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National Community Safety Network

Community Safety

The English Experience

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October 2006



What I will be covering:

- About my own organisation (NCSN)
- What is community safety and why is it important
- How is it being tackled?
 - Brief History
 - Legislation
 - Structures
 - Plans
 - Performance
- Some of the key challenges facing community safety



Who are the NCSN?

- Set up in 1995 as an informal network of practitioners (new profession)
- 2002 - Charity and Company. Board of Directors/Trustees
- Home Office funding, and membership subscriptions – staff team
- Over 400 member organisations - rapid growth over last few years



NCSN Aims

- Give a national voice to practitioners
- Influence national policy and practice – consultation with Home Office and others
- Support the professional development of practitioners
- Promote sharing of good practice and networking opportunities – conferences, seminars, newsletters, bulletins, website



What is Community Safety?

- ‘The protection of everyone’s right to live without fear for their own and other people’s safety’
(National Community Safety Network definition).
- ‘Community safety is a complex issue. It is an **outcome** rather than a service, although it is strongly influenced by the quality of service delivery.
Community safety relates to **people’s sense of personal security** and to their feelings of ease in the places that they live, work or spend leisure time.
It affects how people **value their neighbourhood**, and is a major part of what makes a neighbourhood a good or bad place to live’.
(Community Safety Partnerships – Audit Commission 2002)



Importance of Community Safety

- Key public concern. Top issue in surveys
 - Perceptions/Reality
- High on government's priorities
- Statutory duty for many key agencies



Importance of Community Safety (2)

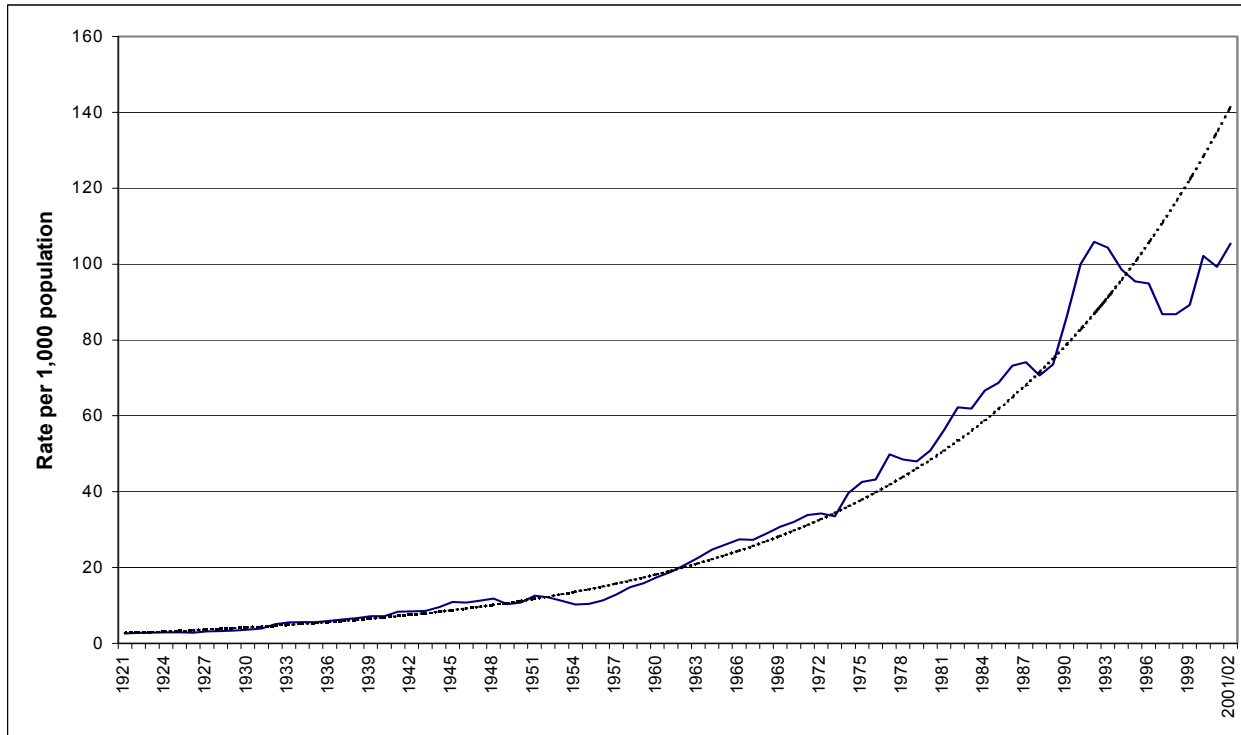
- Prevention and enforcement can save resources e.g. cutting vandalism
- Safety is everyone's business – impact on staff, customers/clients and premises
- There is government funding support



Crime Reduction versus Community Safety

- Community Safety encompasses crime reduction and prevention
- Can include fire and road safety, low level anti-social behaviour and disorder

Growth of Crime



Recorded crime rates for England and Wales: 1918 – 2002

Source: Home Office



Why has crime risen?

