

# Neighbourhood policing: Past, present and future

A review of the literature

## **Acknowledgements**

This review of the literature was commissioned by Thames Valley Police Force to inform their own internal Review of Neighbourhood Policing. Thames Valley are to be commended for seeking to ensure that their approach to Neighbourhood Policing is informed by the best and latest evidence on good practice. The review was put together by a team of five people from the Police Foundation, but special thanks should go to Abie Longstaff for producing a first draft and to James Willer for assisting her with this. The authors would also like to thank the commissioning team from Thames Valley, particularly Jo Pelletier, who acted as the key contact and facilitator for the review.

## **About the Police Foundation**

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**Abie Longstaff, James Willer, John Chapman,  
Sarah Czarnomski and John Graham, The Police Foundation**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Police forces across the country are faced with difficult choices in responding to the need to make substantial budget cuts, including reviewing the role of neighbourhood policing. They are also concerned to ensure that any changes they introduce are, as far as possible, evidence-based. This summary of the relevant literature on neighbourhood policing has been commissioned by Thames Valley Police to inform their review of the future role and function of neighbourhood policing in their force. It covers the history and development of neighbourhood policing, describes the main models of neighbourhood policing, assesses its effectiveness, identifies good practice and looks at how neighbourhood policing might need to adapt in a rapidly changing world.

## History and development

The roots of neighbourhood policing in the UK can be traced back to the emergence of community policing in the US and to the events that led to the publication of the Scarman Report (Lord Scarman, 1981) at the beginning of the 1980s and, some twenty years later, to the introduction of the National Reassurance Policing Programme. The latter aimed to reduce crime and fear of crime and improve public confidence by engaging with communities, targeting their main concerns and priorities and providing a visible and accessible presence in eight forces. The positive outcomes of the National Reassurance Policing Programme led to the national rollout of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme in 2005 and the introduction, for the first time, of Police Community Support Officers

(PCSOs) and dedicated neighbourhood policing teams across the country.

A series of government as well as independent reports subsequently drew attention to a range of issues and challenges and identified good practice. Increasing emphasis was placed on how best to capture the needs and expectations of local communities and involve them in decisions. Known as citizen-focused policing, this variation on neighbourhood policing emphasised the importance of community engagement in securing the trust and confidence of local residents. The government of the day underlined this with the introduction of a single target for the police – to improve public confidence.

The single public confidence target didn't last long. A change of government in 2009 led to major police reforms, including the abolition of the public confidence target and the introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners to improve police governance. Alongside sizeable cuts to police budgets following the financial crisis in 2008, these reforms fundamentally changed the policing landscape. An era in which the police had accumulated more powers, more officers and more resources than ever before, came to an abrupt end and concerns about the future viability of neighbourhood policing began to be voiced.

## Models of neighbourhood policing

Foot patrol is the building block of neighbourhood policing. The presence of patrol officers helps to reassure the public and improve police: community relations, but on its own it rarely deters crime. Only intensive, targeted patrols that work with partners and the local community and

adopt a problem-solving approach are likely to have any impact on crime and antisocial behaviour. Police Community Support Officers now undertake some of the tasks of police patrols, providing visibility, accessibility and reassurance, but in recent years their numbers have fallen as police budgets have shrunk.

Neighbourhood policing encompasses a range of policing styles or models and five are discussed in depth: intensive enforcement, hotspots policing, predictive policing, problem-oriented policing and collective efficacy. Intensive enforcement – also referred to as ‘zero tolerance’ or ‘broken windows’ – requires the police to respond immediately and consequentially to crime and incivilities. Pioneered in New York, it has attracted wild claims of success and opprobrium in equal measure. The research evidence suggests that while less aggressive versions can help to reduce incivilities (or antisocial behaviour), it can damage relations between the police and the community, undermining trust and confidence.

Hotspots policing – the targeting of resources in small geographical areas with high concentrations of crime – has been shown to be effective in the US, although simply deploying patrols to hotspots has little impact. Combined with measures to reduce opportunities for committing crime increases its crime reduction impact, although only with respect to certain kinds of crime (e.g. burglary). Crimes that are not geographically based (e.g. cyber-enabled crime), are largely hidden (e.g. domestic abuse) or transcend local boundaries (e.g. human trafficking) are less amenable to hotspots policing. Concerns have been raised that hotspots policing displaces criminal activity to neighbouring areas, but these

have proved largely unfounded. The most promising approaches to hotspots policing balance the provision of social and situational measures with measures that raise the resilience of the community over the longer term.

A derivation of hotspots policing, predictive policing aims to predict future offending (and hence optimise patrol patterns) through spatial-temporal crime analysis and prevent repeat and near-repeat victimisation. Tactical interventions ranging from target hardening to ‘super-cocooning’ are deployed and while there is some evidence of its effectiveness in the US, there is little hard evidence in the UK.

A more developed derivative of hotspots policing is problem-oriented policing, which is embedded in the National Intelligence Model. It focuses on the drivers of recurrent or connected problems, often identified by local communities, and adopts a proactive, multi-agency response to tackling them. Problem-oriented policing built on systematic, in-depth problem analysis and effective implementation has been found to be very effective in reducing crime, but it requires excellent analytical skills and is heavily reliant on effective joint working between all partner agencies.

In the most deprived, unstable and crime-ridden communities, problem-oriented policing may not be able to deliver sustainable solutions without a more detailed understanding of the socio-economic context of specific hotspots or micro-locations and the reasons why they are such attractive targets. The help of the community is needed, yet it is often in such communities where the capacity to help is at its lowest; they lack what is termed ‘collective efficacy.’ Neighbours don’t know or trust one another and

are unwilling to intervene when incidents occur or protect their neighbourhood. As yet, there is very little evidence on how collective efficacy can be built up or improved or on the impact it may have.

## The effectiveness of neighbourhood policing

Defining or conceptualising neighbourhood policing – or its US equivalent, community policing, is problematic, which makes it difficult to evaluate. Different programmes contain a variety of different components, from directed patrols and neighbourhood watch to community engagement and crime mapping, which makes them difficult to compare and hence generalise from. Having said this, the evidence in the US on the effectiveness of community policing suggests that such programmes are more likely to improve police: community relations than impact on crime itself. Changes in neighbourhood conditions, problem-solving and improving police (and partner) effectiveness did seem to underpin reductions in crime and fear in the internationally renowned Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, but a recently published meta-analysis of 37 community policing initiatives (no ref) concluded that while most led to improvements in public satisfaction, trust and legitimacy, the impact on crime was small at best.

In the UK, a robust evaluation of National Reassurance Policing Programme – the forerunner of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme – found modest improvements in crime and antisocial behaviour in some sites and overall improvements in fear of crime and public confidence, but no increase in collective efficacy. The National Reassurance Policing Programme

was scaled up nationally with every neighbourhood having a neighbourhood policing team, but after two years there was little discernible impact on any of the key outcomes. The results have been explained as a failure to properly implement the Neighbourhood Policing Programme.

## Good practice in neighbourhood policing

The main lesson from the Neighbourhood Policing Programme suggests that neighbourhood policing has to be implemented well to have any chance of success. If executed fairly and respectfully it can build public confidence, encourage compliance with the law and, most importantly, secure police legitimacy. A bank of good practice advice now provides sound guidance on how to maximise the benefits of neighbourhood policing. Crucial to effective practice is: allocating resources on the basis of a thorough analysis of demand; focusing activity on the reduction of risk, harm and threat; working closely with partner agencies to identify and resolve local problems; and designing fully inclusive community engagement strategies that take account of the increasing diversity of local communities and the needs of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach. With respect to the latter, the evidence suggests that there is considerable room for improvement.

Research shows that the quality of routine, daily encounters with members of the public are more important to improving public confidence than formal mechanisms of engagement, such as public meetings. This is particularly evident in street-based encounters with young people, black and minority ethnic and other marginalised groups

and especially in the use of stop and search powers. The experience of individuals stopped and/or searched can profoundly influence their attitude towards the police and can seriously undermine public trust and legitimacy built up over the years. Neighbourhood policing in culturally and ethnically diverse communities poses particular challenges, particularly the need to bridge language and cultural barriers.

Neighbourhood policing teams play a key role in supporting vulnerable people, such as children, the elderly or those with mental ill health or learning difficulties. With demand for protective services rising, this is likely to become an increasingly important role. The police are often poorly prepared to identify vulnerability and too often they are unable to work closely with other agencies to bring the right services to bear. There are however some examples of innovative practice, such as street triage schemes where mental health nurses accompany officers on patrol and provide immediate on-street assessments.

Today's young people are tomorrow's adults and their experience of policing in their formative years influences their attitudes later in life. Young people are most likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours and come into contact with the police more often than other age groups, but research suggests that they tend to be seen as suspects in need of control rather than potential victims in need of protection. Neighbourhood police officers can build the trust and confidence of young people and improve community relations by handling encounters sensitively, using interpersonal skills rather than resorting to law enforcement to resolve conflicts and tailoring their engagement strategies to this age group.

The effectiveness of neighbourhood policing can be enhanced by the intelligent use of new technology. Better data management and mobile working, the deployment of body-worn video and imaginative use of social media can all help to improve the work of the police in local communities. Their record in this regard is, however, largely unimpressive or still underdeveloped. An important exception is the use of crime mapping, which has become an essential tool in identifying crime hotspots, mapping police activity and allocating resources more efficiently. Crime mapping now plays an important role in ensuring the transparency of local crime data and supporting community engagement efforts.

The police service is still learning how to make best use of social media, which has considerable potential for improving engagement, intelligence sharing and police investigations as well as improving transparency and accountability. Online networking sites can assist the police in appealing for witnesses or looking for missing persons and can play a crucial role in providing intelligence about community tensions. There is however scope for improving the use of social media. Neighbourhood policing teams could, for example, use social media to build a list of key community contacts, connect with hard-to-reach-groups and empower local people to work together to solve problems, but as yet these opportunities have not been fully embraced.

## **Neighbourhood policing and the changing landscape**

The wholesale cuts in the budgets of the police and other public services, the controversial



introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners and the rapidly changing nature of criminal activity are all rapidly altering the face of policing. Funding for neighbourhood policing is no longer ring-fenced, the number of PCSOs is falling fast and the future of neighbourhood policing is under threat. New and emerging crimes, such as human trafficking, child sex exploitation and cyber-enabled fraud, which pay little respect to traditional borders, present a whole set of new challenges for which the police service is ill equipped. With neighbourhoods becoming increasingly diverse, transient and fragmented, the task of neighbourhood policing is becoming harder as the skills and resources for doing it become scarcer and the pressures to resort to reactive, response-oriented policing rises.

Major change often results in the long term being sacrificed to the short term, the important giving way to the urgent, the strategic being supplanted by the pragmatic. The key benefits of neighbourhood policing – the construction of trust, confidence and legitimacy – are long term, important and strategic and hence at risk. The chances of igniting a vicious circle, whereby prevention is replaced with reaction and demand spirals, are high. Clear-headed decisions need to be made about how best to invest diminishing police resources in these difficult and challenging times.

The key question is: What is the role and purpose of the police and where does neighbourhood policing fit into this? If the public's priorities for policing are paramount, then neighbourhood policing must be protected. The public values highly the visibility and accessibility of neighbourhood patrols and having a say in what

the police do, both of which play a crucial role in sustaining public confidence. They also value PCSOs, how they address local problems and engage with and reassure local residents.

In practice, forces are adopting a range of different approaches to the difficult decisions they are making around resource allocation in general and the future of neighbourhood policing in particular. Some forces are focusing more on the need to secure the safety of online communities; others are looking at innovative ways of using mobile technology or linking resources more closely to high areas of risk. Still others are pinning their hopes on the promotion of more volunteering or self-policing, although the public's capability and appetite for this is questionable.

# Chapter 1. Introduction

This review has been commissioned by Thames Valley Police as part of their year-long review of Neighbourhood Policing in line with objective 2.2 of the force's Delivery Plan for 2014-2015, which is to “*maximise patrol and uniformed deployment in the most efficient and operationally productive way*”, and objective 2.6, which is to “*review the approach of neighbourhood policing in light of best practice nationally and emerging evidence from the College of Policing*”. Their review is part of a wider intention to tailor patrol strategies towards those locations where crime is most likely to occur and where a uniformed presence will have the greatest impact.

The Police Foundation was invited to carry out a review of the literature on neighbourhood policing and identify best practice. The review looks at the history and development of neighbourhood policing, describes different models of neighbourhood policing, assesses the evidence on its effectiveness and identifies good practice. It also considers a number of key issues and challenges, including the use of technology and social media to enhance neighbourhood policing and how the financial crisis of 2007/08 and the subsequent recession have impacted on it. The review also looks at how globalisation and other broader socio-economic forces are changing patterns of crime and how these are likely to impact on neighbourhood policing.

The review was undertaken through desk-based research and uses a range of articles, books, governmental and non-governmental reports covering the relevant key research and policy documents from across the English speaking

world, primarily those published in the last two decades. It is not a systematic review or meta-analysis insofar as the review is not restricted to ‘gold-standard’ evaluations of neighbourhood policing strategies (i.e. those which adopt a randomised control trial or a quasi-experimental design) or indeed the other criteria that such an approach would require, but it does include the findings of such reviews.

## Chapter 2. The history and development of neighbourhood policing

The UK has a long tradition of ‘consensus’ policing as encapsulated in the famous principle *‘the police are the public and the public are the police’*. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the gap between the police and the communities they served began to widen as car patrols replaced foot patrols and police stations closed or were no longer open 24/7. As a response to this widening gap, community policing began to emerge in a number of forces in the UK and similar developments were occurring in the 1970s and early 1980s in other countries, especially North America and the Netherlands. John Alderson, a former Chief Constable, argued strongly at the time that policing should evolve from being traditional and ‘authoritarian’ to one which aspires to the greater involvement of the community (Tilley, 2008).

The principles underpinning community policing have been widely adopted and community policing has become, in the US at least, ‘a new orthodoxy for cops’ (Eck and Rosenbaum, 1994). Although difficult to define (see Chapter 4 of this report), the following provides a reasonable definition:

*“Community policing is the delivery of police services through a customer-focused approach, utilising partnerships to maximise community resources in a problem-solving format to prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime, apprehend those involved in criminal activity, and improve a community’s quality of life.”*  
(Morash and Ford, 2002)

The most comprehensive example of a carefully evaluated community policing programme in the

US is the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS), which has had a considerable influence on the development of neighbourhood policing in the UK.

### The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy

Beginning in 1993, the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) became a body of international research on the effectiveness of community policing (Quinton and Morris, 2008). The CAPS was initiated in five police districts in Chicago, all with ethnically diverse populations. Based on the premise that to reduce local concerns about crime the police needed to work together with partner agencies to address issues identified by community members, it aimed to bridge the gap between police understandings of problems – or their organisational tendency to redefine them as non-crime-related – and the understandings of local citizens (Karn, 2013). The main components of the CAPS were:

- The integration of crime control and prevention, incorporating authoritative and impartial law enforcement and rapid response with proactive problem-solving.
  - Teams of response and beat officers engaging in proactive problem-solving.
  - Police officers working the same beat on the same watch each day to ensure continuity.
  - Involvement of the community at all levels to identify local issues and problems and help set priorities.
-

- Formalisation of problem-solving, with officers creating a beat profile of the district's characteristics and chronic problems and identifying resources to address them. Together with other agencies and the community, the police prioritise problems, identify strategies and measure success.
- All officers, together with their supervisors, receive training in problem-solving, inter-personal communication, partnership working and leadership skills.
- Neighbourhood level data is analysed to map crime hotspots and track other neighbourhood problems, which is shared with local residents.
- Continuous communication with the community through newsletters, meetings, surveys, focus groups and hotlines, to secure feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- Identification of the components of change needed to fully implement the strategy with concomitant action plans.
- Independent process and outcome evaluation (Karn, 2013).

The findings of an extensive and robust evaluation of the CAPS are summarised in Chapter 4 of this report.

In the UK, the roots of neighbourhood policing can be traced back, in part, to the CAPS programme in the US, but they were also influenced by events more closer to home, particularly the Scarman Report (Lord Scarman, 1981), which followed the Brixton disorders in 1980. The report exposed shortcomings in police-community relations, identifying that the police service had become unresponsive and

uncommunicative to the community. Policing was said to be police-oriented rather than community-oriented, with the need for policing to shift towards a 'service' ethos (Savage, 2007). Since then, community policing became increasingly prominent in England and Wales, first in the form of reassurance policing and subsequently as neighbourhood policing, both of which have their genesis in the broader community policing movement (Fielding, 2009).

## Reassurance policing and the reassurance gap

Reassurance policing arose at the beginning of the millennium from a recognition that there was a significant gap – known as the 'reassurance gap' – between the falling crime rate and the public's perception of crime as still rising. Thus the 2005/06 British Crime Survey showed that despite falling crimes levels, approximately two out of three survey respondents thought that nationally, crime had increased from the previous two years (Jansson, 2006). At the same time, the government was also concerned about low levels of public confidence in the police service. With fear of crime still relatively high (largely because the public didn't know or didn't believe that crime was falling), the police developed what became known as reassurance policing. Initially developed in Surrey, it drew on the signal crimes perspective developed by Martin Innes (Innes, 2007), which claims that certain types of crimes and disorders (which differ from area to area) have a disproportionate impact upon fear of crime and feelings of security (Innes and Fielding, 2002) and therefore need to be prioritised by the police (Morris, 2006).

In 2003, the Home Office funded the National Reassurance Policing Programme to test the concept of reassurance policing. Initially, concerns were raised that the National Reassurance Policing Programme would focus less on reducing concrete crime outcomes and more on improving public perceptions:

*“It is difficult to justify devoting limited police resources to policing activity that serves only to give people the impression they are safer from crime”* (FitzGerald et al, 2002).

