't leave, the owner can start to

obtain possession of the property through the civil courts. This process will alert the dealer to what is happening and therefore should only really occur once action under the criminal law has taken place or been put in train, or been ruled out for lack of evidence.

In the latter case, a civil action for breach of tenancy leading to possession will achieve the aim of closing the property, even if criminal charges against an individual cannot be brought.

As above, if the landlord does not act, they can be advised that under Section 8 (b) of the Misuse of Drugs Act it is a criminal offence to knowingly allow the supply of controlled drugs on their premises, the penalties for which are severe. The threat of action under this power may be enough to motivate some landlords into action.

Note: additional powers to make the law apply to the allowance of use, as well as the supply, of all controlled drugs, have been created by an amendment to Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, contained in Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, which awaits enactment. The intention of this proposed power is to allow prosecution of landlords who do nothing when they have evidence of use or there is not enough evidence to prosecute on the grounds of selling using Section 8 (b).

Other landlords may not be traceable. It may not be possible to act against letting agents under Section 8 because they have no knowledge of the behaviour of the owner. In extreme cases a compulsory purchase order can be made to take control of the premises, but of course this will take time.

Social landlords

Most social landlords will accept the need to act. The best policy is to negotiate a protocol for how situations of this type will be tackled in advance between a housing organisation and the police. This must cover the following circumstances:

Where the tenant or licensee is selling:

Most social landlords will be happy to work with the police to seek a possession order and if successful, evict the tenant or

licensee if they are selling drugs. This is relatively straightforward if the occupant has limited right of occupation (such as those holding licences or introductory tenancies instead of full tenancies, a more limited right to security of tenure). It is harder where they are a secure tenant and have full security of tenure. The court will often want to see evidence, such as a conviction, before it acts to grant such a possession order against a secure tenant,

CASE STUDY

Crack houses in the Royal Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea

Many neighbours suffering from having to live near to a crack house are frustrated by what they see as the lack of decisive action.

Gathering sufficient evidence to prove that drug dealing is taking place within a property and attributing that activity to a specific individual is extremely difficult. In Kensington and Chelsea the problem was made worse by the fact that many of the dealers were female prostitutes who take drugs into the premises concealed in body orifices. The legal restrictions on intimate searches mean that this is rarely tackled directly. The way in which the police used to respond to reports of crack houses would involve a period of lengthy observation, identification of the dealer, arrest of purchasers and a raid on the premises.

However, this process was very time-consuming and the proliferation of crack houses meant that there were insufficient resources to sustain such an approach.

The police therefore adopted another strategy, which involved visible deterrent policing. This involved:

- Uniformed officers regularly patrolling the area to deter drug purchasers
- Repeated raids

- Closing the premises by working with the landlord to evict the tenant.

This change of approach included the following action:

- Getting a search warrant immediately and raiding the premises looking for evidence of possession
- Acting on information promptly, without lengthy observations but by looking for drug paraphernalia and known drug users turning up to buy drugs
- Acting as professional witnesses in partnership with the Tenancy Management Officer (TMO) or Housing Association to get an eviction as quickly as possible

The Registered Social Landlords and police felt that their working relationships were excellent and that both parties had improved their ability to work swiftly and decisively to close premises and evict a tenant.

The Notting Hill Housing Trust have learnt to react differently and more rapidly to crack houses than to other problems with tenancies.

The preferred process is:

1. Get statements from police and housing officers.
2. Go to court; ask for time to be abridged for first hearing, which should take place in a minimum of seven, rather than 28 days.

even if they are a crack dealer. Even then the court may be resistant if the defendant has dependent children in the property. Waiting for the case for supply to come up in criminal courts can take months or even years. It may be worth proceeding to seek possession of property on arrest rather than waiting for the conviction to be obtained. Depending on the relative pace of the criminal or civil proceedings, a conviction for selling drugs may not have

3. Apply for the need for notice to be waived which means that the legal process can continue without a notice being served on the tenant.
4. At this hearing, in addition to starting the process to get possession of the property, get an injunction with the power of arrest that the tenant abides by tenancy conditions relating to drugs and/or antisocial behaviour. In some cases the injunction itself may quieten down activities at the premises.
5. Get the police to serve an injunction on the tenant.
6. Return to court a week later, get an order for possession.
7. Organise bailiffs and regain possession of the property.

Notting Hill Housing Trust has been able to regain the possession of one property within a month of discovering that it was a crack house. TMO officials also felt they had gained expertise and experience and had speeded up the process to the point they could get a case to court within two months.

For more information, see *Crack House Rapid Reaction Protocol* (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 2002), available from Stewart Priestly, Kensington and Chelsea Drug Action Team; c/o Kensington Police Station, 72-74 Earls Court Road, London, W8 6EQ.

been obtained before the possession case comes to court and the court may not grant the possession order. However, simply serving notice may be enough encouragement for the seller to leave. It might be possible to delay the possession proceedings until a criminal conviction is obtained.

There are specific circumstances – relating to antisocial behaviour – where possession can be granted more quickly. These are set out in annex 1 of the good practice guide *Tackling Drugs in Rented Housing* (Home Office and DTLR, 2002).

It is possible to seek an ASBO against the tenant, and indeed their visitors. Injunctions can also be sought against tenants by landlords. ASBOs apply to the next categories too.

Where the dealer is not the tenant but the tenant tolerates the selling: If the dealer is illegally sub-letting, a possession order can be sought against the tenant on those grounds (not against the seller) and criminal charges brought under Section 8 (b).

Where the dealer has taken over the property of the tenant: In these circumstances taking action against the tenant to recover the property is fairly pointless. The criminal action or threat of it is likely to drive out the seller onto different premises anyway. It is better that the tenant is encouraged to surrender the tenancy in exchange for another, rather than instigate possession proceedings. This could be the quickest option, because then the dealer can be removed (or will leave) and the house can be boarded up. Only if they refused to do this (under pressure from the dealer for example), would a possession proceeding against the tenant be sensible.

Squatters can be evicted more quickly and this should not be a difficulty for the landlord.

Obtaining a possession order, ASBO and employing solicitors can take time and money. It is worth setting aside a budget to pay some of the court costs.

Arrangements with the court to hear these cases quickly and good interagency protocols between the housing department and the police are essential.

3.5.4 Community action

In the United States there is an evidence base of effective closure of crack houses by civil action. This *can* take the form of using civil housing powers to close properties as described above. It can also involve even more radical civil action methods. Police can try to use civil powers available under environmental health law, or try to get essential utilities cut off where the bills have not been paid. These can help put pressure on dealers to leave the house, but they are not appropriate when there is a legitimate vulnerable tenant. It is often the case that gas and electricity are connected illegally in crack houses.