Many factors, including:

- Increasing wealth/ new products → more opportunities for crime
- Disparities in wealth
- Increasing mobility
- Breakdown of local social controls – families/schools/communities
- Weakening respect for authority, law and order. More permissive society



Approaches to crime prevention

- Late 1980's: Safer Cities movement. Government funding. Beginning of partnership approach
- Government sponsored report in 1991 - multi-agency partnerships. More than just police
- Informal partnerships by Local Authorities and Police
- 1998 Crime and Disorder Act



Structures

- Central Government – especially Home Office/Dept for Communities and Local Government
(Legislation/Targets/Guidance/Money)
- Regional Government (nine offices in England) – to ensure compliance/monitor performance and grants
- District – based partnerships - implement



Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- Statutory Crime and Disorder Partnerships across England and Wales
- District – based (376) (100,000 to 250,000 population)
- Community safety must be taken into account in all activities of local authorities



Key Partners

- Police
- Local authorities
- Fire
- Health
- Criminal Justice – courts/probation/prisons
- Communities, voluntary agencies and businesses



Partnership Planning

- Three Year Strategies
- Annual action plans
- Audit - Survey: define problems/share data/ask communities/review existing policies+practice
- Decide what to do: prioritise the problems/decide objectives/targets/outcomes/timescale
- Implement: Action plans under each priority theme/allocate responsibilities+resources/take action/monitor
- Evaluate and review the programme



What is in the Strategies?

- Central government priorities
 - Violent crime – assault/gun and knife/domestic violence
 - Domestic burglary
 - Vehicle crime
 - Arson – setting fire to property
 - Street crime – robbery
 - Drugs and Alcohol
 - Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
 - Prolific Offenders
- Local priorities from the audit
 - Fear of crime – improving public spaces
 - Activities for young people
 - Road Safety



Community Safety Strategies Link to:

- Wider community plans for the area
- Neighbourhood Renewal/Social inclusion strategies
- All service and departmental plans in some way



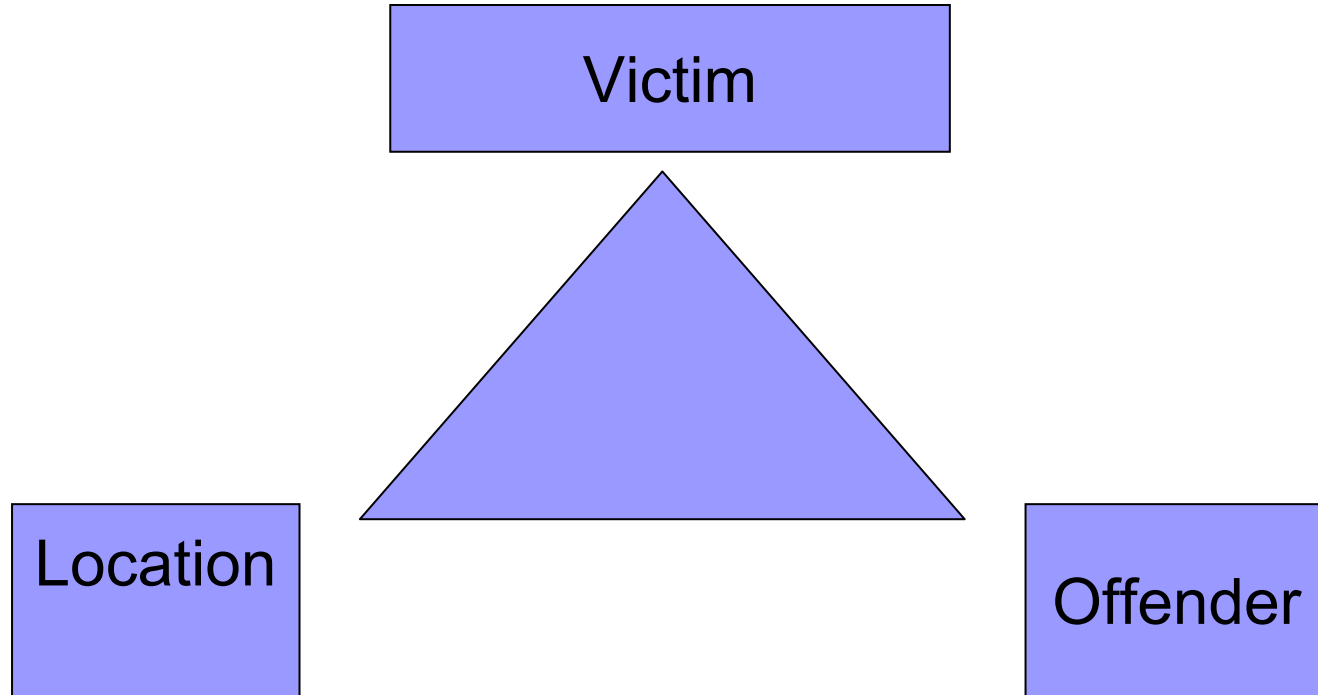
Tools and Methods

- Problem-solving approaches:
- SARA Model
 - Scan (define problem/collect information)
 - Data collection/geographic mapping
 - Analyse – what is causing the problem
 - Respond – look at options. Devise a solution and implement
 - Assess – Did it work? What lessons have been learned?



Tools and Methods (2)

■ Problem-solving Triangle





New Developments

- The first National Community Safety Plan (Nov 05)
- Respect Action Plan (Jan 06)
- Review of the Crime and Disorder Act (2006)
- Neighbourhood Policing
- Neighbourhood Management
- Improved techniques and methods – data-mapping/business processes



Does it all Work?

- Total **recorded crime has fallen** in recent years, but the contribution of CSPs is not clear
- “the performance of community safety partnerships is **difficult to assess**” (Audit Commission) - Many organisations involved in the assessment (hard to gain an overall picture)
- Some types of crime have increased – e.g. violent crimes
- Performance is assessed by Regional Offices and Partnerships themselves



Some Challenges

- It is a complex and wide-ranging area of work – more training and awareness are vital for growing number of staff
- Need to get better at evaluating policies and approaches - for example, the nature and cost-effectiveness of community involvement
- Sharing good practice – across UK, Europe and wider

Contact



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