Other concerns included a risk that the programme would disproportionately respond to high-profile media coverage or the loudest voices at the expense of marginalised populations, whose voices are often lost (Millie, 2014a) and who might even be labelled as ‘signals’ themselves (Millie, 2010; Millie, 2014a). In practice however, little evidence was found to support these concerns (Tuffin et al, 2006).

The main aims of the two-year pilot study were to reduce crime and disorder (including perceptions of crime and disorder), increase public confidence and satisfaction and narrow the reassurance gap. A range of problem solving techniques was employed along with the identification and scoping of local issues and working with the community to determine solutions. Alongside this the National Reassurance Policing Programme sought to reduce fear of crime and improve public confidence in the police through three delivery mechanisms:

- Engagement with communities to identify local concerns and priorities;
- targeting police resources at tackling these concerns; and thereby

- create a visible and accessible police presence (Tuffin et al, 2006).

The findings of the evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme are presented in Chapter 4 of this report, but in summary the evidence suggested that by effectively combining foot patrol, community engagement and problem solving it met its aims, at least in the short term (Quinton and Tuffin, 2007). Key elements of the National Reassurance Policing Programme went on to become part of neighbourhood policing, in particular the importance of visibility, problem solving and community engagement.

## The emergence of neighbourhood policing

The political imperative that acted as a catalyst for the introduction of neighbourhood policing under the Labour government was the concept of ‘new localism,’ a notion that aimed to put the community at the heart of political decision making and give communities a say in the provision of local services (Bullock and Leeney, 2013). Building on this new localism the Home Office Strategic Plan of July 2004 outlined the government’s pledge to pursue a ‘new neighbourhood approach’ and give communities a greater say in setting priorities for their local area (Home Office, 2004a).

In November 2004, following the publication of the Strategic Plan (while the National Reassurance Policing Programme was still being piloted), the government published the White Paper ‘Building Communities, Beating Crime’, which aimed to improve the accountability of the police and increase their level of engagement with the local community (Home Office, 2004b). The

government committed to implementing neighbourhood policing across the country, supported by a Neighbourhood Policing Fund of £50 million and the provision of 25,000 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by 2008 (Home Office, 2004b). Neighbourhood policing was seen to serve three political imperatives: to tackle low level disorder, to improve the quality of life within communities and to increase confidence in the police. It also met Labour's desire to give the public a greater say in the kinds of services they wanted (the notion of 'choice') and more opportunities to engage with service providers (Bullock and Leeney, 2013).

The desire to address the 'reassurance gap' and the success of the National Reassurance Policing Programme were key factors in the development of neighbourhood policing in the UK (Flanagan, 2007). However there were doubts as to whether the positive results of the National Reassurance Policing Programme could be replicated if rolled out nationally. Unlike reassurance policing, whose focus is relatively narrow, neighbourhood policing encapsulates a broader approach that emphasises physical presence, public engagement and the prevention of crime.

## The Neighbourhood Policing Programme

In 2005, a scaled up implementation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme in the form of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme was implemented across all forces in England and Wales with Neighbourhood Policing Teams (sometimes known as Safer Neighbourhood Teams) in every ward. The teams comprised a dedicated sergeant together with a number of

police constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). They used a range of techniques to increase community engagement, such as open public meetings, drop in surgeries, panel meetings, foot patrols or door-knocking. ACPO Practice Advice accompanied the Neighbourhood Policing Programme, identifying ten 'critical success factors' for the effective '*development, implementation and integration of neighbourhood policing*' (ACPO, 2006):

- Organisational Strategy
- Integrated Policing Activity
- Evidence-Based Deployment
- Dedicated Teams
- Locally Dependent
- Public Priorities
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Intelligence-Led Deployment
- Community Engagement and Communication
- Performance Management

In its first year the Neighbourhood Policing Programme was implemented in 43 Pathfinder Basic Crime Units, one per force. Compared to the National Reassurance Policing Programme, these were bigger geographically ranging from 140,000 to 360,000 residents, eighteen times the population of the largest ward in the National Reassurance Policing Programme. During the second year of the programme, neighbourhood policing began to be implemented force wide, with full implementation achieved in its third year (Quinton and Morris, 2008). Focusing on the three delivery mechanisms developed under the National Reassurance Policing Programme pilot of engagement, visibility and problem solving, the

Neighbourhood Policing Programme aimed to increase public confidence in the police, reduce crime and reassure the public.

Following the national roll out of neighbourhood policing, a thematic by HMIC in 2008 found that all forces had achieved the basic standard of making neighbourhood policing a core part of policing work (HMIC, 2008). However, the report also identified a number of issues:

- Neighbourhood boundaries were seldom identified, agreed and reviewed with partners and communities. In turn, this meant that engagement and communication did not necessarily match the needs of communities.
- There were inconsistencies between forces in how they engage with the community, especially with the vulnerable, and in defining community intelligence and how it should be managed
- Joint problem solving was developing but there are two major issues. First, there is not a common service-wide approach; and, second, partners are not fully integrated with the neighbourhood policing agenda.
- In a minority of cases there were some problems such as out-of-date meeting schedules and less effective contact management, reinforcing the need for a consistent approach and better monitoring

HMIC made five recommendations:

1. The PCSO role should be clarified to ensure consistency and public understanding of their powers and purpose
2. Neighbourhood engagement should be flexible enough to adapt to local circumstances. Communities should be

profiled and views gathered in order to understand and meet local community needs.

3. The Association of Chief Police Officers, supported by the National Policing Improvement Agency, should develop guidance clearly defining community intelligence.
4. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), supported by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), should ensure that there is consistency and best practice in community engagement and joint problem solving across the service and communities.
5. Forces should review the contact mechanisms for neighbourhood policing, including 'out-of-office' voicemail and response protocols, so that consistent standards are applied and clarity provided for the user (HMIC, 2008).

## The Flanagan Review

In the same year that HMIC published their thematic inspection of neighbourhood policing, Sir Ronnie Flanagan was putting the finishing touches to his Independent Review of Policing, which looked at how to sustain and mainstream the progress that neighbourhood policing had made. The review recommended that neighbourhood policing should become a 'core' activity of a police force's business, occurring within and through local partnership structures to effectively tackle crime, fear of crime and quality of life issues. It stated that neighbourhood policing (and community engagement) should look different in

every neighbourhood – there is no one-size-fits-all – and identified three critical factors for ensuring its successful delivery:

- Visible, accessible and locally known authority figures
- Community involvement
- Strong relationships and joint working with partners

The review underlined the importance of a multi-agency approach in ensuring the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing and recommended that neighbourhood policing should become part of a broader approach to the coordinated delivery of local services. Termed Neighbourhood Management, this recognises that issues within a community are not solely a matter for the police (for more detail on partnership working see Chapter 5 of this report) but must, by definition, involve other services. The key principles of ‘neighbourhood management’ are summarised as follows:

- Strong Community Safety Partnership leadership and priority setting.
- Understanding local neighbourhoods through information sharing, mapping and resource allocation.
- Strong community engagement.
- Dedicated, multi-agency teams with a Neighbourhood Manager, accommodated in the same place where possible.
- Joint tasking arrangements.
- Better information to the public.
- Joint performance measures, monitoring and improvement processes.
- Financial planning and pooling of budgets to support outcomes.

To achieve this step-change in effective service delivery, Flanagan suggested that forces would need to overcome the ‘cultural hurdles’ of traditional policing, adopting a more flexible approach to performance measurement that adequately takes account of the breadth of activity and outcomes delivered by neighbourhood policing teams. There should be clear lines of accountability to different partners and continuity in postings to maximise victim satisfaction and public confidence. But at the core of Flanagan’s recommendations is the notion of a citizen-focused approach to policing (Flanagan, 2007; Flanagan, 2008).

## Citizen focused policing

Citizen focused policing is defined as: “*a way of working in which an in-depth understanding of the needs and expectations of individuals and communities is routinely reflected in decision-making, service delivery and practice*” (Home Office, 2006). An evident illustration of continued new localism under Labour, citizen focused policing ultimately sought to place the citizen at the heart of policing and is considered to be a critical factor in the emergence of neighbourhood policing.

In a review of the literature on citizen focused policing, it is suggested that effective citizen focused policing should be based on six principles of policing: attentiveness, reliability, responsiveness, competence, manners and fairness (Mastrofski, 1999). The review goes on to highlight the lack of a real understanding within the police service of what citizen-focused policing actually entails; the tendency for community engagement activities and approaches to be



'bolted on' to existing policing structures rather than transforming the way policing is delivered across the board; and how prevailing police culture can mitigate against change, particularly to police officer attitudes and conduct. Engaging with communities is not particularly well-rewarded or regarded, with police forces tending to favour enforcement work (O'Neill, 2014).

The review concludes that to successfully adopt citizen-focused policing, the service needs to:

- Understand and buy into the approach and ensure that everyone in the organisation is involved in the transformative process.
- Provide communities with local, timely and accessible information about crime and disorder problems and how local policing and community safety initiatives are responding to them.
- Ensure community engagement is proactive, flexible and tailored to meet different needs, including the needs of hard to hear groups and minorities whose needs might otherwise not get addressed (Mastrofski, 1999).

## Recent developments in neighbourhood policing

In 2008 the Labour government's Green Paper included a 'policing pledge' (Home Office, 2008) which outlined a commitment to:

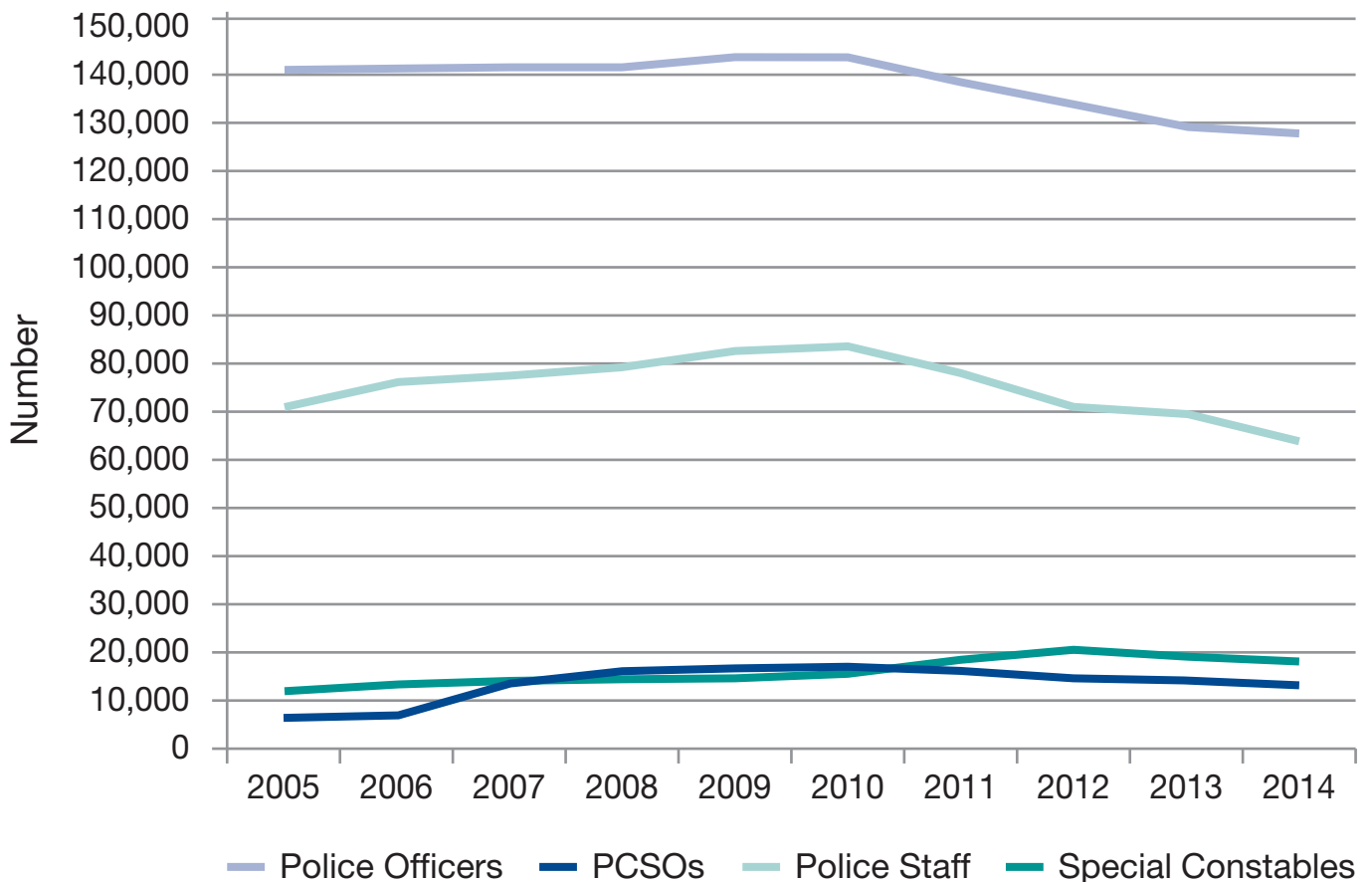
- Publicise the details of neighbourhood policing teams in each neighbourhood;
- Ensure that 80 per cent of time on duty is spent on patch, and that there are visible patrols in an area at times and places where they are needed; and
- Minimise staff turnover.

The Green Paper also included 'one numerical target for police forces – to improve public confidence' (also known as the public confidence target) (Home Office, 2008).

In 2009, a change of government led to the scrapping of the policing pledge and the single public confidence target as part of a policy of freeing forces from 'top down' central control and preparing the police (as well as other public services) for major cuts in their financial resources (Travis, 2010). Within a year, the new Coalition government published a consultation paper, 'Policing in the 21st century: reconnecting police and the people,' (Home Office, 2010b) which contained a major reform proposal with considerable implications for the future resourcing and operation of neighbourhood policing: the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Police and Crime Commissioners were introduced in 2012 with the aim of making policing more locally democratic and accountable. They have a statutory duty to consult members of the community about what issues they want the police to prioritise and to include these in their Police and Crime Plans. They formed the central plank of a raft of new reforms introduced by the new Coalition government that aimed to address the democratic deficit in the governance of police forces. The old tripartite system was considered unfit for purpose and Police and Crime Commissioners, which replaced the old Police Authorities, were intended to effectively hold Chief Constables to account, thus shifting responsibility for police performance away from the centre.

Two years after a Ministry of Justice consultation published in 2012, (Ministry of Justice, 2012) Police and Crime Commissioners took

**Figure 1. Number of police officers, PCSOs, police staff and Special Constables, 2005-2014**

Source: Home Office (2014) *Police workforce, England and Wales*. London: Home Office.

responsibility for commissioning the majority of support services for victims of crime at a local level. This is important for neighbourhood partners as it requires the adoption of a multi-agency approach with neighbourhood policing partners in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop and deliver effective and improved services to meet the needs of victims.

But arguably the greatest influence on neighbourhood policing since the introduction of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme in 2005 has been the sizeable cuts to the policing budget. Following a long period of increasing numbers of

officers, the number of (full time equivalent) officers has fallen by 11 per cent since 2010, which amounts to approximately 16,000 officers (see Figure 1).

Concerns have been raised about the impact of these cuts on neighbourhood policing, not least by the Stevens Commission, which warned of the impact the budget cuts could have on neighbourhood policing (Independent Police Commission, 2013). The implications of the cuts for neighbourhood policing are discussed further in Chapter 6 of this report.

# Chapter 3. Models of neighbourhood policing

This chapter looks in detail at five different models of neighbourhood policing: intensive enforcement, hotspots policing, problem-oriented policing, predictive policing and collective efficacy. But before describing each model in turn, a brief summary of the literature on foot patrol, the basic building block of all models of neighbourhood policing, is presented.

## Foot patrol

Foot patrol is essentially a policing tactic or technique that involves movement around an area on foot for the purpose of observation, inspection or security. Based on the allocation of officers between relatively small geographical areas, it provides a way of organising policing personnel and actively deploying resources. Patrols on foot tend to be reactive rather than proactive, the physical presence of officers acting as a deterrent to criminal and other antisocial behaviour or being on hand to quickly react to calls from the public for assistance.

Historically, foot patrol has been a central feature of policing in England and Wales, with the 'bobby on the beat' forming the 'essential bedrock of the force' (Reiner, 2000) in Sir Robert Peel's strategic vision of the Metropolitan Police. The fictional constable Dixon of Dock Green emerged as an iconic media representation of the friendly bobby, cementing 'the bobby's status in post-war English life (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). Through the latter half of the twentieth century, the image of the friendly beat bobby remained powerful even as officers were increasingly shifting from pounding the beat on foot to patrolling in cars as well as

being diverted into new specialist areas. Today, this preventative, high visibility approach to protecting local neighbourhoods is still an entrenched feature of contemporary British policing.

## *The introduction of Police Community Support Officers*

In the last twenty years or so, British public opinion surveys about the police service have consistently reflected a high degree of public support for police foot patrol, and a general dissatisfaction with the level of resources that the police service typically devotes to it (Smith and Gray, 1985; Bland, 1997; FitzGerald et al, 2002; Nicholas and Walker, 2004; MORI, 2005). This public demand has driven the proliferation of non-police patrols in public areas, such as shopping malls and leisure centres, funded by local authorities, commercial organisations and even neighbourhood collectives. Recognising the need to accept and manage this growing phenomenon, while seeking to stem declining public confidence in the police and reduce fear of crime and disorder, the government developed the concept of the 'extended police family (Home Office, 2001).' The proposals, which included a new, lower tier of policing operatives trained and tasked with patrolling communities, were implemented in the Police Reform Act 2002. Subsequently, in 2005, the first 5,000 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were employed across the police forces of England and Wales, carrying out foot patrol duties alongside police officers and civilian support staff (Home Office, 2005).