There are also US examples of unofficial civil campaigns to dissuade buyers and dealers. This can take the form of marches, vigils, taking photos of people going in, singing, and whatever else to make potential users wish to avoid being seen entering the house. These methods have been applied much less in the UK, and they do rely on the will and energy of local people, who may be putting themselves at risk. They can also run a fine line between civil protest and in their extreme form, vigilantism. Nonetheless some elements of these protests and community action could be applied in the UK, including at the very least encouraging community members to act as sources.

3.6 Disrupting 'arrange-to-meet' markets

Closed 'arrange-to-meet' markets are the hardest to identify and tackle. Most crack is sold this way, especially crack sold to combined heroin and crack users. Dealers will normally sell only to people who know a code word or are introduced to them in some way. They need to store drugs, weights, scales and possibly cooking implements close to the meeting point. Dealers may have weapons. They will have a network of associates and subordinates and competitors.

Swallowed drugs

Many street dealers hold small quantities of crack in their mouths, regularly topping up their supply from locally hidden stores or from runners.

If arrested or held by police the seller may swallow crack held in his or her mouth. This poses a risk to the seller, who may die, if the drugs are not properly wrapped.

Many forces seek to stop this happening by holding down the person and retrieving the drugs from the mouth by hand. This is difficult, could result in injury to the officer, and is intimidating to witnesses who may feel the seller is being assaulted.

Customs and Excise have powers and facilities to detain such people until the drug naturally passes through the body. Such facilities will be difficult for police to provide even if the powers were available, but the feasibility is being explored by the ACPO with the Home Office. See also the box on handling crack-related risk of disorder on p.43.

3.6.1 Methods of disruption

Test purchase remains a key way to penetrate this kind of selling, but it still requires knowledge of a code and the officer may still be put at risk of having to try the drug. However, this applies less to this type of selling than to selling from residential property or in crack houses. If other intelligence can pin down selling to main locations, surveillance can offer more evidence.

Community intelligence and sources

As well as user informants, traders and residents can offer information about regular meeting points used by dealers.

Mobile phones

Dealers use mobile phones to set up meetings. Locks and intercepts can be made to dealers' phone signals.

Number plates

ANPR can monitor regular movements and certain vehicles.

Designing out crack selling

Environmental work is central to tackling street markets. Changing the buildings, places and street settings from which dealing occurs can encourage sellers to move.

Recesses, buildings, doorways and alleys can be redesigned to make buyers and sellers more visible and feel more observed. Obstructions to CCTV include trees, signs, shop-fronts, bus shelters and crowds.

Some of the need for physical redesign is not about structural rebuilding but about maintenance, such as removing graffiti and repairing windows and fences. Cars, vans, trees and discarded furniture can obscure surveillance and be used to store drugs. Improving the appearance of a location can increase public confidence. People don't sell from attractive locations as easily.

This kind of work requires lateral thinking. It can be carried out by police officers or civilians with local authority knowledge or skills in planning, building and design.

3.6.2 Considerations

Note: most of the following also applies to open street markets.

Those selling on the street are generally only associates – such as low-ranking gang members acting as runners. Is it worth all the effort of surveillance and test purchase to arrest a street runner who will be replaced, possibly within minutes? In relation to open street markets, where the object is to reduce visibility, arresting these individuals is essential; but to dismantle a more sophisticated selling operation, it has less immediate value.

The objective has to be to gain intelligence against the whole operation, especially the key supplier who directs the runners. This is a much more painstaking task and it may require some efforts to gain enough intelligence to act against premises where larger quantities of drugs are held, and other items (such as cash, stolen goods

A small grants budget helps for small-scale building works. In most areas a small amount for such works helps the process along. In larger regeneration areas there may also be opportunity to bid specific funding for work of this type.

Problems to overcome

Redesigning street furniture and building frontage is not always easy; especially where there are technical, practical or building reasons why it can't be done. Even if these could be overcome, owners may decline to have their frontage redesigned just because at night someone uses it to sell from.

Local businesses may be sympathetic, threatened by or linked to sellers. Taxi firms, takeaways, cafés and off-licences may well be coerced into supporting selling in order to survive. For example, taxis may well distribute drugs or runners for free as a pay-off.

CASE STUDY

Project Lilac

Project Lilac developed a multi-agency approach to tackle the illicit drugs market centred around Centrepont and the Charing Cross Road area of central London.

The project had a four-strand approach with enforcement, treatment services, research and environment being regarded as equally important. The aims of the project were to:

- Increase information and understanding of drug markets
- Reduce visible drug dealing
- Improve the health of drug users
- Address the issues of rough sleeping
- Improve the environment
- Enhance cross-border partnership activity

The key challenges that the multi-agency project had to tackle were:

- Understanding the roles of other agencies
- Building trust
- Cross-borough issues
- Local needs versus directions from the centre
- Organisational cultures
- Information exchange
- Liaison between sentencing can conflict with enforcement criminal justice agencies

The project responded to these challenges by developing new ways of working

together. The lessons learnt to date include the following:

1. To kick-start information sharing, it can be useful to start with depersonalised data so that confidentiality is not compromised. In this project, such data proved useful for planning and helped identify poor prescribing practice.
2. The project worked hard to engage with local communities and ensure that all agencies were involved in making community presentations. It was vital to develop a media strategy to make sure that misinformation did not undermine community support.
3. The issue of engaging with courts to ensure that sentencing practice does not conflict with enforcement activity has been flagged as an area needing attention.

Within its environmental strand it achieved the following:

- Over 100 initiatives including getting rid of recesses in doorways and managing traffic 'designed out' features of the built environment that provided opportunities for the supply and use of drugs and for rough sleeping
- Developed effective referral systems for street management issues
- Developed links with the business community

and weapons), which can enable charges to be brought against this person. This requires intelligence largely built up from sources who may require careful handling over time. These may include users themselves, which are dealt with as sources in section 2.

The community rarely appreciates environmental work and the media should be used to promote successes.

See **section 2.7** on using the media.

3.7 Tackling crack-related crime

Various types of crime are especially associated with crack, including gun crime, prostitution and types of acquisitive crime.

3.7.1 Acquisitive crime

If not using legitimate income, users pay for drugs through two main sources – sex work and stealing items for sale or exchange. Fewer users will commit street robbery.

