

# Targeting – step three

Targeting hot spots for maximum benefits.

First published 19 October 2022

2 mins read

## Summary

- Forces should target hot spots with the most serious violence.

Once forces have the necessary technologies, they can use it to target hot spots in their area.

Evidence shows that hot spots tend to remain static over time (Braga and others, 2019). Resources can therefore be targeted to these areas. Using evidence to target places with the highest crime is key to long-term success.

At a basic level this can be done by:

- dividing the force into areas (either [lower super output areas](#), hexagons or other shapes)
- measuring levels of crime over several years
- ranking areas by levels of crime

The areas with the highest levels of crime receive the hot spots patrols.

The review of forces found that many targeted hot spots in the same way. Equal resources were distributed to each area, regardless of the levels of crime or serious violence. This approach contradicts hot spots policing theory.

Resources must be allocated based on concentrations of serious violence. Evidence shows that even if all hot spots policing resources were placed in just 20% of local areas, serious violence could still be reduced.

- [See more about hot spots policing](#)

## Targeting using rank ordering

When targeting hot spots for serious violence, it is critical to:

- arrange equal-sized geographical areas from lowest to highest for levels of crime
- identify the areas that produce the most serious violence
- target those areas

This method is known as rank ordering. Rank ordering arranges all the units in any population from the unit with the highest value to that with the lowest. This can be used for any measure, such as crime incidents index scores.

This method is essential for identifying hot spots as the top-ranked locations for crime counts scores.

## Analysts

Force-level analysts can support hot spots identification. Police forces should strongly consider using analysts alongside the necessary software.

- [See more about technologies](#)

## Homicide and near-miss homicide problem profile

This template is for completion by force analysts. It can help forces to understand local problems and inform their response. The template provides a guide on what should be included in a problem profile, including:

- timing and geographical location of incidents
- influencing factors
- victim and suspect profiles
- assault details
- [Download homicide and near-miss problem profile – force template](#)
- [See more about problem profiles](#)

# Tags

Hot spots policing   Crime reduction