The main purpose of PCSOs is to provide a visible presence in communities. Alongside this their role includes intelligence gathering, interacting with the public and tackling low level disorder and antisocial behaviour (Cooper et al, 2006). They do not hold the same level of powers as police officers, but since they are less likely to spend time on desk based paperwork, they can dedicate more time to engaging with communities and building social capital. The public tend to perceive PCSOs as being more 'approachable' and 'less threatening' than sworn officers, which has been shown to lead to higher levels of trust and confidence (O'Neill, 2014).

According to the Casey review (Casey, 2008), those who had met PCSOs in their area were very positive about their role. Despite some concerns about their lack of real powers, the public liked their visibility, approachability and problem-solving, all of which they felt helped to reassure members of the community and deter crime and antisocial behaviour. Views were equally divided as to whether they should have the same powers as sworn officers, particularly in relation to arrest. Since the Casey review was published the government has revised their powers.

At March 2014, the number of PCSOs across all 43 forces stood at approximately 13,400 (Home Office, 2014), down from more than 16,000 in 2010. However, despite being an obvious candidate for forces seeking to make savings, recent research suggests that, despite falls in the overall numbers of PCSOs, most police forces are maintaining similar proportions of PCSOs in their operational workforce (Greig-Midlane, 2014). Equally, between 2012 and 2014, forces were maintaining approximately the same proportion of

their spend on neighbourhood policing at just under 13 per cent. This suggests that most forces acknowledge the importance of PCSOs to neighbourhood policing and are committed to neighbourhood policing despite operating in times of austerity.

### *The effectiveness of foot patrol*

The research evidence on the deterrent effect of the visible presence of foot patrols shows that, on the whole, they do not reduce crime rates, but can improve community relations and reduce fear of crime, although exceptionally, increased levels of directed foot patrols have been shown to have some impact on the carrying of offensive weapons and personal robberies (Karn, 2013). However, the evidence does suggest that foot patrols do play an important part as one of a number of tactics to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour and improve police-community relations where resources are more targeted, or problem-oriented (Ratcliffe et al, 2011). Thus in the Philadelphia foot patrol experiment, targeted foot patrols were found to reduce violent crime, which suggests that high dosages can be effective, but since these are rarely sustainable over time, they are unlikely to be cost-effective.

Despite this limited evidence of effectiveness, the majority of the public both expect and believe that patrol officers help to prevent crime and deter offenders. In direct terms, the chances of a patrol officer coming across an incident in progress are remote (Skogan and Frydl, 2004). Research undertaken by the Home Office in the 1980s (Clarke and Hough, 1984) showed that if patrols were evenly distributed across a number of neighbourhoods within a geographical area, an

officer in London would expect to pass within one hundred yards of a burglary in progress once in every eight years. But it is perhaps not their direct deterrent effect that the public value and more their indirect effect – the idea that by providing a consistent presence they provide a sense of reassurance and confirmation that the police are somehow ‘doing their job’.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) in 2002/03 showed that the public still place a high value on foot patrols, ranking them third in importance after responding to emergencies and detecting and arresting offenders. In terms of improving community safety, the public place increases in foot patrols above all other measures (Wakefield, 2006). A high level of visibility, although not particularly effective in terms of deterring crime, matters to the public, which helps to explain why politicians often pledge to “increase the number of bobbies on the beat” or latterly, “maintain the front line”. Ten years later, the 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales (which replaced the BCS) found that seven out of ten respondents correlated high visibility with high levels of satisfaction in the police, whereas those who reported rarely seeing an officer on the beat in their neighbourhood were much less satisfied (Office for National Statistics, 2014).

Significantly, foot patrol played a key role in the ‘success’ of the National Reassurance Policing Programme when implemented alongside community engagement and problem solving, leading to increased public confidence and reduced worry about crime (Tuffin et al, 2006). However evidence from the evaluation of the national roll out of Reassurance Policing found that foot patrol alone was not sufficient on its own

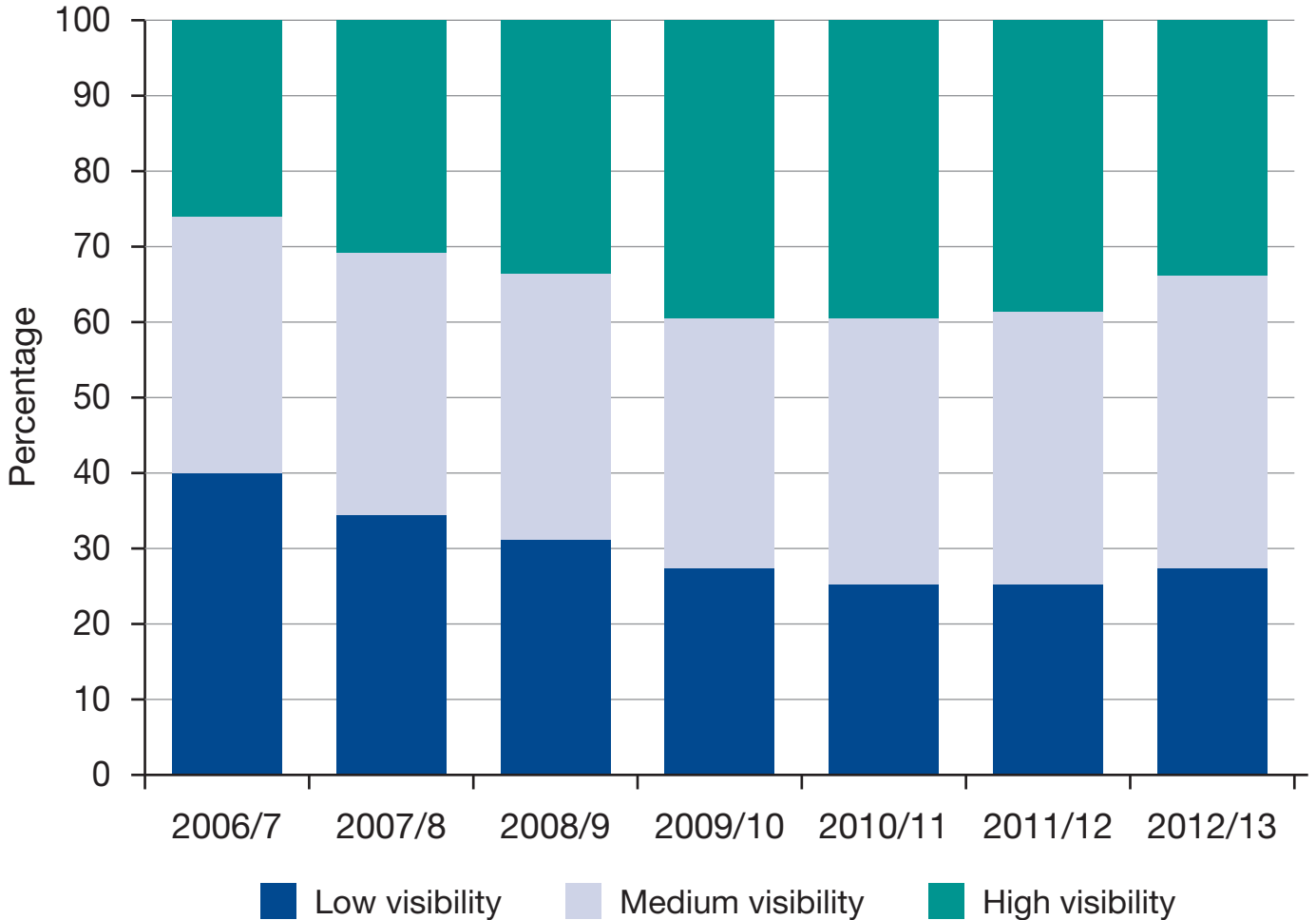
to prompt a significant shift in public perceptions (Quinton and Morris, 2008). As HMIC’s all-force comparison public survey undertaken in 2013 showed, when asked what would make respondents feel safer in their local area, around half said that ‘face to face interaction’ with a police officer or a PCSO on patrol (HMIC, 2013a). In other words, the public don’t just want to see an officer on patrol, but would prefer to directly interact with them – talk to them and get to know them.

A survey conducted as part of the Policing in London study in 2002 found that while the majority – two out of every three – felt that patrols should concentrate on detecting and preventing crime, half also wanted them to offer reassurance and a quarter thought they should also undertake work in schools and gather local intelligence (Fitzgerald et al, 2002).

Today, foot patrols (often bracketed with response officers under the term ‘front line policing’) are at significant risk following the cuts to the policing budget. Figure 2 below looks at the public’s perceptions of changes in levels of visibility of police officers (and PCSOs) on foot patrol since 2006/07.

Figure 2 shows that the proportion of respondents who reported never seeing a police officer (or PCSO) on foot patrol declined from 40 per cent in 2006/07 (just as PCSOs were being introduced) to a low of 25 per cent in 2010/11, but this has been followed by a small increase to about 28 per cent in 2012/13, which is likely to continue. Similarly, the proportion reporting seeing an officer on foot patrol at least once a week has also begun to fall since 2010/11.

**Figure 2. Public perceptions of police visibility, 2006/07 – 2012/13**



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2014

Research undertaken by HMIC in 2013 found that two out of five respondents were dissatisfied with the level of police patrols in their area, with a further two out of five feeling neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (HMIC, 2013a). The same research found that while forces have taken material steps to protect front line foot patrol e.g. single crewing and the use of technology to keep police officers out of the station, the proportion of police officers and PCSOs deployed to public functions has fallen slightly from 61 per cent to 59 per cent. This

suggests that the full impact of the budget cuts is still to be felt on the ground.

### **Intensive enforcement**

Intensive forms of enforcement are based on the notion that the police and their partners should respond immediately and consequentially to crime and incivilities (i.e. low level disorder and antisocial behaviour). Often referred to as ‘zero tolerance’ or ‘broken windows’, these approaches to neighbourhood policing sit

comfortably alongside the kind of crime fighting rhetoric popular with some politicians.

Zero tolerance policing prioritises aggressive order maintenance for often relatively minor infringements of the law in order to deter others who might be disposed to committing similar or more serious offences (Greene, 2014). It is premised on the idea that no level of disorder and crime should be tolerated and has been pioneered primarily in New York City in the early 1990s by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and New York Police Commissioner William Bratton at a time when crime in New York had spiralled. The large fall in crime in New York during the 1990s was subsequently attributed to this approach, but this has also been contested. The main difficulty lies in causally attributing the fall in crime to the introduction of intensive policing, particularly given that crime fell in virtually every city in the US and Europe during this period, where different approaches prevailed (Dixon, 2005).

Commissioner William Bratton has since gone on record as suggesting that the approach adopted in New York wasn't one of zero tolerance which, he claimed, suggested an 'over-zealous' approach' (Bratton, 1998). Zero tolerance policing has also been criticised for failing to address the underlying causes of crime, marginalising minority ethnic and other social groups and undermining police legitimacy.

Arguably, zero tolerance policing in the UK first emerged during the Brixton riots of 1981, but most recently was mooted following the August riots of 2011 and the police shooting of Mark Dugan. The government sought the advice of Commissioner William Bratton and in response to

the riots pledged support for zero tolerance policing (Hennessy and d'Ancona, 2011).

Broken windows theory, developed by Wilson and Kelling, is essentially a more sophisticated version of zero tolerance policing. It is based on the notion that social and physical incivilities cause a neighbourhood to be fearful, which in turn prompts 'respectable' community members to move, leaving a rump of less respectable residents who are less able or willing to exert informal social control (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). This in turn leads to higher levels of crime and incivilities, which attracts more potential offenders to the area and increases the risk of serious crime. By targeting minor infractions of the law, this spiral of decline is thus 'nipped in the bud' (Kelling and Wilson, 2005). While the link between incivilities and more serious crime has been challenged (Taylor, 2001), focusing police resources on incivilities (more commonly referred to as antisocial behaviour in the UK) has become a popular government response to a legitimate public concern.

Intensive enforcement can increase complaints against the police, undermine trust and weaken relations between the police and the public. In general, research suggests that intensive enforcement activity (and any deterrent effect it may have) is also unsustainable in the longer term and, in its simplest form, does not, on the whole, reduce crime or incivilities (Skogan, 1992). However, its effectiveness would seem to depend largely on what tactics are adopted and how they are deployed (Skogan, 1990). There is evidence, for example, that the adoption of CompStat to scrutinise real-time crime data and target police activity in specific hotspots probably contributed

to the reductions in crime in New York. On the other hand, it should be noted that the broken windows approach came under heightened scrutiny in New York after an officer killed a suspect during an arrest for selling untaxed cigarettes (Collapse Network, 2014).

## Hotspots policing

Initiatives that take account of the uneven distribution of crime between and within neighbourhoods and target resources on micro-locations (a small number of streets, a block of flats or even two or three addresses) are commonly referred to as 'hotspots' policing (Weisburd and Braga, 2006). The hotspots model has its origins in the US and arises out of academic research that showed the possible benefits of bringing together crime prevention efforts, in particular the allocation of resources, in concentrated 'clusters' to address criminal activity (Sherman and Weisburd, 1995; Weisburd and Green, 1995). The influential Minneapolis Hot Spots Experiment between 1988 and 1989 for example, found that 50 per cent of calls for service came from only 3.3 per cent of locations and advocated focusing interventions (in this case increased patrol) on such micro-locations rather than whole neighbourhoods. It delivered clear, if modest, general deterrent effects as measured by reductions in crime calls and observations of disorder (Sherman et al, 1989). Following the increasing popularity of hotspots policing in the US, it began to be recognised as an effective crime reduction strategy in the UK.

The effectiveness of hotspots policing varies according to the approaches and tactics that are used; it is rarely sufficient simply to concentrate

police patrol resources in specific locations (Rosenbaum, 2006). While there is evidence that focusing resources in hotspots reduces crime, initiatives that simply rely on using patrol and law enforcement in these hotspots tend to be less effective (Taylor et al, 2011), with the impact tending to be small and short-lived (Koper, 1995).

A frequent component of hotspots policing initiatives is the introduction of measures that reduce the opportunities for committing crime. Commonly known as 'situational crime prevention', such measures include installing better locks on doors and windows (target hardening), increasing surveillance through for example installing CCTV cameras and looking after or altering the environment by for example cleaning up graffiti, removing abandoned cars or improving street lighting. There is now considerable evidence to support the effectiveness of situational crime prevention as well as a convincing body of evidence that broadly supports the strategic targeting of micro-locations (Bottoms, 2012).

Although the evidence on hotspots policing is encouraging, it still poses a number of challenges. Analyses of hotspots based on reported crime data are limited in terms of identifying patterns that are not location-specific (for example e-crime and fraud) or are under-reported (for example, domestic abuse and hate crime) (Rosenbaum, 2006). There are also limits to the degree to which managing localised crime hotspots can address criminality that transcends local, regional or even national boundaries. But the challenge that has ignited the most controversy is whether hotspots policing ends up just displacing criminal activity to other neighbourhoods where there are fewer or



less frequent patrols. It would seem, however, that such fears are not entirely confirmed. Research has shown that whereas some displacement does sometimes occur, in some instances hotspots policing can lead to reductions in crime in neighbouring areas (Braga et al, 2012).

Commonly referred to as 'disbursed benefits', this absence of displacement is explained by the fact that crime hotspots also tend to be hotspots of offender residence and that offenders are reluctant to commit offences in unfamiliar areas or far from where they live (Weisburd et al, 2006). Focusing resources on places for which there is evidence of concentrated demand has an operational logic that is appealing to police managers, but most studies have tended to neglect the reaction of the community to concentrated crime control efforts. While community members may generally support the concentration of resources to address crime, care needs to be taken to ensure that hotspots policing does not become overly enforcement focused (Rosenbaum, 2006).

Although arrests will always be a central element in policing, the aggressive use of enforcement approaches to address problems that are not considered the most damaging in a community, or in ways that appear heavy-handed or unjust, can have lasting consequences for police-community relations (Karn, 2007) and ultimately police legitimacy. Such approaches can also disproportionately increase the entry of predominantly low-income, often minority ethnic men into the criminal justice system. Political pressure for short-term gains therefore needs to be carefully considered alongside the potential risk that particular types of hotspots policing can

undermine the long-term stability of neighbourhoods (Weisburd, 2012).

A thorough understanding of the dynamics of the social context in which resources are being deployed may help to mitigate some of these limitations. Some of the most promising approaches to hotspots policing integrate socio-economic interventions and social and situational crime prevention measures to reduce crime with measures that increase the resilience of local residents. They also incorporate the strong body of evidence that shows that what matters is not just whether more police resources are assigned to hotspots, but what resources are best deployed (from what agencies/ professions/ sectors) to address a well-understood problem, and how they are used (Rosenbaum, 2006).

A recent review of hotspots policing initiatives published by the Campbell Collaboration (Braga et al, 2012) provides convincing evidence that while, overall, hotspots policing strategies can be effective in reducing crime, they are more likely to do so where interventions alter the characteristics and dynamics of hotspots through problem-oriented policing interventions, which is discussed after the next section on predictive policing.

## Predictive Policing

A relatively recent development of hotspots policing, which essentially involves identifying and allocating resources to prevent repeat victimisation in high crime neighbourhoods, is predictive policing, which aims to identify in advance where and when crimes will be perpetrated. Predictive policing has its roots in academic research on repeat victimisation, which showed that repeat incidents account for a

relatively large proportion of most categories of offences. Thus one per cent of people experience 59 per cent of all personal crimes and two per cent experience 41 per cent of non-vehicle related property crime (Pease, 1998). Furthermore, research has shown that crime risks increase for near-neighbours and not just victims and that the perpetrators, at least for burglary offences, tend to be the same (Burnasco, 2008). This research has spawned a number of so-called 'Super-Cocooning' projects, which focus on preventing repeat and near-repeat victimisation and have been shown to have a significant impact (Chainey, 2012).