Such acquisitive crime is most typically from shops, the main items being clothes and electrical goods. Users sell them on in the following ways:

To fences or handlers

Any action to control local drugs markets should look at how those who sell on stolen goods can be identified, warned and acted against. They may be legitimate business or non-legit operators – both will handle stolen goods. The chances are that much of the stealing, passing on, and reselling will occur fairly locally. Users don't go far.

To people they know

This is very difficult to intercept. It involves all types of items, but generally clothes are more likely to be sold to someone a user knows than to fences or goods handlers.

To dealers

Sales to dealers are very difficult to interfere with. This mostly takes place in crack houses with dependent users. Street sellers won't accept lots of items – especially large ones. They want money.

Action against this type of financing involves work with users to address their drug problem and to work on their offending behaviour – see **section 3.10** Reducing demand.

Action to help retailers avoid being targets for shoplifters is really a specialist issue in itself, and is covered by other guidance to the retail trade available on the Home Office website.

Schemes to get local residents to have their property security marked may be relevant.

3.7.2 Sex work and prostitution

Amongst all users of crack markets, prostitutes are unique. Research has shown how their custom and role is central to crack supply, mostly because they use so much. Hence tackling sex work is an essential part of disrupting a market. Reducing demand from other crack users is important, but it is neither so immediate nor so vital as this.

The section below looks especially at various helping schemes by which prostitutes can be assisted to leave their trade.

Legal powers

Note: there are proposed changes to the law on prostitution in development. The following represents the current position.

It is an offence under section 1 of the Street Offences Act 1959 for 'a common prostitute to loiter or solicit in a street or public place for the purpose of prostitution'. The maximum penalty for this offence is a level 2 fine (£500) or a level 3 fine (£1,000) for repeat offending. ASBOs have also been used. These have mixed benefits. It is possible that all these will do is further penalise and criminalise the women involved and just encourage them back on the street to pay the fines that result; or simply move their location to avoid a location ban. Is putting drug-dependent prostitutes in prison for breach of orders really a useful response?

Whilst they may have a role with a limited number of individuals who do not respond to other methods, strong consideration should be given to other methods, including these below and the section on harm reduction – see p.51.

Environment

Making it more difficult to buy and sell sex is useful. Punters will not cruise street prostitutes if they feel at risk of exposure. Publicising names and re-education courses are possible methods of action.

CASE STUDY

Operation Atrium

Operation Atrium is a multi-agency police-led operation based in central Bristol.

Its primary aim is to tackle the increase in violent drug-related crime and robbery linked to the increase of open drug dealing.

The operation began in February 2001 as a low-key intelligence gathering exercise, but has since grown into a high-profile proactive policing initiative targeting serious and organised criminals in Bristol.

Operation Atrium firmly established that there are a number of organised crime groups who are deliberately targeting Bristol as a base for illegal activities, particularly the supply and distribution of crack. As a direct result, the residential areas and business communities, not just in Bristol but throughout the whole of the force area, are suffering the detrimental effects of crime. Operation Atrium and its partners' aim is to disrupt these criminal

organisations and deter them from bringing their illegal trade to the streets.

Bruce Ballagher, who formerly led the operational side of Atrium, stated, "Mules arriving on planes from Jamaica carrying cocaine are a major link to the volume of crime in Bristol."

The three distinctive elements to Atrium are:

In the short term: high-visibility activity aimed at disrupting criminal activity, whilst at the same time reassuring the community.

In the medium term: targeting prolific offenders and areas where the police can make a significant impact and contribute to the regeneration and renewal of specific communities.

In the long term: to make Bristol as uninviting and unappealing as possible to organised crime groups through partnership-building and tackling the issues through a multi-agency approach.

Pimps

The role of pimps can be overstated in sex work as a whole, as many women are self-managing. However, pimps are more dominant in crack markets where many users are younger. Action against pimps can be a major legal tool in tackling sex markets, especially where unlawful immigration, abuse of juveniles, or human trafficking is involved.

3.8 Overcoming community conflict and hostility in black minority ethnic (BME) areas

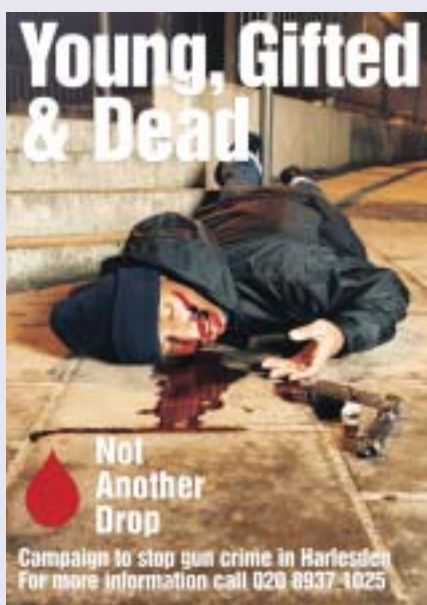
Crack markets, as we have seen, are often based in areas of large African-Caribbean presence which in the past have seen violent reaction to policing. There is some evidence that police action against drugs played a part in some of the violence seen in Asian communities in 2001 and this was certainly true in the Brixton riots of 1981 and those at Broadwater Farm in 1987.

CASE STUDY

Not Another Drop: the Brent gun crime project

In 1999, eight people – all black men – were murdered during a five month period in the Harlesden area. Many of these murders were linked to drug-related crimes.

The Not Another Drop (NAD) campaign was launched in February 2001 with a hard-hitting poster entitled *Young, Gifted and Dead*. The poster featured a staged photograph of a black youth lying dead in the street, and many assumed it to be a photograph taken at the scene of one of the shootings.



The Black Male Forum (BMF) is another strand of the NAD campaign. The BMF addresses problems related to the social exclusion of young black males aged between 13 and 15 years of age, aiming to improve their confidence, respect for others, qualifications, appearance and awareness of the discriminatory environment they live in.

Another strand, Brent Education and Recreation Services (BEARS), works with black youths at risk of offending, who have grown up in a gun culture. This is a diversionary scheme that helps young black men from becoming involved in crime through activities, such as mentoring and building up self-esteem.

