

# Neighbourhood policing evidence review

11 January 2021

The process for how the research and practice evidence underpinning these guidelines was reviewed.

Written by College of Policing

The guidelines were developed by a College guideline committee, which followed a set process. This process involves bringing together an independent committee of practitioners and subject matter experts who collectively review the best available evidence and agree whether any guidelines for policing practice can and should be made. The committee was presented with summaries of the research evidence, plus overviews of submissions to a call for practice and the initial results from focus groups with practitioners.

## Practitioner evidence review

The College carried out a call for police practice to identify current force approaches and practical examples of neighbourhood policing in order to build on the evidence base underpinning the guidelines and, in the final guidance, share practice across the police service. The call for practice specifically sought examples of:

- a policing or partnership initiative or intervention
- a problem-solving technique that has been applied to a local policing issue
- a summary of local practice
- a project or evaluation
- training or continuing professional development

In addition to the call for practice, two 10,000 Volts (10KV) focus groups were carried out in November 2017. 10KV is a web-based debriefing tool that has been used to debrief over 300 operational incidents. Participants use tablets to contribute anonymously to an online discussion, usually responding to a series of pre-set questions. All responses are recorded and analysed to understand any common themes or key issues raised.

The 10KV focus groups aimed to develop an understanding of the contribution neighbourhood policing has made to counter terrorism in order to fill an expected gap in the research evidence.

The focus groups – which included counter-terrorism specialists and neighbourhood officers in separate sessions – discussed the current contribution of neighbourhood policing, barriers and facilitators and areas of good practice. Where appropriate, the outcomes from the 10KV groups have been woven into supporting materials.

## Research evidence review

### Review questions

The research evidence underpinning the guidelines was identified through two rapid evidence assessments (REAs) on neighbourhood policing and related policing strategies. They sought to answer the following questions:

1. What constitutes effective neighbourhood policing?
2. What acts as a facilitator or barrier to the successful implementation of neighbourhood policing?

### What is a rapid evidence assessment?

A rapid evidence assessment (REA) uses transparent, structured and systematic processes to search for, sift and bring together research on a particular topic. These processes should help reduce bias and enable others to replicate the review. An REA is not an exhaustive summary of the literature, as limits are placed on the review process in order to deliver results rapidly. While REAs are typically used to review quantitative studies, they can also be used with other types of research. REAs are able to identify relevant evidence that can be used to support decision making and practice, as well as highlight any gaps in the evidence base.

### Focus and scope

REA1 was not only concerned with exploring the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing. It also outlined what was thought to have been important when neighbourhood policing had a positive impact. The REA used a broad definition of 'neighbourhood policing', concentrating on initiatives that variously involved foot patrol, community engagement, problem solving and partnership working in some combination. Other policing strategies were regarded as being in scope if they were felt to be particularly suited to integration with neighbourhood policing (for example, hot spots policing, focused deterrence policing and procedural justice). Only systematic reviews and other REAs were included in the REA. Relevant primary studies from systematic reviews were also

separately included because they tended to describe implementation of the initiatives in more detail.

By contrast, REA2 was broader in that it sought to document a comprehensive range of implementation issues with neighbourhood policing. It therefore included a much wider range of methods, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method studies. REA2 used the same broad definition of 'neighbourhood policing' as before, but concentrated on the relevance of findings on implementation in the studies. It sought to:

- look at how the defining features of neighbourhood policing had been implemented
- identify what helped and hindered
- explore whether there were any special considerations in particular contexts (for example, in tackling antisocial behaviour, crime or terrorism)

As such, REA2 aimed to draw out findings that would provide the basis for practical advice to practitioners who were supporting the delivery of neighbourhood policing.

## Process detail

Further detail including flowcharts to explain the process can be found in the [downloadable version of the rapid evidence review](#).

## Tags

Neighbourhood policing