*'Predictive policing is the application of analytical techniques—particularly quantitative techniques—to identify likely targets for police intervention and prevent crime or solve past crimes by making statistical predictions'*. (Perry et al, 2013)

Predictive policing is effectively an extension of projects which target repeat and near-repeat victimisation. First piloted in the United States under the 'Los Angeles Predictive Policing Experiment,' it used special software called 'Predpol' to provide each patrol shift with customized crime predictions for a small spatial area (500ft by 500ft) (PredPol, n.d.a) Other American police departments have adopted the model and its success has been widely documented. Thus in Atlanta Georgia, for example, crime fell by 19 per cent five months after introducing predictive policing and in Richmond, California, violent crime fell by 21 per cent, property crime by 28 per cent, vehicle crime by 34 per cent and residential burglary by 50 per cent one year after the introduction of predictive

policing. Police Departments in Alhambra, Norcross, Modesto and Santa Cruz have recorded similar findings (PredPol, n.d.b)

In the UK, Predpol was first deployed in 2009 in a six-month trial in Kent. Although the trial has not yet been independently evaluated, initial findings from an internal operational review (Kent Police, 2012) indicated some positive results, with hotspots being more likely to be accurately identified. The use of the software met with positive officer feedback, freeing up police analysts to work on intelligence led tasks and increasing public engagement. The operational review also claimed a downward force-wide trend of four per cent in all crime, with an increased dosage of Predpol for one day in Kent allegedly disrupting criminal activity across the force for up to two weeks (Kent Police, 2012).

Predictive policing was also trialled in Manchester in 2010 where it was used to predict (and hence prevent) residential burglary in the Trafford area based on the 'Optimal Forager' theory. According to this theory, the risk of further crimes being committed is greatest at the home of the original victim and spreads out to neighbouring properties, with the risk receding over time. Thus one incident of burglary could serve as a predictor for an increased rate of burglary for properties within a range of 300 to 400 metres from the originally burgled home for a period of one to two months following the initial offence (Ross et al, 2008).

The Manchester initiative, which was independently evaluated, aimed to predict future offending and optimal patrol patterns through the use of spatial-temporal analysis. Tactical interventions deployed included target hardening, 'super-cocooning' and a campaign of advice to

home owners. The evaluation showed a 26.6 per cent reduction in domestic burglary offences compared to the previous 12 months, a more effective and efficient use of resources (Fielding et al, 2012) and an increase in public confidence (Chainey, 2012).

Predictive policing based upon the Optimal Forager theory and focusing on residential burglary has also been recently deployed in Birmingham (Operation Swordfish) and Leeds (Project Optimal). In Birmingham, residents surveyed via a postal questionnaire (244 out of 1,300 replied), were more satisfied with the police a year after the project was implemented, but the differences between the experimental and control sites were not statistically significant, probably because the sample size (i.e. 244) was too small and/or because the target hardening measures that were implemented were of very low intensity. The evaluation also found that homes in the control sites that had been burgled were more likely to be re-victimised than in the experimental sites, but again these findings were not found to be statistically significant. Although the findings for burglary rates were better in high crime as opposed to low crime areas, they were (again) not statistically significant<sup>1</sup>.

In Leeds, over the course of one week, 20 per cent of offences were predicted by offences from the preceding week; 30 per cent of offences were predicted by offences from the preceding two weeks and approximately 40 per cent of offences were predicted by offences from the preceding three week period (Addis, 2012).

Some potential problems with predictive policing have been identified (Perry et al, 2013) and include:

- Data protection/collection issues (including censorship, relevance and systematic bias).
- The relatively small size of areas that can be targeted.
- The inability of predictive policing software to analyse the underlying causes of crime and identify risk factors to be targeted in an area.

Predictive policing has also been criticised on the grounds that predictive forecasts alone cannot justify the reasonable suspicion grounds for a legal stop and search as they fail to provide any personal knowledge about an on-going crime or provide any characteristics of the offender (Ferguson, 2012). Furthermore, predictive policing and its crime reduction effect is yet to be robustly tested such that the positive findings, like those reported above, can be unequivocally or partially attributed to the predictive analysis itself (as opposed to the use of a range of tactics and interventions) (Telep and Weisburd, 2012).

At a time when the police service is faced with extensive cuts to its budget and forces are being asked to do 'more with less,' predictive policing might be seen as a way of using resources more effectively and efficiently. However the effective deployment of resources in advance is heavily dependent on the quality of the predictive data and given its infancy (and its use so far with just a limited number of crimes), more research is needed before its utility can be firmly endorsed.

## Problem Oriented Policing

Problem-oriented policing emerged as a more proactive alternative to traditional response policing. While still identifying hotspots, problem-oriented policing places more emphasis

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished data from Operation Swordfish, West Midlands.

on understanding the connections between problems and *why* they are occurring, tackling problems identified by local communities that have been resistant to other, more conventional responses (Goldstein, 1990). The model requires a thorough analysis of the causes of crime and disorder, identifying strategies for intervention (beyond law enforcement) and involving other agencies and the community in delivering them. It also requires checking whether the intended benefits have accrued.

The main intention is to reduce crime and disorder proactively and sustainably by dealing with recurrent or connected problems, rather than responding incident by incident, and improving community confidence in the effectiveness of agencies by responding to its immediate and most pressing concerns. Problem-solving has become part of policing practice; it is embedded in the National Intelligence Model (and potentially in some investigation practice), and is evident, in particular, in the way analysis is intended to inform multi-agency tasking meetings (Maguire and John, 2003).

Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment (SARA) is the model most often used to guide the design and implementation of multi-agency, problem-solving crime reduction initiatives. The model comprises an iterative process of:

- Identifying community and organisational concerns (scanning).
- Investigating priority problems, such as exploring in depth what, where, when, who, how and why the problem is happening (analysis).
- Developing tailored, evidence-based interventions to address the problems identified and their causes (response).
- Evaluating the implementation and outcomes achieved (assessment) and then redefining and refining those problems and strategies in response to attempts to address them.

SARA has been criticised for being over-simplistic (Bullock and Tilley, 2009), but it nevertheless provides a logical approach to embedding evidence in problem-oriented policing.

The capacity for problem-solving approaches to reduce local crime rates in hotspots is now widely accepted, especially when driven by community concerns (Tuffin, 2006), although their effectiveness has in the past suffered from implementation failure (Quinton and Morris, 2008) and a tendency for the police to ‘rush to solution’ before securing a full understanding of the problem and how best to resolve it (Myhill, 2006). The police and their partners often fail to conduct systematic, in-depth problem analysis (Telep and Weisburd, 2012), revisit problems and learn lessons highlighted during implementation, or effectively implement evidence-based interventions (Tilley, 2010). The effective integration of multi-agency information and interventions also remains a significant challenge and analytical capacity remains one of the potentially weakest elements in the implementation of a problem-solving approach. Nevertheless, a recent systematic review concluded that problem-oriented policing initiatives built on sound data analysis and research have had ‘an overwhelmingly positive impact on crime rates’ (Weisburd et al, 2010), although the evidence is less clear about how

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and why they have worked in some circumstances but not in others (Tilley, N. (2010).

The growth in the analysis infrastructure within UK police forces, using software for the collection, mapping and analysis of crime and disorder data and other local information to inform an understanding of local problems, has been assisted in part by the recognition of the need to understand better the connections between incidents. There have been successful initiatives that share data between police and partner agencies, bringing together different kinds of information to supplement recorded crime data. An initiative in Cardiff Accident and Emergency Departments in hospitals, for example, actively collected data from victims of violence to develop better responses to tackling violence (including unreported incidents) (Florence et al, 2011). However, attempts to replicate this elsewhere have struggled to create the conditions for the successful provision and use of similar quality data (Davison et al, 2010).

Effective problem-oriented policing requires close joint working between the police and their partners. They need to access information held by other agencies on the nature and causes of problems and they need to work with them to implement cross-cutting, sustainable solutions. Although difficult to assess, partnership working has been shown to reduce violence in the US (Berry et al, 2011). According to McGarrell, 2010, good practice in partnership working includes:

- Developing a common set of values.
- Focusing collaborative work on well-defined problems.
- Embedding researchers to help insure against implementation failure.

- Providing robust data analysis to guide decision-making.

Following the recession and the severe budget cuts which followed, effective partnership working is being undermined, despite its basis in statute, as partner agencies retreat to their core statutory duties.

## Collective Efficacy

Reducing the opportunities for crime is sometimes contrasted with approaches that attempt to change the socio-economic context of high crime neighbourhoods. This latter school of thought acknowledges the importance of developing longer term solutions (Rosenbaum, 2006) based on a detailed understanding of the multiple and persistent problems commonly found in such communities, such as high concentrations of poverty and ill-health; a poor physical environment; a large number of low-income families; poor performing schools; limited neighbourhood resources and informal control; an active drug market; and substantial barriers to offender resettlement.

Although often characterised as polarised approaches, researchers have begun to highlight the potential for a more integrated approach that takes greater account of the social context of hotspots, in particular the need for greater recognition that it is the social characteristics of hotspots that account for their longevity (Weisburd, 2012). This suggests that there may be some potential for more targeted socio-economic interventions in micro-locations.

As yet little is known about why hotspots are attractive targets and what role, if any, residents'

'collective efficacy' plays in this. The term 'collective efficacy' is used to describe the degree to which neighbours know and trust one another and are willing to intervene (together or individually) to protect their neighbourhood from crime and related problems. It acts as a protective factor in neighbourhoods that might otherwise experience high levels of crime (Sampson and Raudenbusch, 1999). So for example if residents in a particular neighbourhood are willing to contact the authorities if they see a stranger acting suspiciously or have a belief that neighbours would do so, then that neighbourhood would be considered to have a relatively high level of collective efficacy. Research shows that if offenders are aware of such a willingness to intervene, they will modify their behaviour accordingly (Bottoms, 2012).

Recent research, which has begun to explore whether collective efficacy is also protective in micro-locations (Bottoms, 2012; Weisburd, 2012), suggests that offenders are aware of the willingness of local residents to intervene or watch out for each other. Thus a street, for example, with greater collective efficacy may be a less attractive location for committing offences than another, even within a high crime neighbourhood. This suggests there may be potential benefits in strengthening collective efficacy in micro-location hotspots (Bottoms, 2012), particularly in areas of high population turnover, where length of residence, social organisation and mutual trust, may be considerably less. There is however very little research evidence on how levels of collective efficacy can be built up or improved.

An important contribution to the idea that collective efficacy can help to reduce crime and

disorder, has been developed in the US. Entitled 'situational policing', it divides neighbourhoods into four broad types, based on their levels of crime and collective efficacy and allocates a different policing style to each type of neighbourhood. The four types of neighbourhood are those where residents:

1. Rely solely on the police for protection as long as the police do what is asked of them
2. View the police as primarily responsible for their protection, but understand that they can't fix all their problems
3. Are frustrated with each other (rather than with the police) as they try to work together to improve the neighbourhood
4. Trust one another and work with the police when they are needed (Nolan et al, 2004).

As yet there is no evidence of the effectiveness of situational policing.

As resources for policing are expected to continue to decline, pressure on local communities to take more responsibility for addressing their own crime and disorder problems, with or without the help of the police, is likely to increase. Projects which aim to improve collective efficacy may as a result become more popular as ways of reducing demand are sought. Chapter 6 of this report looks at this in more detail.

# Chapter 4. The effectiveness of neighbourhood policing

This chapter summarises the findings of evaluations of community and neighbourhood policing in the US and the UK. It summarises the US research on the effectiveness of community policing, including the world-renowned Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, and the (more limited) evidence on the effectiveness of neighbourhood (and reassurance) policing in the UK.

## Community policing

Community policing tends to mean different things to different people and lacks a clear definition. The term ‘community’ is particularly and notoriously slippery and difficult to define (Tilley, 2008). While in practice the term ‘community’ typically implies the population of the immediate intervention area or neighbourhood, neighbourhoods are not necessarily homogenous constructs and can often be divided, with problematic ones exhibiting *“conflicts over use of space, legitimate lifestyles and appropriate forms of policing”*. The ‘community’ *“rarely, if ever comprises all residents, or a representative sample of them”* and is therefore *“elusive and may in many cases be illusory”* (Tilley, 2008). Thus its definitional and conceptual ambiguity combined with the sheer heterogeneity and scope of community-oriented policing and the wide range of strategies employed, makes it difficult to evaluate (Boba Santos, 2013).

Specific strategies have been used (in effect, as a proxy) to represent community policing in previous evaluations. One of these is Neighbourhood Watch. Others include increasing the flow of community information and intelligence to the

police through meetings, officers ‘walking the beat’ and engaging with residents, storefront beat offices, and disseminating crime information to the public through the internet, crime maps, and newsletters (Boba Santos, 2013).

Notwithstanding that none of these capture the full scale and nature of community policing, studies show that, with the exception of doorstep engagement, community meetings, neighbourhood watch, storefront offices, and newsletters do not reduce crime (Weisburd and Eck, 2004). Such approaches have shown to have a positive effect on community perceptions of disorder, however (Weisburd and Eck, 2004).

### *The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy*

The community and its concerns are at the heart of the CAPS, where priority setting and problem-solving are devolved to local residents and neighbourhood level officers. Set up in 1993 in five police districts in Chicago, it was based on the premise that local concerns about crime can only be tackled by the police and local residents working in partnership. The evaluation of the CAPS showed that all beats saw a reduction in crime, with the decline most evident in African American communities. Such changes were primarily attributed to the improvement of neighbourhood conditions and changes in police effectiveness. Fear of crime also saw reductions amongst the highest fear groups (African-Americans, women and older residents). However the impact of the CAPS was experienced differently by different ethnic groups. Whereas the vast majority of African Americans were aware of the programme and reported large improvements

in neighbourhood conditions and expressed fewer concerns regarding neighbourhood disorder, the experience of the Latino community was more mixed: barely half were aware of the programme, with many reporting little improvement in neighbourhood conditions or disorder, with particular concerns about public drinking and deteriorating conditions around schools (Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium, 2004).

Once the programme was underway, confidence in the police steadily improved before levelling off towards the end. Although beat meetings were unrepresentative of the community, participation at beat meetings rose steadily during the first seven years of the programme with 60 per cent of adults aware of the meetings. By the end of the programme however, beat meetings had become shorter with fewer officers attending and public satisfaction waning. On the whole, members of the community reported positively on how the police were dealing with problems raised by residents, including how they worked with residents to solve them, but their performance in terms of order maintenance and victim support was reported as relatively poor.

Relied upon as a model of community policing illustrating best practice, the CAPS recognised that the police alone could not solve the city's crime problems and that a multi-agency partnership was required to identify and solve neighbourhood crime problems. Thus the overarching aim of the programme was not so much to reduce crime and disorder but to improve the quality of life among the diverse populations in Chicago's neighbourhoods.

The effectiveness of community policing has been recently systematically assessed through a

rigorous synthesis and review of existing academic research (a so-called systematic review) (Gill et al, 2014). This study sought to identify its impact(s) on crime, disorder, fear, citizen satisfaction with police, and police legitimacy by assessing 25 reports containing 65 independent comparisons of community-oriented policing, the vast majority of which (approximately 85 per cent) were conducted in neighbourhoods in the US. Both pre and post-intervention scenarios were analysed. 37 of these comparisons were included in a meta-analysis (where quantitative findings from studies that reported sufficient data to calculate an effect size were combined).

From the outset, the authors concede that the diverse array of approaches that have been collectively defined as 'community oriented policing' were represented in their sample of studies. In some cases, intervention descriptions were vague, and while few stringently conformed to core 'community oriented policing' ideology, all examples included in the review incorporated some degree of community collaboration (Gill et al. 2014).

The findings indicated that community oriented policing interventions are most successful in terms of their impact on non-crime control outcomes, particularly improving citizen's satisfaction with the police. Satisfaction was measured in 23 of the 65 comparisons, and community oriented policing showed an improvement in 78 per cent of these. Community oriented policing was also shown to have improved police legitimacy in six out of the ten studies that measured this outcome. According to the authors, this indicates that *"residents typically perceived that officers in community oriented policing areas were more*



*likely to treat them fairly and with respect, and that they trusted the police.*” Community oriented policing was also shown to lead to reductions in citizens’ perceptions of social and physical disorder in their neighbourhood.

Evidence for the actual crime prevention effect of community oriented policing was found to be inconsistent. Although community oriented policing approaches were associated with marginally greater odds of a decrease in recorded crime (between five to ten per cent), the lack of robust statistical findings led the authors to assert that community oriented policing potentially “*has no effect on crime*”. Neither the presence nor absence of a problem-solving approach as part of community oriented policing interventions was seen to have a bearing on this outcome, although they concede that the findings from research are somewhat ambiguous.

Given that community oriented policing was not originally meant to be simply another crime-fighting tool it is arguably unfair to expect crime prevention effects to transpire. While crime reduction is seen as a desired objective of community oriented policing, it was not necessarily a key reason for its adoption; community oriented policing incorporated a range of diverse roles for the police beyond tackling crime, including addressing the fear of crime, responding to general community problems, generating positive relationships with local residents and hence increasing public satisfaction, trust and legitimacy. This helps to explain why a number of academic reviews highlight that, despite significant investment, community-oriented policing has little impact on crime. Importantly, the authors suggest that

increased citizen satisfaction and perceptions of police legitimacy may be restricting the ability to reliably measure the crime prevention capabilities of community oriented policing programmes, given that higher satisfaction and trust in the police may increase the willingness to report crime and therefore mask crime reductions.

