

Partnerships

Engaging with partners.

First published 4 September 2023

Chief officers should engage with relevant partners, communities and stakeholders at a strategic level to encourage their involvement in problem-solving.

This engagement should include:

- encouraging a shared approach to problem-solving – for example, exploring joint learning and CPD opportunities, as well as using shared problem-solving terminology, tools and methods
- facilitating the sharing of information to identify, inform and tackle problems
- jointly defining and prioritising problems, and encouraging collaborative working throughout the problem-solving process

Evidence summary

Evidence highlights that partnership working is important to problem-solving. Aligning priorities with partners can improve cooperation and reduce potential duplication of activity. Working with partners may also increase capacity for problem-solving, may provide access to alternative solutions and may enable non-crime issues to be passed on to the most suitable agency.

Public involvement in identifying and defining problems is also key to successful neighbourhood policing programmes.

Partnerships to facilitate problem solving

Senior leaders can support effective problem-solving by working with partners at a strategic level to facilitate and support problem-solving. This may include aligning priorities, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and agreeing data-sharing protocols to protect vulnerable people.

Chief officers should establish strategic and collaborative partnerships to accomplish shared objectives, both across forces and outside the police service. Stakeholder mapping helps to identify the most appropriate partners who can help to resolve specific problems.

In most successful problem-solving, partners are not limited to statutory partners and agencies. Partners will often include the private and voluntary sectors, academics, individuals and community groups. Identifying the partners who are necessary to deliver a sustainable change is a critical element of the process.

Partnerships and data sharing

Without effective data sharing between partners, it will be more difficult to develop the detailed problem specifications that are needed for effective problem-solving, based on multiple data sources. It is important that senior leaders understand the roles, responsibilities and priorities of partners. Senior leaders should work with partners to develop systems and protocols to share data securely, and should help partners to overcome any barriers to implementing these systems and protocols.

Mapping partner data sources and agreeing data sharing arrangements, including making police data sources available to others where possible, should facilitate timely access. This should also encourage a consistent approach to problem-solving across all partners.

Partnerships and capability

Joint training, workshops and conferences on processes and activity are likely to help facilitate effective partnership working. Joint award ceremonies may also be effective in encouraging, and learning from, good practice.

In order to build and maintain effective working relationships with partners, forces should consider how they provide consistent communication channels and representation in groups. This could include providing single points of contact and ensuring that effective handovers are carried out when staff move posts. Some forces have found that police staff, who tend to stay longer in post, can provide this consistency.

Chief officers should also consider working with local universities and academics to support them in evaluating problem-solving activity, including cost-benefit analysis.

Forces should be aware that partners may focus on different approaches to problem-solving (for example, the public health approach and/or asset-based management approach). In these circumstances, problem-oriented policing strategies and processes can complement other models

and other approaches that are also based on a specific model.

Supporting resources

- [National Problem Solving Conference](#)
- [Public health approach](#)
- [Asset-based management approach](#)

Tags

Evidence-based policing