

Proactive street-level policing

Proactive street-level policing in drug crimes.

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Systematic review evidence suggests that geographically targeted law enforcement interventions are more effective overall for reducing drug crime than standard, unfocused approaches to street-level drug law enforcement (Mazerolle and others, 2017; Mazerolle and others, 2020).

Proactive problem-oriented and community-wide interventions – involving police and partners – are more effective than reactive hot spots interventions or directed patrols.

Focusing on larger problem areas – such as neighbourhoods, suburbs and beats – tends to be more effective in reducing drug crime. This is unlike with other crime types, where focusing on micro-places is more effective.

The review authors suggest this may be because partnership approaches, involving agencies such as health and housing, are easier to manage when focused on large geographic areas.

Example of relevant practice

Operation Moorland (Devon and Cornwall Police)

Operation Moorland is a police and public health initiative. It aims to understand the prevalence of and reduce the harms caused by blue pills – also known as fake valium/benzos.

Based on intelligence, the operation focused on Devon. It mapped:

- prevalence
- types of pill in circulation
- potential source
- type of persons/communities predominantly using/affected

This mapping was then used to target the right public health messages to the right people, at the right time and in the right way.

The operation also sought to encourage intelligence submissions. It did this through raising awareness:

- internally (in the police)
- with wider partners, such as local hospitals

Tags

Evidence-based policing Crime reduction