## Neighbourhood policing

Like community policing, neighbourhood policing is also not easy to define and its meaning varies according to who one asks. It clearly differs from reactive policing (as practised primarily by response teams) in that the latter places a much greater emphasis on immediate response to specific requests by the public, many of which are deemed to be emergencies. The public see neighbourhood policing as ‘*...all the policing they experience in their neighbourhood*’ (Casey, 2008), which essentially amounts to their local experience of policing, wherever they live. But even among the experts there is considerable scope for variation in how neighbourhood policing is defined.

Quinton and Morris (2008) define neighbourhood policing as follows:

*“Neighbourhood policing is an approach that seeks to increase contact between the police and the public in defined local geographic areas in order to make the work of the police more responsive to the needs of local people”* (Quinton and Morris, 2008).

According to ACPO however, neighbourhood policing encompasses considerably more than this, as evidenced by its three main aims:

- To provide a consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams that are

visible, accessible, skilled, knowledgeable and familiar to the community.

- To feed back intelligence-led identification of community concerns.
- To encourage joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life within the community (ACPO, 2006).

The most comprehensive and detailed definition of neighbourhood policing was provided by the now defunct National Policing Improvement Agency:

*“Neighbourhood Policing is provided by teams of police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), often together with Special Constables, local authority wardens, volunteers and partners. In some areas, Neighbourhood Policing may be known as Safer Neighbourhoods or another locally decided name. It aims to provide people who live or work in a neighbourhood with:*

- **Access** – to local policing services through a named point of contact;
  - **Influence** – over policing priorities in their neighbourhood;
  - **Interventions** – joint action with partners and the public; and
  - **Answers** – sustainable solutions and feedback on what is being done.”
- (ACPO, 2006)

In practice, there are considerable differences in the kinds of neighbourhood policing adopted by different forces. The Casey Review found wide variations in what neighbourhood policing was called at a local level. While the majority of forces

(24 forces) used the term ‘Neighbourhood Policing’, ‘Safer Neighbourhoods’ was used by 13 forces, and five other names (Local Policing, Safer City Wards, Safer Community Teams, Community Action Teams and Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods) were used by the remaining six forces (Casey, 2008). Some would argue that this is a reflection of the way in which the concept was originally envisaged as a model that *should* be delivered differently in different areas in order to be flexible and responsive to local needs and resources.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, the forerunner to neighbourhood policing in the UK was the carefully evaluated reassurance policing initiative, the National Reassurance Policing Programme, which was implemented in sixteen ward level sites in eight forces in England and Wales between October 2003 and March 2005. The evaluation, which was one of the most sophisticated and robust tests of a particular model of neighbourhood policing ever undertaken (Tuffin et al, 2006), adopted a quasi-experimental design. It focused on just six of these wards which were then matched with comparison sites. As mentioned earlier, the findings of the evaluation, found that it *“delivered positive changes in key outcome indicators, such as crime, perceptions of anti-social behaviour, feelings of safety after dark and public confidence in the police”* (Tuffin et al, 2006). It also increased public awareness of police foot patrol and, through effective community engagement, improved public confidence.

The evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme identified statistically significant positive effects on crime and antisocial behaviour, with reductions in five out of eight

categories of antisocial behaviour, and two out of six sites saw significant reductions in total crime (the four other pilot sites did not achieve notably improved results than the comparison sites). There was also a fifteen per cent increase in the proportion of people who felt the police were doing an excellent or good job (compared to a three per cent increase in control sites) but little discernible increase in collective efficacy was identified (Quinton and Tuffin, 2007). These findings provided an encouraging basis for the national roll-out of neighbourhood policing that followed.

The three year Neighbourhood Policing Programme was rolled out nationally from April 2005, with the intention that every neighbourhood in England and Wales would have a neighbourhood policing team by 2008. Unlike the National Reassurance Policing Programme, which was implemented in a small number of pilot sites, the Neighbourhood Policing Programme was much larger and there were no expectations of impact during its first year. However two studies were carried out to test its initial effectiveness, one of which was very similar in design to the evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme. The latter was based in five experimental Basic Command Units which were matched with five control sites, but with between 140,000 and 360,000 residents, they were much larger than the National Reassurance Policing Programme sites.

Evaluation of the national roll-out of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme from April 2005 onwards found little evidence of effectiveness during the Neighbourhood Policing Programme's first year – a result that the authors concluded was *“not uncommon when*

*programmes are ‘scaled up’ and introduced in more challenging environments”* (Quinton and Morris, 2008). Measurement and implementation issues, as well as the relative infancy of the programme, were cited as key reasons for not being able to draw any conclusions regarding the early effectiveness of the programme. The study found that forces needed to remain focused on implementation because of the relative decline in public perceptions of police visibility over the course of the two years. The absence of effective problem-solving, which was found to be particularly difficult to implement at Basic Command Unit level, was evident in almost all sites.

There were some encouraging signs of efficacy during the second year, even though these were not found to be statistically significant. Neighbourhood policing was beginning to have a positive impact on key outcome measures at the Basic Command Unit level, although again not to a statistically significant degree. No positive changes were found at the Police Force Area level (Mason, 2009). The relatively weak overall findings have been put down to implementation failure – neighbourhood policing was neither comprehensive enough nor consistent enough (Mason, 2009).

## Chapter 5. Good practice in neighbourhood policing

The last chapter on the effectiveness of community and neighbourhood policing showed that despite the limited evidence base, there is some evidence of efficacy, such as reduced levels of fear of crime and antisocial behaviour and greater levels of public satisfaction and confidence. This chapter looks at good practice in neighbourhood policing – the ‘how’ of neighbourhood policing – including the crucial role that local partners and effective engagement with the public play. It also looks at good practice in relation to specific aspects of the role, namely: stop and search, policing diverse communities and supporting the vulnerable (in particular young people and those with mental health problems). It then looks at how technology can help to improve neighbourhood policing, including better use of social media.

### The ‘how’ of neighbourhood policing

The benefits of neighbourhood policing are well established. Targeting resources on places with high levels of crime and antisocial behaviour, on people repeatedly involved in offending or who are victims and providing communities with a visible presence that reassures the public are all part of what neighbourhood policing provides. But the way in which neighbourhood policing is delivered – the ‘how’ of neighbourhood policing – matters: done fairly and effectively, it builds public confidence, encourages compliance with the law and secures police legitimacy. How the police interact with the public, how they treat minorities and the vulnerable, what kind of decisions they

make and how these are explained and justified and the mechanisms through which they are held to account are all crucial to public confidence and perceptions of legitimacy (Tyler and Degoey, 1996; Tyler, 2004; Tyler, 2009).

In turn, public confidence and perceptions of legitimacy are vital to effective, efficient and fair policing. Citizens who trust and accept the authority of the police are more likely to obey the law (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). Intelligence gathering, crime prevention and crime investigation all depend to a great extent on public confidence and trust. A community in which residents mistrust the police can create a climate of impunity for serious offenders, increasing the vulnerability of those living amongst them.

According to the first systematic review of the evidence on the effectiveness of community policing, good neighbourhood policing can enhance trust and legitimacy and increase citizen satisfaction (Gill et al, 2014). Research consistently shows that the *fairness, respect* and *dignity* with which people are treated by the police, and the degree to which people feel that their views are considered prior to police decision-making, have considerable influence on whether people see the police as exercising legitimate authority, regardless of the outcome of the interaction (Tyler and Degoey, 1996; Tyler, 2004; Tyler, 2009). For neighbourhood policing, this is particularly about improving the quality of everyday contact (Manning, 2008; Hough et al, 2010; Hough, 1987) and ensuring it meets public expectations of fair and legitimate behaviour.

Getting neighbourhood policing right assists all areas of policing, not simply neighbourhood policing. The Home Office Safe and Confident Neighbourhood Strategy views neighbourhood policing teams as an intrinsic element across all policing services: the engagement work assists other parts of the police to do their jobs effectively (Home Office, 2010a). Good neighbourhood policing teams are described as being able to identify suspects, being aware of vulnerable people in their community and relaying community concerns and intelligence to other sections of the force.

In 2013, the National Policing Improvement Agency undertook a survey of all 43 forces to establish what is working well in neighbourhood policing and identify the key challenges that forces face. Of the 43 forces, 32 had reviewed or were in the process of reviewing neighbourhood policing. The main findings, based primarily on these 32 forces, are summarised below:

1. A clearer understanding is needed of the role and function of neighbourhood policing and what should be prioritised, given the reduction in resources.
  2. Forces need to obtain a better understanding of the demand profile for neighbourhood policing teams in order to design their service and allocate resources most effectively.
  3. Forces need to establish how best to balance proactive and reactive approaches, including how to reduce the demand on response officers in order to free up resources for proactive, problem-solving work and how to shift their focus to reducing risk, harm, vulnerability and threat.
  4. Forces are using different ways to maintain neighbourhood policing in the face of the budget cuts, including ring-fencing one officer or PCSO for each neighbourhood; extending the responsibilities of neighbourhood policing teams to include investigative and response functions; giving more responsibility to PCSOs; combining command functions; and integrating response, neighbourhood policing and CID. Most forces now expect neighbourhood police officers to investigate serious crime.
  5. Despite a few examples of good practice (e.g. Hertfordshire), most forces were finding it difficult to design and deliver cost-effective community engagement strategies. Public meetings were viewed as unrepresentative and engagement efforts as insufficiently targeted according to need/vulnerability, although some forces (e.g. Thames Valley) were using neighbourhood profiling tools to help tailor their community engagement methods. Some forces were also exploring ways of involving local citizens more directly in policing activity (e.g. Lancashire).
  6. Current performance frameworks, which primarily use 'hard' measures of performance such as arrests or detections, do not adequately capture the impact or outcomes of neighbourhood policing, such as identifying community priorities, improving public confidence, problem-solving and engagement, although regular public/victim surveys were used by most forces to help generate data on public satisfaction and confidence (e.g. Cleveland).
  7. Partnership working, through co-location and sharing resources, was (still) a key dimension of neighbourhood policing.
-

8. Neighbourhood policing teams needed to do more to manage high risk offenders and support vulnerable people in line with a force strategy based on threat, harm, risk and vulnerability, using information technology as appropriate.
9. Officers needed better training in the force's vision for neighbourhood policing, their role as neighbourhood policing officers, community engagement, problem-solving and the impact their work has on police legitimacy (e.g. Greater Manchester).

## Working with partners

One of the findings of the National Policing Improvement Agency review (see point 7 above) refers to the importance of partnership working. Following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) – which mandated formal partnership working arrangements between the police and other local bodies in England and Wales – police collaboration with partners in delivering community services and interventions has become institutionalised in local policing (McCarthy and O'Neill, 2014).

A key driver for much of the initial Crime and Disorder Act (1998) legislation was that addressing crime effectively should not – indeed could not – continue to be the sole responsibility of the police. The orientation towards a more 'holistic' approach of robust law enforcement coupled with addressing the socio-economic drivers of criminality was a core motif of the Labour Party's "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" election manifesto pledge in 1997 (Political Science Resources, 2015). It is now widely accepted that the police "must work

*with the community and draw from other resources outside the police to prevent and solve crime problems"* (Boba Santos, 2013) and that "most responses will be more effective if they involve partner organisations, and many problems can only be solved by others" (Ashby and Chainey, 2012). In the US too, the importance of partnership is emphasised, as the following quote from the US Department of Justice illustrates:

*"Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime".* (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2011)

So although the police are primarily responsible for reducing crime, in many cases other local partner organisations will be better placed to do so. Thus for example, in relation to tackling on-street prostitution, blocking off one end of each affected street, effectively turning through streets into dead-ends and thereby restricting 'kerb-crawling,' can't be done without help from the local authority (Ashby and Chainey, 2012). Another example (below) comes from the Police Foundation's 'Police Effectiveness in a Changing World' project.

*"In Slough, collaborative problem solving is a central premise of the Violence Multi-Agency Panel (VMAP) process, which has been set up to address the problem of recurrent violence. Alongside co-ordinating the VMAP process, the police provide core enforcement responses – such as the arrest and charging of perpetrators – but resolutions to recurrent violence may also*

*necessitate additional or alternative partnership interventions, including mental health service provision, drug or alcohol dependency treatment, behavioural therapy, welfare support for victims of domestic violence and/or their children and social housing provision. All of these are integral to ensuring the 'holistic' effectiveness of the VMAP process."*

A study of neighbourhood policing partnerships in six sites in 2010 shows how partnership working can contribute to the aims of neighbourhood policing. Each site was allocated a Neighbourhood Manager responsible for overseeing the implementation and delivery of services on a day-to-day basis and acting as a central point of contact for, and acting as an intermediary between, members of the community and partner agencies. Interviews with residents and practitioners found that the former felt more empowered and thought crime and antisocial behaviour had reduced while the latter (practitioners) felt that working in partnership increased job satisfaction, delivered efficiencies in resource allocation and more effective problem-solving (Turley et al, 2012).

Some sites used 'Co-location' (i.e. a bespoke facility that houses all key partner agencies) to enhance communication by encouraging effective face-to-face contact. This helps to improve partners' understanding of each other's roles, establish positive working relationships, assisted the sharing of data and intelligence and allowed more efficient working practices as problems were solved and residents were responded to more quickly. However, where residents' trust in the police was low, co-locating the neighbourhood policing team with other partners risked

disengaging residents in contact with those other agencies.

Important factors underpinning effective partnership working were found to be:

- Strong leadership and engaged staff who understood the local area and its problems and demonstrated a genuine interest in the well-being of its residents;
- Shared aims and objectives between all partners; and
- Effective communication between partner bodies

There were however some important barriers to effective joint working that needed to be overcome, including identifying the resources required to support a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager under conditions of austerity, engaging with just part of the community (the 'easy-to-reach' or 'the usual suspects'), community priorities not matched by crime/antisocial behaviour data and lack of continuity.

Partnership working provides the wider context within which effective neighbourhood policing operates. But equally there are very specific aspects of the work that neighbourhood policing teams carry out which, if undertaken well, can enhance their ability to fulfil their functions or, if done badly, can seriously undermine them. One of the most important of these is effective engagement with the communities they serve.

## **Engaging with the public**

The National Policing Improvement Agency's review of good practice referred to above mentions the importance of community engagement (see point 9 above), but it says very

little about what constitutes effective practice. Community engagement enables citizens and communities to participate in policing at their chosen level and ranges from the provision of information and reassurance to empowering them to identify and help resolve local problems and influence strategic priorities and decisions (Myhill, 2006). There are different types of community engagement, from structured participation in local events, meetings or consultations, to informal contact on the street or elsewhere and some people are more likely and/or willing to engage with the police than others.

The findings of research on the effectiveness of police: community engagement are largely negative. Formal meetings or consultations have been shown, on the whole, to be relatively ineffective in terms of their representation, independence and impact (Myhill and Rudat, 2006). Findings from the National Reassurance Policing Programme showed that engagement activities failed to significantly influence public perceptions of the police. In four out of ten sites, the public questioned the effort the police put into finding out what people think; in five sites the public thought they were ineffective at working with the local community; and in eight sites that the police were unwilling to respond to the public's views (Morris, 2006). The evaluation concluded that the way of canvassing residents' views needed to be more robust and that officers needed to improve their consultative and communication skills. According to a review of the evidence on effective community engagement, the key ingredients of successful engagement are:

- The public are more interested in engaging than police officers often believe but in the

poorest and most challenging areas sustained work may be needed before residents will participate.

- Informal rather than formal contacts work best.
- Finding ways to engage those individuals and groups who do not get consulted and whose needs might be ignored should be a priority.
- Being clear about what type of engagement should be undertaken and what promises are implicit in it is very important.
- Police attitudes towards engagement are vital – a lack of commitment or interest is recognised by the public and reduces satisfaction and confidence (Lloyd and Foster, 2009).

In the UK, an intensive community engagement initiative in Northampton entitled 'locally identified solutions and practices (LISP)' promotes the police working with the community, which it sees as the place where the solutions to problems are found – rather than on its behalf. Through intensive engagement, it develops networks of local residents to assist in identifying the community's assets and capabilities, the problems it faces and the solutions to these problems (University of Northampton, n.d.). An evaluation of the project is due to report towards the end of 2015.

Research suggests it is not contact *per se* which leads to lower confidence in the police but rather *the quality of the encounters* which matter. Furthermore, negative encounters with the police have a much greater impact on public and victim ratings of satisfaction and confidence than positive ones, for which the police receive little credit (Skogan, 2006; Skogan, 1998). This is most evident in encounters with black and minority



ethnic and marginalised groups, particularly stop and search, but research in this country and elsewhere suggests that it is not so much being stopped and searched that is complained about but as manner in which it is done (Fielding and Innes, 2006).

## Stop and Search

Given the number of stop and search encounters between neighbourhood officers and members of the public, the experience of individuals during these encounters can have a profound effect on their attitude towards the police. Research suggests that the public does not wholly object to the use of stop and search provided it is used fairly and properly – regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. If the power to stop and search is used in this way, it can only improve police effectiveness without compromising police legitimacy. However a single negative interaction can reverberate across a whole community, destroying trust and legitimacy in its wake (The Police Foundation, 2012).

