

Tracking – step six

Ensuring hot spots policing duties are being performed.

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Summary

- Measurement is necessary for tracking accomplishments achieved with hot spots policing.
- Measurement is context specific. Metrics will be subject to the local conditions and delivery of hot spots policing.
- Measurement data is best acted upon when used in feedback structures. This is particularly true with operational officers delivering hot spots policing.
- Feedback can open a dialogue. This can lead to modification of hot spots policing to better fit the local context.

Tracking establishes what is being accomplished by a hot spots policing strategy. It requires measurement and feedback. It also allows issues to be identified and addressed.

Measurable progress of hot spots policing

Measurement will vary according to the focus of the hot spots policing strategy. All approaches are driven by the need to understand:

- what is happening within a hot spot
- whether the activity is making a measurable difference

Measurements include:

- inputs – the amount of police resource the hot spot is receiving
- outputs – what police are doing in the hot spots
- outcomes – the effect the activity is having, such as calls to police, injuries from violence and levels of recorded crime

A strategy's success is measured by long-term reductions in crime and harm in hot spots. But compliance with the hot spots policing patrol strategy can affect its success. Measurement is important to understand what is happening.

For example, a trial of night-time economy hot spots policing included patrol time in micro-locations in a city. This required monitoring of:

- movement by officers allocated to hot spots
- time spent by officers inside and outside of hot spots
- unexpected loss of radio signals
- pings from officers' locations verified by city centre CCTV cameras

Methods of feedback

A feedback strategy is essential. It ensures regular information about performance associated with hot spots policing. It also provides the space to change and intervene in hot spots policing practice.

Feedback can come in several formats, such as:

- making it part of force performance meetings led by a senior officer
- the provision of a weekly data stocktake
- discussions between a sergeant and their constables or police community support officers (PCSOs)

Two-way feedback

Evidence from forces demonstrates that performance measurements are necessary for tracking hot spots policing. But tracking is more insightful if it goes beyond collecting data.

Tracking should involve two-way feedback about data between supervisors and management, and frontline officers. The benefits of two-way feedback are as follows.

- Evidence suggests larger effects of hot spots policing when frontline officers take part in discussions about data.
- It provides a forum for frontline officers to provide feedback to those in charge of the implementation. This enables modifications on practices if necessary.

Two-way feedback has proved vital in recovering failing hot spots policing implementations.

Example

Feedback

One force implementing hot spots policing held a set of feedback sessions. The lead officer was told the global positioning system (GPS) was not accurately recording locations. The GPS device was in the centre of the hot spot. Officers indicated it was recording some distance outside the hot spot.

A chief inspector was dispatched to stand in the middle of a hot spot area. He updated the radio to show his status when performing patrols. The geo-fence recorded the movement of the officer. However, the GPS tracking showed his location as 200 metres away from where he was standing. This placed him outside the hot spot area.

Interventions

The lead officer looked at the contract with the supplier. They found the contract did not guarantee positional accuracy. All else being equal the supplier expected 80% accuracy. This was subject to conditions that signal masts were not obscured in built up areas.

An intervention was required. The force decided to increase the catchment area of the geo-fence (around the hot spots) by 200 metres. This captured the updates that were being missed.

Tags

Hot spots policing Crime reduction