The main strands of the campaign are:

- Community problem-solving panel: an independent panel of local people advise the police and council on issues affecting the community and on the development of the campaign
- Brent LBC communications directorate: this group is responsible for ensuring residents are aware of the steps being taken to tackle violence and sending an “unequivocal message to the offenders that the wider community in Harlesden will not tolerate their behaviour”
- Brent Victim Support: the organisation will be expanded to provide support for victims of violent crimes and their families
- Joint Intelligence unit (JIU): the unit will collect and distribute data from a database so police can target their operations
- Black Male Forum: (as described above)
- Ringmaster: a system enabling crime-related information to be sent quickly to key community contacts by ‘phone, fax or email. The aim is to stop the circulation of inaccurate rumours

There are many reasons why communities can be hostile to the police:

- A perception of the police as racist
- A belief that black communities are singled out for oppressive policing (e.g. stop and search)
- Drug operations can be numerous and carried out simultaneously with considerable force and secrecy
- Action against street dealers is perceived to interfere with street life and community activity
- Action on drugs is perceived as symbolic of broader persecution of black communities
- Some community members may wish to protect dealing operations

The presence of these beliefs amongst some in the black community does not mean that violent reaction to drug raids is

an inevitability. However, there is an element of risk. This element should not be used as an excuse for non-action; the vast majority of BME communities want action on drug supply. But the presence of some of these opinions in some members of the community means that each significant operation should be subject to a risk assessment before it happens.

Managing this potential reaction requires the high standards of policing minority ethnic communities that is expected from a modern police force. It also requires the kind of community liaison and communication structures referred to in **section 2.5**, whereby community leaders are involved in helping plan a range of action to tackle supply and communicate the purposes of that action to the wider black community.

CASE STUDY

Operation Trident

Operation Trident, within the Metropolitan Police area, aims to take gunmen off the streets and is mainly intelligence led, using information on shootings.

- Trident has an independent advisory panel to which unsolved murders are referred to so that they can be counter checked to see that all avenues of investigation have been pursued
- Members of the panel are also able to view operations

Key successes:

- Proper intelligence debriefs after investigations
- Further work with the panel has led to better witness protection schemes
- The marketing campaign was successful and led to the branding of the Operation Trident logo
- Operation Trident has been used as a benchmark by other agencies such as the PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland)

Handling crack-related risk of disorder

Street markets

Street crack dealers often carry rocks of crack in their mouths. An officer apprehending that person will need to work with several others to bring the person to the ground and get the drugs out of the mouth before they can swallow them. This process can seem violent, aggressive and painful. It is likely to attract a crowd who will simply see a person being violently jumped on by several officers. They may not know him as a drug dealer.

Currently, this is however the only tactic available, as courts will not accept the word of officers that drugs have been offered without proof of the existence of drugs.

In such instances, community discord can be reduced by crowd management in the following ways:

1. Keep a distance between the crowd and the incident.
2. Tell observers that the incident involves the supply of drugs and that it is in the interests of the person that the drugs are recovered as swallowing them could prove fatal.
3. Hand out notes to the crowd stating this.
4. Proactively use the media and various communication methods to explain that street dealing requires these responses.

Targeted stop and search

Stop and search has a long history. In drugs terms it is a very valuable method of identifying individuals who may be carrying larger quantities for supply. Widespread searching, however, has a very negative impact. Targeted searching can be the solution if it is very carefully and properly done and the systems adhered to. It should be actively communicated

to local groups, such as the ones described in **section 2.5**. Such targeting should be focused, closely related to identified and demonstrable evidence, and applied in short bursts for maximum impact.

Crack houses

Crack houses are generally very unwelcome to local residents; so action to tackle them is usually welcome. However, they are complicated by the handling of:

Users

Local residents may have compassion and engagement with friends and relatives who may be using in crack houses. The sight of these people being taken into custody may cause tension. If they are just users it is likely that they will not usually be detained and, if charged at all, they may be bailed. However, some will have other reasons for being detained – for example possession of weapons, including firearms or other offences for which they are wanted.

Those whose houses have been taken over

Those who have the tenancy of a crack house may be seen as being victims who have lost their home and possibly been arrested as a result of the raid. Not all are victims.

It will help to communicate clearly what has happened. This requires consultation. Visibly drawing attention to the status of the house with posters on the doors or windows may help. These should state clearly that the house has been used as a crack house and has been closed but should state that the tenant of the property, if guilty of new offences, will not be prosecuted for their involvement and will be offered alternative help with accommodation. However, not all local residents want this kind of public notification to happen – they feel it further stigmatises their neighbourhood.

3.9 Displacement

Displacement is a persistent issue in dealing with street-level drug markets. All markets move or change when disrupted. Some tactics disrupt and lead to displacement most obviously – for example putting up CCTV cameras or street patrols will make dealers physically move their market.

3.9.1 Buffer zones

If the market is in one street or particular location, visible patrols will displace it to a street or building nearby. Parallel action can displace it further.

Other markets change their nature. Complete closure is the aim, but in reality this is unlikely. If there is to be displacement, it should aim this to be

Table 3.2 Displacement effect as a result of police action

Type of crack market	Suitable intervention	Likely displacement effect of policing	Possible other effect
House-based sales, open	Test purchase Surveillance Source	Closed, 'arrange-to-meet' markets	Turf wars/New people take over market – greater use of violence?
Closed house sales	Surveillance Source Demand reduction (prostitutes)	Different house used	As above Reduced prostitution nearby
Open street market, high visibility	Overt patrols Section 18 searches Surveillance Physical redesign	Open, low visibility	Turf wars/New people take over market – greater use of violence?
Street market, low visibility	Overt patrols, Section 18 searches Surveillance	Further movement away from busy locations nearby Possible move to 'arrange-to-meet' markets	As above
Middle market supplies	Intelligence	New gang or associate formation/realignment	As above New gangs entirely

non-violent. Table 3.2 outlines the effect that different types of intervention will have.

3.9.2 Benefits of displacement

Displacement is not always a bad thing. The displaced market has to begin again and its new location may have environmental factors less attractive to the seller. Action against a displaced market may be easier because the market has been weakened and is vulnerable. However, sometimes a displaced market may be more difficult to tackle.

3.9.3 Negative aspects of displacement

Displacing a stable, existing market can lead to turf wars between dealers. Following successful police operations, new dealers that are more predisposed to violence can move to an area. However, violence is endemic in crack dealing regardless of police activity. In practice, turf wars occur mostly in large-scale closed markets, not in street or house markets, usually between suppliers selling to these markets. Action against higher-level dealers may have more effect on turf skirmishes at the higher level.

3.10 Reducing demand

Treatment, education or other non-arrest methods should be used to reduce the number of users of a drug market.

This section is not a full guide to treatment or work with young people, but a quick overview of how these different interventions can be applied to support market work. It helps police partners to understand what actions will best complement police activity and what could be provided from other agencies in local partnerships. Such action is crucial in helping ensure a market does not re-emerge exactly as it did before, and to create long-term change.

3.10.1 Prostitutes

See **section 3.7.2** on sex work and prostitution.