There is little evidence to support the effectiveness of stop and search in tackling crime and concerns have been raised by HMIC and others that the powers are sometimes deployed incorrectly and disproportionately target black and minority ethnic groups (HMIC, 2013b). So, for example, stop and search has little impact on arrest rates for drug possession. Although over half of all searches under PACE, Section 1 and other legislation are drug-related, the arrest rate for carrying drugs is only 7.5 per cent. Since searches only reduce the number of ‘disruptable crimes’ by 0.2 per cent, its use in disrupting drug markets is also negligible (Miller et al, 2000). In

terms of how the powers are used, the ‘with reasonable grounds’ safeguard is not always applied by police officers, who may construct such grounds *post hoc* in order to justify their actions. In a Police Foundation study (Graham and Karn, 2013), officers stated it was easy to find such a justification and that stop and search was often used to demonstrate that officers were ‘doing something’ to justify their existence to the community or assert their authority. This was found to be of particular concern in relation to black and minority ethnic communities, particularly its younger members, who strongly believe they are disproportionately targeted, which the facts tend to bear out: according to the Ministry of Justice, black people are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched under PACE 1984 than white people and Asian people are twice as likely to be searched as white people (Ministry of Justice, 2011).

The Police Foundation study also found that, if an officer is under pressure to increase their arrests, young adults, who are more likely than any other group to be subject to stop and search, are a relatively easy target (Graham and Karn, 2013). But this can do long term damage. If a young adult believes that the police use powers such as stop and search unfairly, disproportionately, excessively or wrongly, they already start from a position of not wanting to cooperate with the police or comply with the law and will take these attitudes with them into adulthood. The same applies to black and minority ethnic groups.

A joint manual on stop and search published by ACPO and the Home Office notes that in forces with lower levels of disproportionality, force policy explicitly states that an officer’s performance will

not be assessed on the number of stops and searches they performed, but on the outcomes and quality of their searches. It is important that officers give a good reason for carrying out a stop and search, treat suspects with respect and understand how the over or disproportionate use of stop and search powers, rather than reinforcing their authority in the eyes of the public can actually achieve the precise opposite. Critical Encounters, a project based in Lewisham, South London, illustrates how the police can work with the local community to ensure it uses its stop and search powers constructively.

*“Second Wave, a youth and community arts charity in Lewisham, South London, has been running a project called Critical Encounters for the past eight years. It comprises a series of local workshops where young people and police officers meet and take on each other’s roles during a stop and search encounter. The work of Second Wave has not been independently evaluated, is not instantly transferable and should not be seen as a panacea. But because the charity is embedded in the locality – it has been there 30 years and has built strong links with the local council and the police force – it would seem that it is making positive improvements to police: young people relations in a poor inner city area with a significant black and minority ethnic population and a history of tensions with the police. There are still significant local tensions in Lewisham and many young adults are subject to stop and search, but there is also a better dialogue between them and the police, with more emphasis on engagement and protection than simply law enforcement”* (Graham and Karn, 2013).

## Policing diverse communities

One of the challenges for neighbourhood policing is to foster and maintain trust and legitimacy in transient and often culturally diverse communities. Attempts to promote dialogue about problems and their solutions inherently require an appeal to common values, which is more complex in multi-cultural communities. Such communities may also experience high rates of crime and/or a history of adverse police intervention and the lessons from insensitive enforcement-based approaches suggest the need for an awareness of how such approaches can undermine trust and confidence. It may not be possible for managers to appeal to the dominant norms of every cultural group, but efforts can be made to find common ground that reflects a more universal morality<sup>2</sup>.

Some of the problems experienced by diverse and transient communities are similar to those experienced by other communities and adopting a problem-solving approach is therefore equally appropriate. Neighbourhood policing built around problem-solving helps build trust, reduce fear and encourage reporting, irrespective of the make-up of the local population, particularly if combined with flexible approaches to identifying residents’ concerns, understanding their expectations and involving them in developing effective responses. Such approaches might, for example, include innovative forms of community engagement, tailored to a variety of groups, such as new migrants or young students. They may include proactive attendance by the police at community events, meetings or ‘street meets’, the involvement of community members in local decision-making and using new forms of

<sup>2</sup> This draws on Michael Walzer’s distinction between thick and thin moralities articulated in Bottoms and Tankebe (2012). See also Karn (2007).

communication technology and social media to help bridge language and cultural barriers.

## Supporting the vulnerable

Neighbourhood policing teams play a key role in helping to improve the police response to vulnerable people (both children and adults). A recently published report from the College of Policing that attempts to estimate the demand on the police service, shows that the number of reported public safety and welfare (PSW) incidents in the six forces that provided data on such incidents had all increased. In five of them, they had become the largest category of reported incidents, larger even than crime and antisocial behaviour incidents, despite a fall in the number of calls overall (College of Policing, 2015). Vulnerable child and adult referrals and domestic abuse referrals have all increased as have incidents involving mental health issues (College of Policing, 2015). The latter in particular takes up a considerable amount of police time, with 15 per cent – 20 per cent of all incidents linked to mental health (Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing, 2013).

The police, particularly neighbourhood policing officers, are often the first port of call when it comes to protecting vulnerable people, including those with mental ill health or learning disabilities. As well as placing a considerable burden on resources, often officers are not suitably trained to identify vulnerability and to respond appropriately. Guidance produced in 2010 by ACPO, National Policing Improvement Agency and the Department of Health states that the police shouldn't deal with vulnerable groups on their own (ACPO and NPIA, 2010), but with other

public and voluntary services facing cuts, the police often find they are unable to get the support from other agencies they need. Indeed it is frequently the police service that is called upon to fill gaps in other services: Freedom of Information figures show that, over a three-year period, police cars were used in lieu of ambulances on 600 occasions in Wales alone (BBC News Wales, 2014). Those with learning difficulties or mental health problems pose particular challenges.

Since the large-scale closure of psychiatric hospitals and the implementation of 'care in the community' in the early 1990s, the local police are often the first professionals to respond to a situation or crisis involving someone with a mental health issue. It is estimated that between 15 and 30 per cent of officers' time is spent on issues involving mental health (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2008). This can happen in a wide range of circumstances, from where a mentally disordered person has committed or been a victim of or witness to a criminal offence, to situations where they create a public disturbance or present a risk to themselves or the public.

The policing of mental health presents a real challenge for the police and requires a sensitive and nuanced approach. Police officers are not medical professionals, yet they are often required to make professional judgements on individuals' mental health and their related service needs. In order to identify people suffering from mental illness and/or provide or signpost them towards appropriate sources of help, officers need to have a basic understanding of mental illness and be able to empathise with those experiencing it. Trainees need a basic understanding of mental

health issues, how to identify them and knowledge of the appropriate support services for mentally disordered people (Mental Health First Aid England, n.d.), but in reality their training for this is rudimentary.

Crisis Intervention Training is the preferred method of police mental health training in the United States where it is used in over 2,700 jurisdictions (American Psychiatric Association, 2014). The 40-hour training programme teaches officers to identify individuals with mental health issues and divert them, where possible, from the criminal justice system. Research has found that officers trained in CIT have a more positive attitude towards, and improved knowledge of, mental health issues, are more confident in working with people with mental health issues and deliver higher rates of diversion from the criminal justice system (CIT International (2012); Compton et al, 2014). An independent evaluation of CIT in Australia found similar improvements as in the US, suggesting that it could be successfully adapted in other countries (Herrington et al, 2009).

*“Mental Health First Aid, developed in Australia and highlighted by Lord Adebowale’s Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing, has been integrated into Dyfed Powys police force’s six-day Community Police Development Programme. The programme, designed in collaboration with a Hywel Dda Health Board, provides new recruits with MHFA, followed by a placement in an acute psychiatric unit in their jurisdiction. Students also spend time with various multi-agency groups in order to gain an understanding of how mental health support is best provided in their community (Cummings and Jones, 2010). The programme relies heavily on*

*input from service users and has been found to improve relations between police and local mental health providers (Coleman and Cotton, 2010).”*

The quality of interactions between the mentally ill and the police can have an important impact on their willingness to engage with service providers and their future trajectory through the system (Brink et al, 2011). People suffering from mental disorder are statistically far more likely to fall victim to crime and subsequently experience greater adverse effects of crime than the general population (Pettitt et al, 2013), but identifying those who need intervention or support is not always straightforward (McManus et al, 2009). Collaboration between public services such as policing, health, education and housing is essential for ensuring that mentally ill individuals are identified and supported (Department of Health, 2012) and the Bradley Report (Bradley, 2009) underlined the important role that neighbourhood police officers can play in bringing such services together.

*“Street Triage Schemes were piloted preliminarily in Leicestershire and Cleveland, with the recent addition of five other forces. The scheme involves mental health nurses accompanying police officers on patrol, providing assistance during emergency response and offering support in the control room. The nurses are able to provide immediate, on the scene mental health assessments to identify individuals’ service needs. Thus far the pilots have received wide praise and appear to have succeeded in diverting some mentally disordered individuals away from the criminal justice system, freeing up police time in the process.” (Kini et al, 2013)*

People with learning difficulties often present similar challenges, but simply finding better ways

of engaging with this group can help to improve relations between them and the police and subsequently enhance their capacity to respond effectively to their needs. In Hertfordshire, for example, the Keep Safe programme was developed in response to research which showed that people with learning difficulties can find it difficult to contact the police or feel intimidated or uncomfortable about doing so. Those identified as having learning difficulties are given an easy-to-read help pack and a Keep Safe card to record personal and contact details. They also attend courses where they can practice reporting allegations of bullying and harassment (i.e. hate crime) to the police. Several hundred people with learning difficulties have apparently benefited from the initiative, which has been nationally recognised and awarded.

### *Policing young people*

Young people are more likely to come into contact with the police than other age groups, predominantly because they often frequent public space and because the transition to adulthood is commonly characterised by risk-taking behaviours, such as substance misuse and associated criminal behaviour. According to research, many young people tend to hold negative views of the police, who in turn tend to view young people as suspects in need of control rather than potential victims in need of protection (Graham and Karn, 2013). Such mutual negative stereotyping can undermine relations between young people and the police and face-to-face encounters can consequently be fraught.

How the police handle encounters with young people has important implications in terms of their willingness to cooperate with the police, their trust

and confidence in them and ultimately police legitimacy. Poor community relations between the police and this age group can lead to serious confrontations and negative spirals of conflict, particularly where policing is target driven and opportunities for positive engagement with young people are limited or ineffectual.

Neighbourhood policing teams are uniquely placed to engage well with the young people they regularly meet, but the mutual respect carefully developed can be easily destroyed by the actions of response teams who often have little connection with the local community and move into an area on a reactive basis to tackle an immediate incident. Young people are also disproportionately subject to stop and searches and an aggressive stop and search policy (see above) can also damage the building of trust that underpins effective neighbourhood policing.

Young people are not always easy to deal with. Many will not have learnt to be in full control of their emotions or manage personal feelings of resentment. Some will still be learning to deal with authority while others may have built up considerable antipathy towards the police as a result of past experiences. Yet there is generally little police training on how to interact or engage with young people; people skills do not seem to be a high priority. A systematic review carried out by the National Policing Improvement Agency in 2010 concluded that classroom-based training alone is not a particularly effective way to improve interpersonal skills or to change behaviour (Wheller and Morris, 2010).

With respect to community engagement, young people are often excluded from meetings: formal consultative committees tend to be made up of

older individuals and young people rarely attend. So while they constitute a major client group for neighbourhood policing teams, there do not seem to be specifically developed strategies for engaging more effectively with this age group.

Where there are tensions between young people and police, trusted intermediaries such as youth workers (especially detached youth workers) may be able to broker relations between the two. In London, a new pilot scheme run by the Safer London Foundation and the Metropolitan Police Service has been set up in three boroughs (Southwark, Newham and Ealing) whereby young people run training sessions for the police to improve community relations. It focuses on encouraging police officers to listen to the concerns of young people in order to understand how best to improve relations in their communities (Safer London Foundation, n.d.). A number of Police and Crime Commissioners have also begun to recognise the importance of improving relations between young people and the police. Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes has put in post a Youth PCC to assist young people and the police to engage with one another, whereas in Leicestershire, Police and Crime Commissioner Clive Loader has indicated that young people are a priority group (Britton, 2014), and his force has developed a local reference group that includes younger adults.

## Using technology to improve neighbourhood policing

Using technology to improve real time data management, provide opportunities for better mobile working, enhance intelligence sharing or assist in identifying suspects is a fundamental

aspect of effective policing. But it is not an area where the police service excels. HMIC, ACPO, the National Audit Office and the London Assembly are among the many organisations that have been highly critical of the police service's use of technology. According to the Stevens Review, the 43 forces in England and Wales have 2,000 different IT systems (Independent Police Commission, 2013) while the Home Affairs Select Committee concluded that their IT system *"...is not fit for purpose, to the detriment of the police's ability to fulfil their basic mission"* (House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee, 2011a).

Some forces have introduced technology strategies for improving their service, such as the Metropolitan Police Service's Total Technology Strategy (Metropolitan Police, n.d.) which aims to improve the use of technology by encouraging the use of mobile devices to capture witness statements and evidential photographs as well as on-line systems to report non-emergency crimes. The benefits of mobile working are summarised by HMIC in their report, 'Taking Time for Crime,' which identifies 19 different operating systems, most of which can be accessed remotely and therefore release officers to spend more time in the community (see Figure 3 below).

**Figure 3. Mobile computing benefits**

	FORCE A			FORCE B		
	Investigation	Neighbourhood	Response	Investigation	Neighbourhood	Response
Mobile Telephony	●	●	●	●	●	●
Email		●	●			
Receiving images		●	●			
Read / update incidents		●	●			
Check electoral roll			●			
Search intelligence		◐	●			
Mobile fingerprint IDs		◐	◐		◐	◐
Police National Computer		●	●			
Sending images			●			
Mobile ANPR		◐	◐			◐
PS / Satnav			●			
Access policy / guidance			●			
Record Stop and Search			●			
Crime recording system			●			
Submit intelligence			●			
Use mapping			●			
Electronic case files						
View resource location						
File a Witness Statement						

- Fully functional (all officers in a team can use)
- ◐ Partially functional (some officers in a team can use)

Source: HMIC, 2012a

Other examples of technology that could be used (or better used) to improve neighbourhood policing include:

- Mobile access to face recognition technology, which has been developed to help search and match facial images held on police and other (e.g. DVLA) databases.
- The charity Witness Confident has developed a free App called 'Self-Evident' which allows the public to gather and report evidence on non-emergency crime (Witness Confident, n.d.), which as of November 2014 had been downloaded over 10,000 times. In West Yorkshire officers are using a similar App to report crimes, take witness statements and complete missing person forms that also provides them with live updates about on-going incidents.
- Computer software called 'Geo-fencing', which is being used in Cheshire to help identify when offenders fitted with a tracking device enter or leave a particular neighbourhood in real time and therefore improves the deployment of neighbourhood patrols.
- TrackMyCrime, which is being used in Avon and Somerset to keep victims informed of the progress of their case by email or text and thereby enhance victim satisfaction.
- A number of forces use various case management systems to, for example, improve information sharing for identifying vulnerable people, address licensing and multiple occupancy issues, assist integrated offender management, manage investigations and provide better support for victims. (Other examples of case management systems used by forces across the country for various purposes are contained in the College of

Policing's recently published stocktake of good practice in neighbourhood policing (College of Policing, 2015)).

As the above illustrates, the police use various forms of technology to help improve their work, but there are four other kinds of technology which may be of particular relevance to neighbourhood policing: crime mapping, body worn cameras and social media.

### *Crime Mapping*

Crime mapping has been widely used as an operational policing tool to identify crime distribution and hotspots, and in response, guide the efficient deployment of police and also multi-agency resources. The use of crime mapping in policing has a long history, but early manual and computerised iterations were highly labour intensive. It has only proliferated since the wider availability and development of desktop computers since the early 1990s, which has made crime mapping and geographic information system (GIS) technology more affordable and accessible (Chamard, 2006; Harries, 1999).

As a core component of what today is known as 'crime analysis', crime mapping has seen significant utilisation in policing within the US. It is integral to processes such as Compstat, a data-driven performance management model widely used by US police departments since the mid-1990s (Henry, 2006; Weisburd et al, 2003). Collaborative research projects conducted in the US in 1990s led the way for a series of practitioner-researcher crime mapping partnerships. These demonstrated how GIS could be used as a core component of crime control initiatives. While primarily focused on the use of



geographic police data, it was found that analysing other geographical datasets contributed to the effective targeting of problem-solving strategies and brought other partners with different perspectives to the table (Boba Santos, 2013).

In the UK, similar multi-agency data collaborations proliferated in the wake of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the ensuing formulation of Community Safety Partnerships. Statutory requirements placed on Community Safety Partnerships initially necessitated the production of three-yearly local Crime Audits, which frequently utilised hotspot and choropleth mapping – using both police crime and other data from partners – for community profiling and identifying priority intervention areas. Crime Audits were superseded by the requirement to conduct annual strategic assessments following the introduction of the Government's Community Safety Partnership Reform Programme in 2007. Crime maps and GIS-based analysis of partnership datasets (such as ambulance call out data, fire service data on arsons, local authority records on antisocial behaviour incidents and probation offending data) were often heavily utilised within strategic assessments as a means for visualising crime patterns and directing resource allocation to local areas of need. Government legislation mandated the sharing of these and other datasets between core Community Safety Partnership partner agencies. Parallel developments saw the widespread application of crime mapping in analytical products (including problem profiles) produced by UK police forces under the auspices of the National Intelligence Model, implemented in 2001 (O'Neill, 2008).

