

Reassurance Policing

Thanks to the police service, there has been a huge reduction in crime over past years. Unfortunately, the public's perception of crime rates and sense of safety does not reflect this success.

As people are affected by what they see, hear and feel, if a reduction in crime is not tangible or visible - despite positive statistics - they will still feel unsafe. Antisocial crimes, such as bus depot vandalism, feature high on the public's radar and create a sense of insecurity.

Delivering reassurance

Providing 'a sense of security' is a vital part of the Police force's role when it comes to reassuring the public. Making a real difference is only possible if reassurance is recognised as an integral part of the force's day-to-day business alongside priority crimes.

Three key starting points:

- Withstand external scrutiny by establishing a consistent starting point.
- Define the locality through a visual inspection and understand the public's concerns in that area, including 'triggers' for fear.
- Allocate sufficient resources.

Four key elements of the way that forces use their resources and decide on priorities must be considered:

- National Intelligence Model (NIM)
- Joint working with partners.
- Operational policies.
- Measurement of impact.

Five defining principles of successful public reassurance:

- Public confidence is vital. This includes confidence in local policing methods. Community partners should, therefore, be involved in reassurance policing choices, rather than simply making assumptions about what will work.
- Fast, visible control of antisocial behaviour is key: burnt out cars, graffiti and other damage to the physical environment should be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- A targeted, intelligence-led approach will stop a small number of 'signal' crimes from significantly damaging the community's sense of security.
- It is essential the police join forces with crime and statutory partners: a solution to offenders, locations and victims is only partly the police's responsibility.
- Assigning sufficient resources is crucial to delivering reassurance. The solution rests upon delivering above expectations: doing work that wouldn't otherwise be done.

Special Reassurance

The Special Constabulary can play an important role in reassuring the public. With research revealing that communities prefer visible, accessible and familiar policing – Specials fit the bill.

- Forces can use their Specials to take responsibility for specific aspects of policing i.e. problem solving to increase a sense of familiarity and ensure they become known within the community.

A joint project between the Surrey Police and the Metropolitan Police aimed to tackle the public's concerns. It set out to:

- Effectively capture intelligence on disorder and antisocial behaviour.
- Devise tactics to reduce all forms of antisocial behaviour.
- Ensure that success is made visible to the public.
- Measure the impact.

Based on these deliverables, the project secured funding approved by the Police Standards Unit.

Increased understanding and knowledge

Academic experts from Surrey University and the Police Foundation supported the research and evaluation process. Fundamental to developing strategies for restoring reassurance are:

- A doctrine of the key requirements for success; public confidence in choices and solutions; visible control of anti-social behaviour and its consequences; a targeted intelligence-led approach; joint action of police and partners and resources committed to delivering reassurance
- Use of visible ('signal') crime surveys and public perception surveys; an initial view as to those crimes and incidents that cause the greatest sense of insecurity to the public

Develop a 'restoring reassurance' model, including:

- A framework for the model
- Initial progress using NIM to manage reassurance
- A visual progress measurement

Developing a range of tactics:

- Encourage faster response from partners to clear up the visible impact of crime after investigation.
- Engage with local sectors of the community (e.g. youth) to establish partnerships and prevent crime: 'outreach' working is crucial.

Understand the resourcing impact and opportunities:

- Allocate dedicated officers to priority 'hot-spots', (including Special Constables, regulars, PCSOs and warden schemes).