Enforcement activity against a crack house, dealers or prostitutes, is unlikely to have much impact unless it is combined with action to help prostitutes give up both their drug use and their sex work. Before any other demand-reduction strategy is considered you should look at ways of reducing the demand from prostitutes using:

- Diversion schemes
- Legal powers
- Action against pimps
- Street redesign
- Discouragement of punters

Prostitutes – and in this context we are mostly concerned with women – would much rather not be working on the street. Prostitutes in closed settings, for example massage parlours, often use drugs less than street workers do, and in a more controlled way. The exception are street workers in houses where they are virtual prisoners, through lack of power, money, language or drug dependency. It is not always easy to generalise but street prostitutes are more likely to be crack or heroin dependent.

The web of dependencies that keep women on the street include:

- Pimps
- Boyfriends
- Levels of income
- Lack of other opportunities
- Crack

Many of the women locked into these dependencies have had long and complex histories of abuse of different kinds and have suffered considerable psychological damage. Reducing their demand for drugs is not just about addressing the addictive aspect of the drugs through medical or psychological help with the immediate dependency.

Interventions need to offer routes out of the life. These should include:

- Access to primary health care and harm reduction, which builds trust and confidence in helping agencies over time
- Retraining and alternative skills development
- Help with housing
- Action to control dependency
- Psychological help
- Relationship counselling
- Help with managing the control pimps have over them

CASE STUDY

Southampton Working Women's Project

Southampton Working Women's Project has been offering services to female prostitutes since 1994. Based in the Department of Genito-Urinary Medicine at the Royal South Hampshire Hospital, its primary focus is sexual health and maximising the safety of women working in all sectors of the sex industry within Southampton and South West Hampshire.

Many of the women lead chaotic lives and the following services have been designed with this in mind:

- Twice-weekly dedicated sessions serviced by a female doctor, nurse or health advisor and HIV counsellor. One is community based in a women's drop-in service and the other is hospital based. Both offer a full sexual health clinical service, practical and emotional support
- Late night street outreach service, providing condoms, needle exchange, information exchange about 'dodgy punters' and a newsletter
- Daytime outreach, visiting homes and brothels, providing condoms and advice/support
- Self-defence training by a female instructor, addressing specific safety issues such as working in cars and enclosed spaces and breakaway techniques

Crack came into the city from London and Bristol and the women are trafficked along the same routes.

Over the past ten years, there has been prolific use of crack among street-based prostitutes and this has resulted in a marked change in working patterns. Women, some as young as 14, are known to steal each other's earnings, undercut street prices and in some cases offer unprotected sex, 'clip' (run off with the money without delivering sex) and lead punters into traps in order to rob them.

For local residents, kerb crawling and all the activity that surrounds sex work was a problem. The City Council has combated this by introducing a series of traffic calming measures and closing brothels. This has displaced prostitutes onto the streets and made their working conditions more hazardous.

The numbers of young women working the streets and using crack was rising. The police were increasingly frustrated by having to repeatedly return girls to children's homes' Child Protection Units. In response to this, the Social Services Children's Service were asked, in 1995, for advice to develop a strategy for tackling this problem. This led to the formation of a multi-agency team, the *Young Women at Risk* group, which is still in existence today (now named *Young People at Risk* group).

Communication and joint working between agencies was difficult at first. Negotiations about how to proceed were slow, but the outcome was guidance released in April 2000, *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution*, produced in partnership with the Department of Health and the Home Office. This was followed by a commission in September 1998 by the Southampton Child Protection Coordinators to produce a local protocol, which was launched in February 2001.

In 1999, the situation worsened when new pimps began to appear from London and Jamaica bringing with them a gun culture and using violence to enforce control over existing dealers and users. Some exploited the link between crack and prostitution, making dependent prostitutes pay off their drugs debts by working. Women and girls are also being used as 'mules', trafficking cocaine and heroin from countries such as Jamaica and Spain.

In 2000 Social Services and Barnardos joined together to fund a project, Barnardos

Young Women's Project, to help girls under 18 to exit prostitution and drug use. This project is staffed by two workers, who have, over time, managed to gain access to many of the young women involved and through trust have found ways to work and maintain links with them, despite constant threats from dealers.

In May 2001 Hampshire Constabulary launched Operation Trojan in Southampton which went force-wide in October 2001. Working with Immigration, amongst other partners, 154 trafficking arrests have been made so far, with ammunition and numerous firearms seized. Work is still ongoing.

In late 2001, the local DAT and the Vice Unit convened a multi-agency meeting to consider ways of setting up an exit scheme for women involved in drugs and sex work. Specific fast-track services for crack users are needed as the current services in Southampton are opiate-oriented and cannot respond in time to the needs of crack users.

3.10.2 Buyers

Buyers may be deterred by enforcement activity, which makes them fear arrest or exposure. Other ways to reduce demand include:

- Reducing their 'interest' in drugs, for example through education or action to improve their personal circumstances
- Reducing their dependency on drugs
- Removing the source of funds that underpin drug dependency (their resources)

Table 3.3 helps to give an overview of how different motivations to buy drugs are best addressed by specific responses.

Harm reduction

The primary aim of harm reduction is improving health. It is usually successful in achieving this but it is less clear whether this reduces the size of the market in the long term.

Over time it can help people trust services and be more likely to take up other resources, such as treatment. However, contact and referral schemes for prostitutes do not demonstrate great success in moving this client group into treatment, though they do have great benefit in improving their health. It is likely that such heavily dependent, often quite powerless,

victims of powerful dealers and pimps need a far greater level of intervention than harm reduction on its own. This means responding to a range of needs including housing and mental health.

Harm reduction is likely to have many other benefits in terms of community feelings about the market, but in itself is probably not of direct benefit to market disruption.

3.10.3 High-risk groups

Gun culture has become increasingly linked to crack use, for complex reasons that include patterns of culture, learning, history and powerlessness. Young men living in very poor communities with little opportunity or hope of advancement may often turn to violence to obtain a sense of control and power over the immediate circumstances of their lives. In the crack context this has been compounded with the importation of a gangster culture derived from music, cinema and lifestyles experienced in more violent societies, which has attractiveness to some young people with the lowest stake in society – the most marginalised and excluded.

Interventions have to compete with these negative role models and the power of negative and violent culture. Mentoring, education, and community building can help to offer alternative and positive images.

There is a clear need for action to tackle these problems and alert young men – for it is mostly young men – of the risks this lifestyle poses.

3.10.4 Reducing demand after enforcement action

After a major operation or series of arrests, it is possible that a gap in the market develops. It is possible that suppliers will not be on hand to supply users. Users may be uncertain where to buy drugs, and new dealers slow to move in. Prices may increase.