By 2003, crime mapping and the use of geographic information systems had become big

business in policing and crime reduction planning (Byrne and Pease, 2003). The application/benefits of crime mapping are not simply restricted to hotspot identification, deploying police officers and targeting crime reduction interventions, but also a range of other prospective applications for GIS technology, all of which have a potentially useful application in supporting neighbourhood policing efforts. These include:

- Recording and mapping police activity, crime reduction projects and calls for service/incidents.
- Supporting of briefing of operational officers by showing where crime has recently occurred and predicting where it may occur in the future.
- Helping to understand the distribution of crime and to explore the mechanisms and dynamics of criminal activity through analysis with other data.
- Monitoring initiatives.
- Using the maps visually to show crime statistics to the public and initiatives that are being implemented (Chainey and Ratcliffe, 2005).

Crime mapping has also been employed for a diverse range of other neighbourhood level community safety activities, including mapping the fear of crime in Merton, London, visual audits of night-time economy behaviours in Bath and assessing vulnerable targets for terrorism in local communities (Chainey and Tompson, 2008). Several Community Safety Partnership areas also developed bespoke, online mapping based information systems to facilitate neighbourhood crime profiling (Chainey and Smith, 2006)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed case study of the application of a specific system, see: Rose (2008).

In the last few years, there has been a drive towards public availability of locally mapped crime data in the UK. Smith's independent review of crime statistics (Smith, 2006) Casey's review of Crime and Communities (Casey, 2008) and Flanagan's review of policing (Flanagan, 2008) were all key in promoting the greater availability of local crime statistics for the purposes of increasing transparency and public accountability of policing and addressing public misconceptions of crime prevalence (Ray et al, 2012).

A subsequent requirement for all police forces to provide crime information to the public in the form of crime maps in 2008 was followed by the development of a single crime mapping service, [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk), in late 2009. The website facilitated viewing of monthly local crime data through a postcode or area-based search (Ray et al, 2012). An on-going commitment to transparency and increasing the accountability of public services by the government resulted in enhancements to the website being introduced in January 2011 (Home Office, 2010b; O'Hara, 2011). The ensuing provision of street-level crime and incident data was intended to enhance information availability to third parties and serve as a catalyst for increased engagement and interaction between communities and the police (Home Office, 2010b).

### *Body-worn video*

The use of body-worn video is a very recent development. Trials of body-worn video of domestic abuse incidents began in Essex in 2014 (Owens et al, 2014). The findings indicated that a higher proportion of people were charged with an offence when the cameras were worn (81 per cent of the sanctions issued were charges,

compared to 72 per cent when officers did not wear the equipment.) The cameras captured evidence including the layout of a scene or damage caused as well as the emotions and injuries of the victim. Half of officers surveyed in the trial said the cameras increased their confidence to secure a conviction. Officers also felt the cameras increased police accountability, making them more mindful of their behaviour. However, the trial uncovered a number of practical limitations: cameras could be difficult to turn on and off; the angle of filming did not always capture what was required at a scene and they did not work well in poor lighting. A twelve-month trial also began in May 2014, with 500 body-worn cameras issued to officers across London to use in 'contentious' situations and encounters, such as stop and search, public order and domestic abuse (Metropolitan Police, 2014). It is perhaps too early to assess how helpful the cameras could be to neighbourhood policing, however they are a development that is worth monitoring.

## **Social media**

Social media represents a major shift in the way the public are sharing and using information. 83 per cent of adults are now online (Ofcom, 2014) (55 per cent using social networking) and social media offers the opportunity to develop new and innovative ways of connecting with the public. With its potentially positive effect on engagement, information and intelligence gathering, social media is an area of modern technology which is likely to become of increasing relevance to neighbourhood policing.

Traditional police-citizen communication required either mass announcements through media

channels, or face to face interactions through organised meetings and on-the-beat conversation. Social media allows the police to communicate with large numbers of people at once, without citizens leaving their houses. In this sense, it provides the individual officer with more direct, intimate access to the community. In addition, bypassing the traditional media gives forces more control over what information they release, and when (Murray and McGovern, 2014). Social media use has become so prevalent it has been embedded into the communications strategies of most police departments worldwide. The Stevens Review highlighted in particular the importance of improving the use of social media as a tool of communication and information sharing, intelligence gathering and data management.

### *Information-sharing*

Using social media offers the police capabilities beyond conventional informing mechanisms such as leaflet drops or the traditional news media. Information can be published in real time,<sup>4</sup> directly to a ready audience,<sup>5</sup> and posts can be read and shared around networks at the click of a button, disseminating the material to a large number of people at little administrative cost. However, the opt in nature of the tool means that people will only get updates from the police if they ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ their pages, so in order to be able later to disseminate and gather information effectively the police need to make sure the public is aware of, and follow, their social media pages. A high number of varied followers will enable a police force to send out public information more widely.

Posts can be used to give safety advice to the public, encourage people to be alert to criminal

activity in their area, and counsel them on how to minimise risk and consider and improve certain aspects of their safety. Social media has been found to be particularly useful during critical incidents. During the August 2011 riots, some police forces and neighbourhood officers used social media to reassure the public by refuting ill-founded rumours of supposed incidents (Crump, 2011) and keeping people up to date with the latest developments.

### *Engagement*

It is well understood that the police cannot maintain order and reduce crime on their own; to be effective they must be able to secure the cooperation of the community (Tyler and Fagan, 2008). The tool of social media allows the police to connect with citizens, building relationships, posting interactive content such as polls and videos and encouraging them to help police their community by reporting information and helping to track down suspects. Studies have shown that open communication can improve the levels of trust citizens have in their forces (COMPOSITE Project, 2012) and an interactive online presence can create a personal connection with users and promote positive attitudes (Briones et al, 2011). This kind of interaction also broadens the conversation on policing, and may ultimately encourage greater diversity in physical community events.

ACPO guidelines recognise that social networking sites potentially assist the police in engagement, allow officers to respond in real time to incidents, and help the police to demonstrate greater accountability and transparency (ACPO, 2013). In particular, social media may enable the police to

<sup>4</sup> Bypassing the press release process.

<sup>5</sup> Followers who have already suggested they are interested in hearing from the police by subscribing to their page.

engage with 'hard to reach' groups, reaching a different demographic from those who traditionally attend public meetings. Younger people, for example, have expressed an interest in contacting the police online (London Assembly, 2013). It may also be a positive way of connecting with members of the community who might otherwise be disinterested or antagonistic (Knibbs, 2013).

Social media sites, unlike traditional forms of engagement, provide a means for the public to raise concerns while remaining anonymous. Many users have 'handles' – names which are not their own – and this layer of protection enables them to contact the police without revealing their identity. A survey by Accenture (Accenture, 2012) found that 69 per cent of respondents would interact with the police more if they could remain anonymous, so social media may provide an opportunity for the police to receive information from people who would not otherwise have contacted them. However, while police forces are using social media effectively for information-sharing, its potential as an engagement tool has not yet been fully realised (Metropolitan Police, 2011).

In order to engage, rather than simply inform, communication needs to become a two-way interaction. Studies have shown that an online presence which does interact can create a personal connection with users and facilitate positive attitudes (Briones et al, 2011). Yet conversation exchanges between citizens and the police are infrequent (Fernez et al, 2014). The aforementioned Accenture survey (Accenture, 2012) found that over half of UK respondents (58 per cent) would like to see the police using social media to engage with the community, rather than

simply to give information. Examples were given such as allowing citizens to upload photographs or details of stolen property for inclusion in case files, or to check the progress of an investigation.

In 2011 News South Wales police (Australia) launched 'Eyewatch', an online project mimicking neighbourhood watch. It allowed citizens to report crime and raise concerns directly to police forces, and created a virtual community 'meeting'. Although the force won a 'Social Media Gong' for the project, an evaluation found that police engagement was limited because officers were rarely able to respond to citizens in a timely manner (Kelly, 2013).

Resourcing issues can greatly impact on the ability of forces to engage effectively, and there is a danger that, in offering an interactive service, the police may raise expectations from citizens that cannot be met. A report by DEMOS (Bartlett et al, 2013) found that forces do not treat tweets with the same degree of urgency as other forms of communication, and most forces warn citizens not to report crime via social media as accounts are not integrated into force control centres. Further, in order for the police to be able to engage with citizens online, public awareness of the police use of social media needs to be increased. The Accenture survey found less than a fifth of UK respondents were aware that the police are currently using digital channels.

### *Intelligence*

Online networking sites can also assist the police in intelligence-gathering, with speed providing a crucial advantage when appealing for witnesses or information or looking for missing persons. As well as using their own pages and profiles to

gather information, many forces also follow the use of social media by others in order to get an insight into their local communities, pick up leads or be prepared for potential incidents. Analysis of the public's mood, and detection of anomalies, can provide intelligence to inform deployment decisions and optimise effectiveness (HMIC, 2012a). Sir Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, stated that social media websites played a crucial role in intelligence gathering about community tensions following a fatal police shooting in Cheshire (Fahy, 2012). In the August 2011 riots the police were able to monitor rumours and track the development of the disorder by looking at the community's use of Twitter and Facebook.

The police regularly visit and monitor sites known for potential criminal or antisocial activity to gather information and sources (COMPOSITE Project, 2012). These include sites such as those on the 'dark web' (an unofficial list of sites that criminals use to communicate) as well as sites which propagate hate propaganda, and chat rooms regularly used by sex offenders to target vulnerable victims (Taylor, 2011). The police can also use social media to gather data on suspects: every interaction with the internet leaves a trace and trawling through an individual's social media profiles can give the police information such as his/her location or circle of friends. Partnership working can assist in this area: Facebook, for example, works with the police in cases of child abuse and child pornography, freezing a user's data to assist investigation.

This does, however, pose challenges. The Home Affairs Committee recognised that the task of distinguishing credible information from

rumour and speculation was made difficult by the sheer volume of information involved and the speed of interaction (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2011b). 'Sock puppet' social media accounts, which use a false online identity, can potentially be used to spread false information or counter-intelligence; Facebook estimates that seven per cent of its accounts are fake (Eaton, 2012).

Further, to use social media effectively as an intelligence gathering tool, the police need to be able to analyse and manage the information they receive quickly. This is of particular importance in relation to critical incidents, when there is a need to read, log and analyse information at speed. However, it takes time, and people, to read tweets or posts and convey information to the right channels. During the August riots, the speed and spread of incoming intelligence posed considerable difficulties for the police.

There are further challenges for forces using social media in terms of staff-management. Policing frequently involves dealing with highly sensitive information, which the police are not at liberty to share. As police of all ranks and experience use social media, from Chief Constables to PCSOs, every user needs to be aware of the kind of message s/he is projecting, and to make sure that content is appropriate for the public to read.

In October 2012 a police force shut down the Twitter accounts of four officers after HMIC raised concerns about the content of their tweets (Laville, 2012b). A 2012 report by HMIC (HMIC, 2012b) identified 357 instances of potentially inappropriate behaviour on social media over a nine month period. 71 per cent of these were on Twitter. HMIC categorised this behaviour as:

- Offensive language or behaviour (132 instances).
- Comments on police protocol or procedure (119 instances).
- Negativity towards work (70 instances).
- Extreme opinions on the government (36 instances).

The report found that only nine forces had the capacity to check for inappropriate behaviour on personal accounts and that nine forces did not monitor staff use of social media at all. HMIC recommended that forces ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor and manage the use of social media and improve the training of officers using it.

One aspect of Twitter that is difficult to manage relates to ‘cross-over accounts;’ those where a police officer tweets about work, but also about their personal life. These accounts are common; indeed, a degree of humour or frivolity or human detail can help attract followers, who do not always want to read serious, dry tweets. However, occasionally an extreme opinion is tweeted, or one user gets into an inappropriate debate on Twitter with another user.

The ACPO 2013 Guidelines (ACPO, 2013) state that the same standard of behaviour and conduct applies online as would be expected offline; and the Guidelines warn against using social media off duty after consuming alcohol. The Guidelines are also clear that social media accounts should not be used to make adverse comments about the police or other officers.

Former ACPO lead on digital engagement, Deputy Chief Constable Gordon Scobbie recommends that police managers should trust

their officers to use social media accounts properly, training and supporting them to interact well with the public and, where mistakes are made, make allowances for what is essentially a learning process (Laville, 2012a).

In terms of neighbourhood policing therefore, social media allows officers to build a new space for communication and engagement, based not on geographical areas but on virtual communities. It may assist forces to connect with hard-to-reach-groups and to engage in more informal interactive activity. It has also been suggested that the police could provide particular value through the creation and maintenance of online networks of citizens and local partners. Social media is well-placed to encourage collective efficacy and co-safety: Greater Manchester Police used the hashtag #shopalooter on twitter to encourage people to tweet photos of alleged looters. Similarly, in the wake of the August riots the police posted CCTV footage and photos of suspects on the website Flickr as part of Operation Withern. Following publication of the photographs large numbers of the public came forward with information, and some suspects gave themselves up (Bartholomew, 2012). For the Metropolitan Police Service, in particular, Twitter significantly supported the investigation – within a few hours the Flickr images were retweeted 8,500 times and viewed 4.3 million times (Denef et al, 2013). This model could be developed to build a list of key community contacts, to empower local people to work together to solve problems, and to help a community to maintain social control.

## Chapter 6. Neighbourhood policing and the changing landscape

This chapter looks at how recent events have impacted on neighbourhood policing, in particular the economic recession and the emergence of the politics of austerity following the change of government in 2010 and broader socio-economic and technological changes that are fundamentally changing the nature of criminal activity.

### The politics of austerity

Just two months before the Coalition government came to power in May 2010, the previous government published its latest (and as it turned out last) national strategy on neighbourhood policing. The strategy pledged to support neighbourhood policing, despite the recession, with ring-fenced funding – including for PCSOs – that were seen as playing a ‘crucial role’.

*“We know that neighbourhood policing works and we are determined to protect the improvements to public services which matter most to the public”* (Home Office, 2010a).

But within two years the new Coalition government lifted the ring-fenced funding for neighbourhood policing and by 2014 alarm bells were already ringing for its future survival.

*“This accelerated reduction in PCSO posts adds to HMIC’s growing concern that neighbourhood policing is being eroded.”* (HMIC, 2013a)

HMIC warned that neighbourhood policing was the area of policing most at risk in terms of cuts (HMIC, 2013a) and raised particular concerns over the numbers of PCSOs, for whom the planned reduction between March 2010 and March 2015 was 22 per cent.

Figure 1 in Chapter 2 shows the actual decline in the number of PCSOs since 2010. Senior members of the Police Service, such as Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service (Dodd, 2014) and Lord John Stevens (Independent Police Commission, 2013), chair of the Independent Police Commission were, not unpredictably, also critical of the impact that budget cuts could have on neighbourhood policing.

*“Neighbourhood policing needs to be sustained as the key building block for strengthening the relationship between the police and public”* (Independent Police Commission, 2013)

The Independent Police Commission recommended that there should be a guaranteed minimum level of neighbourhood policing, which should be protected through legislation that includes a set of national minimum standards which everyone should receive and police forces must deliver. But the prospects for this, even with a change of government in May 2015, are poor. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) anticipates that, with NHS and education spending protected in the current round of spending cuts, reductions over the next few years are likely to focus on areas of unprotected spending, of which the police service is one (Cribb et al, 2014). With a further 5 per cent reduction in police funding announced for 2015-16, the numbers will fall further and police spending is unlikely to return to pre-2010 levels for at least a generation, if not more (Gibbs and Greenhalgh, 2014).

Forces will continue to face demands to maintain officer numbers while delivering high quality

services, including neighbourhood policing, while budgets continue to fall. Efficiency savings will only go so far and forces will increasingly face the prospect – if they haven't done so already – of saying 'no' to certain non-priority demands.

## Changing patterns of crime

At the same time as budgets are being cut, new patterns of crime are emerging. A recently published report by the College of Policing identifies a general shift away from traditional forms of high volume crimes (e.g. burglary, vehicle theft and shoplifting) to more complex, high harm crimes (e.g. domestic abuse, child sex exploitation, human trafficking/modern slavery and cyber-enabled crime) (College of Policing, 2015). According to the College “...*there are new contexts in which crimes are committed that are increasingly coming to the attention of the police...and many are associated with vulnerability, public protection and safeguarding*”.

The Office for National Statistics estimated last year that there were approximately 3.7 million fraud offences last year – many of which are cyber-enabled – and that if just bank and credit card frauds were included in the annual rate of victimisation reported by the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the total number of criminal offences would increase by a quarter. According to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, cyber-fraud alone costs the UK £670 million a year and the credit reference agency Experian has reported that the illicit trade in stolen data, primarily used to facilitate cyber-fraud, has increased by 300 per cent in the last two years. Such crimes are often harder to detect, cost more to investigate and present the police service with

a set of very new challenges requiring new responses and, in some cases, new kinds of skills and resources.

These so-called 'new' or 'emerging' crimes are being driven by wider, often global trends in socio-economic, demographic and technological changes. These include the globalisation of goods and services, the rapid spread of new forms of communication, the increase in personal mobility and migration, growing income inequality and the fragmentation of families and communities have created new threats and risks and new criminal opportunities. The threat is often neither geographically based nor responsive to conventional policing tactics, so it no longer makes sense to tackle crime without knowing the extent to which it crosses local, regional and national boundaries (Karn, 2013).

## The implications for neighbourhood policing

The above changes present particular challenges for neighbourhood policing, such as:

- Working effectively across local, regional and national borders.
  - Staying ahead of increasingly fluid criminal networks.
  - Responding to new kinds of offences and new ways of committing them.
  - Engaging with increasingly transient and diverse communities and with citizens connected more through social media than through the places where they live.
  - Meeting increasing public expectations for security and the demand for a visible presence at a time when resources are declining.
-



But there is a risk that, rather than spending time and resources tackling these new areas, the service will retreat to reactive, response-oriented policing, with resources being deployed to respond to immediate demands rather than more strategic, long term demands. Community engagement, neighbourhood policing, partnership working and problem-solving may all be at risk as other agencies withdraw towards their core (often statutory) priorities. HMIC warns of this approach, saying the police must guard against a vicious circle whereby less preventive activity leads to more reactive policing responses and spiralling demand (HMIC, 2014).