Such a scenario is most true in smaller locations or sub-centres of cities, rather than in large metropolitan areas with many dealers and markets. In these places, another dealer will quickly fill the void.

Drug services

Offering a heightened level of drug service availability in these circumstances may help motivate some users to enter proper treatment at this vulnerable point. Such services should be:

- Offered proactively, through outreach and satellite clinics
- Flexible and responsive to need and offer appointments quickly
- Motivational and welcoming
- Close at hand
- Perceived by users to be separate from law enforcement agencies

Services should be seen as loss leaders, offered on a short-term basis to encourage groups of users into treatment. There is a good argument for setting up specific services that are capable of responding to market operations, rather putting a strain on existing services. This demands a considerable budget, and relies on the police being prepared to work with treatment services to communicate that raids are due to happen in specific areas. There is little point of asking services to respond at short notice as they will not have the required capacity. This type of service needs to be properly funded and structured for that purpose explicitly.

It is potentially the case that such services will work best where the main drug involved is heroin. Crack treatment, without any ability to offer a substitute drug, may not have the draw of heroin prescribing. Nonetheless it is worth trying.

It is possible that a number of children will require Social Services care after a series of major operations. Services should have the capacity to deal with childcare issues. This will require involving Social Services in

Table 3.3 Methods of reducing demand for drugs

Motivation to buy drugs	Action most likely to reduce desire to buy drugs	Actions less likely to reduce buying of drugs	Who provides most likely successful response
Curiosity/peer pressure	Education, media work; difficulty of access	Treatment (users don't perceive use to be problematic)	Teachers, youth workers, health educators
Vulnerability	Education, media and work on circumstances of vulnerability – family, home life, self-esteem, etc, environment Difficulty of access; surveillance	Treatment (users don't perceive use to be problematic)	Social workers, youth workers
Dependency	Treatment, harm reduction	Difficulty of access	Counsellors, medical and nursing staff
Supports other problem behaviour – i.e. sex work	Help to exit sex work at same time as work on dependency	Education	Housing; prostitute outreach projects
Non-dependent use	Surveillance, difficulty of access	Treatment (users don't perceive use to be problematic)	Police, local authority
Introduction through related criminality – e.g. sex markets	Difficulty of accessing drugs; surveillance Control of drug use of intermediaries – e.g. prostitutes, etc	Treatment (users don't perceive use to be problematic)	Police, outreach staff
Association – e.g. dance clubs	Club management efficiency; education	Policing outside clubs	Club owners

planning and trusting them with a degree of sensitive information.

The best example of this type of service is to be found in Derbyshire, albeit mostly following up heroin operations. The service offers a pre-arrest outreach service to soften up motivation, and then a team that is available locally to offer access to treatment and prescribing for those left without dealers. The project is being evaluated and details can be obtained from the Government Office for the East Midlands, tel 0115 971 2733.

3.10.5 Work with offenders at arrest and within the criminal justice system

Most interventions to reduce demand with offenders are led and managed by Probation services. A wide range of community penalties exist to enable offenders with crack problems to receive the help they require after having been sentenced by the court. These provide a means by which crack-dependent users can reduce their demand for crack and their related offending. However, there is another stage at arrest and even pre-arrest in which police play a much more active role.

Arrest referral

Arrest referral offers the opportunity for offenders detained by the police for any offence to see an arrest referral worker in police custody, and to be referred to drug services. In their relatively short history, these schemes have enabled a very large number of users to access treatment. Police in custody suites or making the arrest should assertively offer drug users the option of arrest referral. This particularly applies to those users who are arrested in crack houses. Police questioning users in connection with enquiries, even where there is no charge or detention, should use these opportunities to recommend treatment and share knowledge about local treatment facilities.

However, evaluations of the first period of the national arrest referral scheme (Sondhi et al, 2002) shows that the groups that are the least likely to take up the offer of treatment include:

- Prostitutes
- Those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Crack users

Arrest referral schemes have to deploy highly skilled workers and be more assertive and proactive in their follow-up to get these groups into treatment. There is more research being conducted into why these groups fail to access treatment through this route. Current research suggests the reasons are:

- The availability of immediate help
- The extreme volatility of users
- Lack of commitment to change
- The addictiveness of the drug
- Their lack of faith in what treatment services can offer

There will be separate guidance published on the needs of these groups and how police and arrest referral workers can help to improve treatment take-up numbers. In turn much is being done to improve the quality of drug services, to reduce their waiting times and make them more relevant to crack users.

Drug testing is increasingly being used to determine whether certain individuals are users of Class A drugs. These tests are triggered by certain acquisitive crime offences. An initial pilot programme in three sites suggested that crack users and combined crack and heroin users outnumbered purely opiate users, and that they represented a very large percentage of all those arrested and tested. This programme is being widened to many more police custody suites. There is consideration to compel those who test positive to attend treatment as a presumption of bail.

CASE STUDY

Blackpool Tower Project

The crime rate in Blackpool increased significantly over 2001. Research showed the rate of criminality of a few drug-dependent offenders rose due to increased use of crack alongside their heroin habit. The Tower Project is a coercive persistent offender targeting initiative aimed at reducing their criminality and drug use by 30%. There has been a large waiting list in Blackpool for drug treatment and persistent offenders found themselves excluded from many mainstream services due to their erratic behaviour. They are trapped in a cycle of offending, drug taking and prison.

Probation services, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police staff work together at the police station and a drug worker and medical practitioner are based at the community drug treatment centre. Housing, Benefit Agencies and voluntary agencies support the project. Fifty targets are identified based upon a computer matrix of their offending rates and the professional judgement of staff. This evidence matrix supports organisations to share information under the Crime and Disorder Act and is weighted to prioritise offenders who commit robbery, house burglary and vehicle crime.

The project provides immediate access to drug treatment and other support. It is made clear that failure to co-operate and evidence of drug taking and criminality will leave them liable to police targeting. Those targeted are tested weekly and where appropriate daily their consumption of

medication is supervised. Where suitable, mainstream rehabilitation, detoxification and day care services are referred.

The project has no powers or supporting legislation and the co-operation of those targeted is purely voluntary. The project works with people both inside as well as outside prison. It links in with the Counselling Advice Referral Assessment and Throughcare (CARAT) drug treatment scheme to encourage persistent offenders to make best use of rehabilitation support in prison. They receive multi-agency pre-release support over the last six months of their sentence.

The Tower Project supports the CPS with balanced reports on bail/remand applications and ensures that persistent offenders are targeted through the courts. Project staff support the National Probation Service with unbiased information for pre-sentence reports, prison licences and other orders.

The project has been operational since 1 January 2002 and over the first four months the crime reduction results compared to the previous year were dramatic. There are 35 individuals whose cost of criminality was estimated at between £25,000 and £40,000 per week. All but two are co-operating to some degree. House burglaries have reduced by 42%, theft from vehicles by 30% and all crime by 18%. A large amount of these reductions are directly linked to the Tower Project.

Proactive persistent offender schemes

These schemes are not new but they offer a very different approach to helping drug users.

Certain individuals are well known to the police and to Probation for their record of drug-related offending. This record is supplemented by intelligence held by

police. Rather than wait until these individuals are arrested in relation to an offence and can be referred into one of the schemes referred to above, the offender is proactively approached and offered a place on a drug treatment programme.

Schemes vary. In some the offender is already on a Probation-run community sentence to which a condition to attend a drug treatment programme is attached. In others attendance is entirely voluntary and non-coerced. The advantage to the user is that they often bypass a lengthy treatment queue or the programme is tailored to address their offending as well as their drug dependency. The approach may well fall at the right point in the cycle of their attitude to their crack use in a way that the arrest referral intervention may not. It becomes another point in the cycle of offending at which users can be offered treatment.

Role of the police

The police role is very much about identifying certain candidates, but also offering an element of supervision by visiting the user at home during the programme and keeping a close eye on them. Furthermore, they can warn the offender of the likelihood of arrest if they drop out.

Such schemes are to be found in many places – and not just for drugs – and their effectiveness continues to be measured. For general offenders the results are promising; for crack users there is no definite evidence of effectiveness to date.

3.10.6 Reducing demand in an area marked by excessive deprivation

A recent study, “A Rock and a hard place: drug markets in deprived neighbourhoods” (Lupton *et al*, 2002), sets out the relationship between deprived areas and drug markets, and also demonstrates how weak and unstrategic, action against supply has often been in such communities.

Section 3.6 showed how important it is to take account of the environment of crack markets and to consider how the interventions of other partners could assist police action. Policing is a tool in regeneration. A companion Home Office guide, *Tackling Drugs and Neighbourhood Renewal* (Home Office, 2002), sets this out in more detail. Police partners should seek to work at an early stage with partners in regeneration partnerships to align enforcement activity with other action on an estate. At the simplest level, physical changes to an estate or area can make policing easier. In a more complex relationship, tenancy or resident reprofiling can change the demographic mix. Action to control antisocial behaviour helps too. Whilst deprived areas have the most acute problems, they also have the most resources available. These resources can fund interventions to reduce demand, purchase additional law enforcement capacity, and other action that can reduce crack problems.

Typically, a neighbourhood renewal partnership will want to pay for additional CCTV, perhaps a neighbourhood warden scheme, and local police presence. Short term these will not close a crack market but they will increase sources of intelligence, inspire local confidence and trust, and may deter some dealers from operating and some users from buying.

Key learning points from section 3

- For every type of crack market there is some kind of police action that can be applied
- Approaches to tackling crack markets span every facet of policing and require the help of partners in the local authority and elsewhere
- Managing displacement and avoiding community resistance are essential aspects of tackling any market
- Middle markets demand an intelligence-led response and good functional links between command units, separate forces and with upstream agencies
- Reducing demand from key users of markets is essential – in particular reducing demand from prostitutes

Further reading

- Andell, P. and Hough, M. , 2002. "Addressing Local Drug Markets – A Community Harm Reduction Approach", Crime and Social Policy Occasional Paper 1, London: NACRO
- Burgess, R., 2002. "Tackling drugs as part of neighbourhood renewal", London: Home Office
- Lupton, R. *et al* 2002. "A rock and a hard place: drug markets in deprived neighbourhoods", *Home Office Research Study 240*, London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate
- May, T., Harcopos, A., Turnbull, P. and Hough, M., 2000. "Serving Up: the Impact of Low-Level Police Enforcement on Drug Markets", Police Research Series Paper 133, London: Home Office Policing and Crime Reduction Unit
- Sondhi, A., O'Shea, J. and Williams, T., 2002. "Emerging Findings from the National Arrest Referral Monitoring and Evaluation Programme", DPAS Paper 18, London: Home Office

Assessing the impact of police action against crack markets

Assessing the impact of the actions taken to disrupt the market is an essential part of any intervention or strategy for many including the following:

- To assess whether desired police targets have been met
- To assess whether communities have benefited from police action
- To assess public perception of police action
- To inform future action
- To secure funding for future action
- To assess whether action was carried out properly

4.1 Aims of police action

The overall aim of police action is to reduce the amount of drugs being sold on the street. Put simply, action against crack supply can be assessed in two main ways:

1. The specific aims and targets set by police and professional groups which measure action in a technical way (see outputs and outcomes below).
2. The perceptual benefits to the local community (see outcomes below).

However, the perception that this aim has been achieved depends on the perspective of different groups, agencies and individuals. The success of police action can be illustrated for each group through a wide range of indicators.

4.1.1 Police and professional groups

Those who are involved in disrupting crack markets use a wide range of indicators to show that their actions have been successful, for example the number of arrests, seizures and criminal gangs disrupted and the value of assets seized.

They use a broader and more complex group of indicators than the general public, for whom this kind of data may have little value if they perceive drugs still to be widely available.

4.1.2 The local community

A community living near a street crack market will want to see a perceptual change to that street market. Arrests and seizures may not affect their perceptions. Assessing whether police action has been successful will be structured around their perceptions of the effect on this action.

The public perception of police action also depends on the action of the courts as well as the work of other professionals.

4.2 Indicators of success

There are many different indicators to assess whether police action has been successful. These indicators can be grouped into three areas:

- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Process indicators

4.2.1 Outputs

These contain both data on activity expended by forces in tackling markets and the immediate results of police action. They are measurable and can usually be obtained from law enforcement data. For example, one output is the actual number of people arrested for crack supply. Table 4.1 lists different outputs and their suitability for evaluating whether action against the three levels of crack markets has been successful.