Part of the perennial challenge in retaining neighbourhood policing lies in making a case for keeping frontline officers and PCSOs in patrol work. Much of neighbourhood policing is intangible, which makes its effectiveness in concrete performance measures difficult to establish. Unlike crime fighting, its focus tends to be long-term rather than short-term. However, even if maintaining neighbourhood policing is the agreed ideal, the resources may not be available to support this. The question of what the police should be doing, and how their limited time and resources should be spent, must dictate the allocation of resources. In this sense, form must follow function and a debate needs to be had on how to narrow (or at least re-configure) the role of the frontline and its task, including determining what could be passed to other agencies (Millie, 2014b).

## The role of the police

The effective allocation of finite resources needs to reflect not just economics, but a clear strategy

of what the police should be doing. In 2012 HMIC examined demand on the police and raised the issue of the “*absence of clarity around a single mission for policing.*” (HMIC, 2012a) The purpose of policing has shifted with successive governments. Conservative White Papers in the 1990s believed it was ‘*to catch criminals*’; in 1997 Labour defined the police role as being ‘*to support a just and tolerant society*’; in 2011 Theresa May stated she needed the police “*to be the tough, no-nonsense crime-fighters they signed up to become.*” (May, 2011)

Messages which reinforce the police as crime-fighters, particularly during times of austerity, do little to support the role of neighbourhood policing teams, which were not just introduced to reduce crime (Skogan, 2006). The aims of neighbourhood policing are broader, encompassing community engagement, fear reduction and tackling low level disorder and antisocial behaviour. Neighbourhood policing teams also provide a social service, such as safeguarding or transporting the mentally ill, tracking down missing persons, or diffusing local tensions or conflicts, often through means other than law enforcement. These are all held to be core areas of policing (Reiner, 2013).

The degree to which the police undertake activities that have little to do with crime-fighting is no better illustrated than by the Manchester twitter experiment. Based on an analysis of the 3,200 calls they received over a 24 hour period, all of which were tweeted, the Greater Manchester Police estimated that the majority of these calls had little or nothing to do with crime. Millie (2012) refers to this as the “*policification of social work,*” (Millie, 2012) others describe it as

**Figure 4. The public's top ten priorities for policing**

1.	A service that takes action – responsive, approachable, coming out quickly when called to incidents, acting on, following up and feeding back on progress to members of the public when they report crime and antisocial behaviour.
2.	A visible, uniformed police presence, with fewer constables and PCSOs taken off patrols to perform 'administrative' tasks, and are there when needed, not just a nine-to-five service.
3.	PCSOs that are clearly distinguishable as part of the police service, with uniforms, equipment and powers that match their role in patrolling communities, supporting local police and tackling antisocial behaviour.
4.	Named contacts and clear information about who is responsible for what locally, and how to contact them in both emergency and non-emergency situations.
5.	Face-to-face access at a police station, a surgery or a street meeting.
6.	Continuity in the local policing team, with officers and PCSOs serving a minimum of two years in the neighbourhood so that they get to know areas and communities well and gain communities' respect and trust.
7.	A better service for victims of crime, especially repeat victims, returning regularly to check they are alright and to help minimise further victimisation.
8.	Sensitivity over reporting crime and giving evidence, protecting anonymity.
9.	Good engagement with the community to identify their priorities for action and to give feedback on action and outcomes on cases of greatest community concern.
10.	Clear leadership from the police on crime – with the backing of other organisations like the local council, prosecutors, the courts and probation services.

'mission drift'. The 'can-do' culture of policing has led police leaders to take on tasks wherever there is a service gap (Gibbs and Greenhalgh, 2014).

Having said this, neighbourhood policing teams clearly do carry out activities which contribute to crime reduction, as the models described earlier (e.g. hotspots policing, predictive policing) illustrate. Even the model of reassurance policing includes a crime reduction element, although the

emphasis is more on reassuring the public that the police are present and will intervene if required.

The combination of 'mission drift', cuts in police budgets and political demands to fight crime places the police service in a difficult and potentially precarious position. The main challenge is to pull back from functions without losing public confidence. With this in mind, it is worth looking at the public's top ten priorities for

policing, as illustrated in Figure 4, which is taken from Louise Casey's review, 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime'.

Clearly neighbourhood policing, arguably the most threatened section of the police service, has an important role to play in delivering many of these priorities, from visibility and accessibility to effective engagement with communities and tackling antisocial behaviour. In fact, as recommended by Lord Stevens' Commission, the Casey Review states that the government should ensure the provision of a local police commitment in every neighbourhood, based on the ten principles outlined above. Through positive engagement, for example, neighbourhood policing teams can encourage people to come forward with information to help keep their own neighbourhood safe. The public want face-to-face contact with officers and PCSOs they know and can trust. In HMIC's all-force comparison public survey, when asked which forms of communication would make them feel safer in their local area, around half of respondents identified face to face interaction with a police officer or PCSO on patrol (HMIC, 2013a).

By being a consistent and familiar presence in communities, neighbourhood policing teams can build confidence and trust in the police and, through that, compliance with the law (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). Neighbourhood policing officers are also well-placed to identify problems – most of which are directly related to crime – at an early stage, such as poor parenting, substance misuse or mental ill-health (Home Office, 2010a). In many respects neighbourhood policing is core business, as the Steven's Commission claims:

*"Neighbourhood policing is not simply a desirable option that can be shaved in order to affect cost*

*savings. Rather, it is the key building block of effective and legitimate policing and vital in responding to public expectations and building and sustaining confidence. This in turn is likely to improve and increase the public's engagement with the police in terms of giving them information and being willing to act as witnesses, essential ingredients if the police are to do more with less."* (Independent Police Commission, 2013)

## The role of Police Community Support Officers

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have played a major part in increasing engagement and interaction with local communities. PCSOs were first introduced in 2002, but initially both the public and the police service were sceptical. Although their primary role was to contribute to public reassurance through visibility and accessibility, there was confusion at first as to what this entailed, and a national evaluation of the role in 2004 identified a range of non-standard tasks being undertaken by PCSOs, which included distributing crime prevention advice, collecting evidence for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), minor house to house enquiries and witness support (Cooper et al, 2006). Concerns arose that the PCSO role, with limited powers compared to a police officer, would become simply a cheap way to fulfil some officer functions (Caless, 2007).

Today, PCSOs are recognised as a useful addition to the policing family (O'Neill, 2015). Given the depth of local knowledge which PCSOs can acquire from their beat areas, they can help to address problems in a neighbourhood, gather intelligence for police colleagues and therefore

play a key role in improving police legitimacy with the public (Foster and Jones, 2010). PCSOs are seen as skilled at negotiation and discussion (O'Neill, 2014) and are more diverse than police officers or staff (9.1 per cent black and minority ethnic compared with 5.5 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively) (Cooper et al, 2006). Evidence shows that neighbourhood policing, particularly through the use of PCSOs, has had a significant impact on the way the police engage with diverse communities (O'Neill, 2015). A national evaluation of PCSOs undertaken by the Home Office in 2006 showed that they were particularly valued for their work in tackling local problems involving young people and engaging with and reassuring the public (Cooper et al, 2006). As Figure 4 above illustrates, they are now considered by the public to be one of their top ten priorities for policing.

However, PCSOs are staff and not warranted officers, so they can more easily be made redundant and in the last few years their numbers have fallen (see Figure 1), although most police forces are maintaining the same proportion of PCSOs in their operational workforce. Recent research suggests that decreases in the number of PCSOs results in the impairment of neighbourhood policing, while increasing their number comparably enhances it (Greig-Midlane, 2014).

There is also evidence to suggest that their role is changing. The 2014 HMIC report found PCSOs were taking on more roles and responsibilities, some of which removed them from community engagement, such as scene guarding, road closures, detaining suspects or young people, giving fixed penalty notices and responding to low level emergencies (HMIC, 2014).

Some forces have found new sources of funding for PCSOs, such as local authorities. Telford and

Wrekin, for example, are subsidising the cost of PCSOs while allowing the local council to have a say in daily tasking (The Police Foundation, 2014). Some forces have suggested that it is helpful to divide activities into those that could be done by anyone and those which specifically require a police response. So, for example, cocooning advice to burglary victims could be given by a range of people (aided by the police) whereas dealing with a major public disorder incident can only be done by a warranted officer (The Police Foundation, 2014).

## Re-allocating resources

Whereas some forces are shaving costs by targeting their workforce (including PCSOs), others are looking more strategically at how to adapt to the changing environment they are facing. So, for example, some forces have begun to widen the concept of 'community' beyond physical or geographically defined areas and towards communities of common interest, as created for example on the internet. The internet allows offenders to commit crimes remotely with little risk of detection and potentially high rewards. But these crimes impact on local communities so as online risks become increasingly apparent, the police service will face increasing demands to secure the safety of internet users. Academy schools offer another example. With a wide and socially diverse catchment, parents and pupils are linked by their involvement with the school rather than the neighbourhood in which they live. Visibility and engagement need to adapt to take account of this.

In London, the Metropolitan Police Service has moved from allocating the same number of officers to every Safer Neighbourhood Team (a

sergeant, two PCs and three PCSOs) to one which better reflects the crime risk (prevalence, incidence, location and time of day/night) and the diversity of the neighbourhood (Gibbs and Greenhalgh, 2014). HMIC's 'Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge' identifies other examples, including: single crewing; using mobile technology to maximise time spent on the street; aligning patrols with times and places that maximise visibility; locating response hubs near to areas of high demand; using satellite positioning technology to identify the nearest responder; and ensuring that response officers are not tied up processing prisoners, by creating teams in custody (HMIC, 2013a).

In the face of budget cuts and staff shortages, neighbourhood level service delivery (which is heavily resource reliant) becomes a challenge for all public services and it is not just the police service that is increasingly refocusing towards more 'introverted' service delivery principles. As early as 2011 (one-year after the announcement of significant cuts in central government funding grants to police forces and local authorities in October 2010), research conducted by the National Community Safety Network (NCSN) found that a quarter of community safety partnerships surveyed had had to reduce levels of community engagement as a result of staff cutbacks and nearly two-thirds had experienced reduced commitment from partner agencies over the previous 12 months (Mowat, 2011). Irrespective of whether the will to collaborate with partners prevails, depleted resources (particularly reduced staffing numbers) create significant fragility in terms of residual capacity to maintain even skeleton services and functions. However, it has been suggested that partnership working is a

productive and efficient way of delivering services, even in an age of austerity:

*"The extent to which partnership at the neighbourhood level can act as a catalyst for more efficient (e.g. through less duplication of effort and better targeting), rather than just more effective, working is clearly relevant in the current economic climate."* (Turley, 2012).

Partnership collaboration, particularly seeking support and efficiency savings through others when faced with diminishing resources, could provide added resilience to community policing and neighbourhood crime reduction efforts. If this is so, then organisational regression to core single agency priorities seems counter-intuitive.

## The role of the public

As explored under 'Collective Efficacy' (see Chapter 3), communities where people know and help one another experience less disorder and less of certain types of crime. In this respect greater citizen intervention and participation is one possible route to reducing the harm and the financial cost of crime. Yet research shows only 30 per cent of Britons would feel confident about intervening to stop a group of 14 year olds committing vandalism (this contrasts with 60 per cent of Germans) (ADT, 2006). Often citizens are also worried that, if they do intervene, they might be attacked by the perpetrators, be arrested themselves by the police (Casey, 2008) or be sued. The last of these is currently being addressed by the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Bill (2014), which is currently going through Parliament. This states that where a person acts for the benefit of society (such as intervening in an emergency) and something goes

wrong and they are sued, the court will take full account of the context of their actions.

However the Bill does not address the other risks, particularly the concern that promoting public action of this kind could increase the risk of vigilantism.

Notwithstanding these concerns, public participation also comes with its own set of challenges. Citizens are rarely trained in the kind of negotiation and safety skills police constables require to deal with often volatile incidents, although an interesting initiative, 'The Woolwich Model,' (Rogers, 2010) puts forward the idea of training citizens to deal with antisocial behaviour in their local community in the same way as first aiders are trained to respond to health emergencies.

Galvanising citizens to volunteer can also be a challenge. The Citizen Power Project began a three-year trail in Peterborough in 2013 to encourage public participation, create stronger connections between people and develop new models of citizen-led response. Although the project has had some success in galvanising residents, they tended to be either 'superhuman altruists' or 'busybodies'; a large number were only willing to engage when the right opportunities, incentives and support were in place (Taylor et al, 2013). Research shows that graduates and the more affluent are more likely to volunteer to attend beat meetings, join neighbourhood watch schemes etc (Bullock and Sindall, 2014) which raises the issue of how to avoid simply recruiting 'the usual suspects' and motivate the 'harder-to-reach' groups. Fragmented, transient communities are often the most distanced from policing (Curtis and James,

2013), and the most vulnerable to crime. The confidence to intervene to prevent disorder, or to approach the police and report wrongdoing, is often dependent on how much such communities trust the police to support them.

Finally, citizens may not know the best way to negotiate with a perpetrator to achieve a peaceful outcome. They may believe they are standing up for a common morality or higher purpose, but may use violent means to make their point. Without the accountability of a corporate or service structure, they may also make mistakes, such as the case in 2000 of a doctor hounded from her home when citizens misunderstood the meaning of the word 'paediatrician' thinking instead it meant 'paedophile.' (Allison, 2000)

## 7. Conclusion

This review of the literature provides a picture of the past, the present and the future of neighbourhood policing. It has looked at its history and development, described different models, considered the evidence for its effectiveness and identified good practice. It has also looked at neighbourhood policing within the wider context of considerable changes in the economic, social, and political landscape, which has led to concerns about whether neighbourhood policing has a future.

If this concern is real, then one might ask what would be lost if neighbourhood policing disappeared. Some communities may not notice, a few may rejoice, but on the whole the public would suffer the loss of a prime source of reassurance and a sense that the state took some responsibility for the safety and protection of the communities and localities in which they lived. Some groups – particularly the vulnerable – may feel more exposed, isolated and helpless than others. There is a real public expectation that the police are not just there to deter or catch offenders, but to address a wide range of problems that other public services either lack the capability or the authority to resolve. And even if the police were required to do no more than fight crime, the evidence suggests they would be severely handicapped in doing so without the trust and cooperation of the public. If neighbourhood policing disappeared, then policing by consent may well go with it.

If neighbourhood policing is to survive and even flourish, then greater clarity is needed on the functions it can effectively perform (and what it

can't) and hence its real value to society. The evidence suggests that while it may not be particularly effective in reducing crime (though see below), it is crucial to developing and sustaining the trust and confidence of the public in the police service **as a whole** (i.e. not just neighbourhood policing); and it is through this that the service **as a whole** acquires its legitimacy. It should also be made clear that a service that is trusted by the public and is able to exercise its authority with the public's full support is actually more likely to be able to prevent crime and deter offenders. It is the public that reports crimes, provides the police with intelligence and stands witness in court; without this support – and the willingness of the public to provide it of their own free will – the police would be severely hampered in their fight against crime.

If a clear case can be made for securing the future of neighbourhood policing, then what might be done to improve it? A number of indications have emerged from this review, such as:

- Better training in interpersonal skills to improve officers' handling of street/public encounters, particularly in the use of stop and search and in encounters with young people.
- Greater, more imaginative use should be made of technology and social media.
- Less risk averse solutions could be found to enable better data sharing both within and out with the service, particularly with local partners.
- If problem-solving is to become the core of neighbourhood policing, then police analysts (and their counterparts in other agencies) need to play a greater role in problem

analysis, joining up data sets and informing proactive tasking.

- To help identify local problems and better ways of addressing them, more inclusive and more relevant ways of community engagement need to be developed.
- Better ways need to be found of measuring problem-solving performance through which forces can demonstrate not just efficiency and effectiveness, but also legitimacy in line with HMIC's new inspection criteria.
- Neighbourhood police officers need to develop new skills and generate better intelligence on emerging crimes, such as cyber-fraud, human trafficking and child sex abuse.
- Like other public services, much more needs to be done to understand and harness the power and influence of social media.

Other examples of neighbourhood policing can be found across the country as forces review their options. So, for example, in Leicestershire, neighbourhood police officers – of which there will be fewer – will no longer investigate crime or respond to emergencies. They will only deal with 'core community activities', such as patrol, public protection, antisocial behaviour and community engagement. They will be supported by PCSOs – of which there will be more.

The recent report by the College of Policing on estimating demand on the police service suggests that the future may well require a different sort of neighbourhood policing. Although there is less crime and less fear of crime now than there was ten or even twenty years ago, the strain placed on public services in the wake of unprecedented budget cuts has played a key role in the growing

demand for protective services. The police service is spending more time on costly, complex crime and non-crime incidents, such as child sex abuse, people with mental ill health and requests for mutual aid. These problems are experienced locally and require a local response, whether they originate locally or not. They are also complex and often require the kind of multi-agency response that neighbourhood policing teams know (or should know) how to deliver.

Finally neighbourhood policing, if it is to survive, has to adapt to the changing world. It has to understand better what the key risks, harms and threats are and what drives them. It has to find new ways of engaging with virtual communities, not just geographic ones. It needs to develop digital literacy – cyber-enabled crime should be the business of all police officers, not just specialists. It needs to be flexible if it is to effectively adapt to the increasing pace of change. It needs to find a role in assisting police forces to combat serious organised crime, the nature of which is changing – it's not just about drugs anymore – and the threat from which is growing. And finally it needs to find a way not of doing more with less, but of "*doing less, but doing it better*" (Innes, 2011).



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