Table 4.1 Outputs

Indicators for outputs	Street (level 1) markets	Middle (level 2) markets	Import (level 3) markets
Number of people arrested for crack supply and the number of separate incidents of seizure	More applicable	May be applicable	Unlikely to be applicable
The comparison between the number arrested to the total estimated number of those active at that level	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
How many were carrying or seized with large quantities (especially of cocaine) or involved in types of activity that suggest that they were middle-level dealers.	Less applicable	More applicable	Less applicable
The number of crack houses closed down	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
The volume of cocaine seized and the number of different incidents of seizure	Applicable	Applicable	More applicable at this level
The comparison of the total volume of cocaine seized against estimates for the size of the whole market at that level	Less applicable	Applicable	More applicable
The number of different incidents of seizure of crack	More applicable	Less applicable	Much less applicable
The comparison of the total volume of crack seized against estimates for the size of the whole market at that level	More applicable	Applicable	Not applicable
The value of assets or goods seized from suppliers	Applicable	Applicable	More applicable at this level
The comparisons between the volume of assets seized and the total volume of assets estimated at that level	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

Table 4.1 Outputs (continued)

Indicators for outputs	Street (level 1) markets	Middle (level 2) markets	Import (level 3) markets
The number of weapons seized from dealers	Applicable	Applicable	May be applicable
The number of separate criminal gangs dismantled and not functioning through action against supply	Less applicable	More applicable	More applicable

The indicators listed in Table 4.1 point to the effectiveness of police action. Additional output data that shows the volume of houses acted against, number of police hours expended and the number of officers deployed is useful to demonstrate the volume of action needed to support these indicators.

4.2.2 Outcomes

Outcomes can be defined as those indicators of success which demonstrate that the main aim of police action against suppliers has been achieved. They are the indicators which suggest that the volume of drugs being sold has decreased.

However, as said above, perception depends on where the observer stands. To show a rounded picture of impact, any list of suitable outcomes must also include indicators which clearly show that the ability of dealers to sell drugs has been substantially impeded and their activity disrupted. These outcomes are qualitatively different from outputs. Gathering indicators that dealers find it harder to sell drugs is positive but it is not as complete as showing that the overall volume of drugs available has been reduced.

Perceptions of key groups

Outcomes can be qualitative indicators that are concerned with the perceptions of the following groups:

- Residents
- Key professionals – these include local head teachers, Social Services managers, police, housing managers
- Young people
- Users
- Dealers

This information is usually obtained from perception studies – which ask people what they think – and by qualitative interviewing, best measured using 5-point Likert or rating scales such as poor, less than adequate, OK, good, very good. These perception studies can be useful in assessing public views on the success of police action against street markets.

Indicators of successful outcomes include:

1. Resident and key professionals’ perceptions of the:
 - Number of people selling crack in the street
 - Amount of drug dealing overall – open and closed

- Amount of nuisance crack selling causes and its relation to other crime such as prostitution
- Amount of people using drugs in their area
- Amount of drugs litter in the area
- Amount of selling to those at risk, for example young people

2. Crack users' perceptions of the:

- Ease with which they could buy crack, as measured by hassle, distance, price and observation
- Use of violence by or between sellers
- Ease in selling goods they had stolen (this can be sampled from arrest referral data)

In addition, for certain sub-categories of residents, other indicators may apply – for example, young people's perception of the ease with which they can buy crack.

3. Dealers' perceptions of:

- Ease with which they could buy drugs to sell
- Price changes from those supplying them
- Difficulty in selling crack on the street or selling drugs in private settings
- Risk of arrest
- Increasing violence in selling crack
- Risk of handling and processing assets (this is also an indicator of the success of action against middle or higher level markets)

Technical indicators of market change

These outcomes are indicators of the success of police action against all levels of crack markets. They are difficult to relate to local activity and affected by geo-political trends in source countries. However, the data is worth assembling, if only to demonstrate short-term impacts of enforcement activity. Technical indicators include:

- Price changes
- Purity changes
- Range of drugs sold
- Market network analysis (that the map of

dealing has substantially changed as a result of police action)

Data about all of the above can be obtained from forensic analyses and from interviews with local dealers.

4.2.3 Process indicators

Process indicators show whether police action has been carried out properly. They include:

- Resident perception of the way complaints and intelligence are handled
- Resident perception of speed of response
- Resident perception of level of police commitment to tackling drug supply in their area
- The proportion of rejected charged cases for prosecution by CPS
- The number of incidents of disorder arising from action against crack supply

Other quality indicators

Positive media reporting of action to tackle supply and availability of crack, especially in certain areas, can help change perceptions. This is neither an outcome nor an output, and is affected by media bias and choice, but it has value in improving resident perception.

Indirect indicators

These indicators help map the scale of markets, but in themselves don't demonstrate the effect of police action exclusively. They may reflect other factors. This is not an exclusive list:

- Take up of treatment services, including those for offenders
- Biological testing of users (i.e. in custody, etc)
- Number of drug-related deaths

4.3 Constructing the evaluation process

Police and their partners will need to work closely to assemble the best local list of indicators that demonstrate impact in their area. Such a list has to be obtained consistently, with the right methodology and on a regular basis. The data must be organised in a logical and coherent way. This means that the data streams that support any of these indicators need to be up and running from an early stage to allow the improvements to be shown.

It may help to set targets for each of the aims chosen, to establish a yardstick against which performance can be measured, but setting easy targets is of limited value.

The whole process of estimating impact should be part of a cycle that includes the gathering of data and consultation exercises that we referred to in **section 2**. Any activity to tackle drug markets should regard the measurement of impact as being central to the whole programme and not added in retrospectively. Deciding what the impact should be is part of the process of setting up or enacting activity to tackle a market. If the objective is clearly to reduce the visibility of the market to the general public then this must be the focus of both the intervention and the evaluation. The data needed to show progress must be collected before the operation starts to show there has been progress.

Asking for residents' perception of markets should be followed by asking for their perception of how well activity to disrupt markets has worked. Finding out their perceptions should be completed in sequence, with the same people being the respondents in each case.

For all these reasons, staff time to conduct evaluation should be built into the project requirements and costings from day one. The operational team must include someone who can process and handle data. Commissioners within DATs and operational commanders should factor this into their commissioning decisions.

Key learning points from section 4

- Evaluation of impact is central to enforcement activity
- Successful evaluation is the key to community engagement and future funding
- Evaluation has large cost and resource implications and takes time and effort, but it should be part of the process from day one

Conclusions

- Crack supply is an increasing and challenging issue for local policing strategies
- Partnerships need to think, act and work strategically to plan their response, starting with a thorough understanding of the local crack market based on a wide range of sources of information, not least from local residents and users
- Interventions need to be based on the kind of practice that has been proven to have the best chance of success. There is a wide range of action that can be tailored to the precise form of the local market.
- The consequences of actions and factors supporting action need to be taken into account
- Action to reduce supply needs to be closely linked to action to reduce demand, especially from major consumer groups
- Action at level 1, 2 and 3 needs to be closely related and linked
- Actions need to be assessed for their impact in terms of outcomes, as well as outputs

