

Modernising neighbourhood policing

The Policing Vision 2025 describes how the link between the police and the public will continue to form the bedrock of British policing.

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The defining features of neighbourhood policing can be traced back to the Peelian principles. The clear emphasis on prevention, the recognition that the police are part of the community and that their power depends on public approval, are as important today as they were at the inception of the police service. There have been different approaches to neighbourhood policing and, on occasion, different names, however, a connection to the original foundations has remained throughout.

Previous guidelines were based upon the National Reassurance and National Neighbourhood Policing programmes and supported by substantial investment in dedicated neighbourhood resources. The focus was on establishing public priorities to reduce crime and the fear of crime and improve public confidence in the police, recognising the importance of this for maintaining police legitimacy.

The context now is different. Demand on policing services continues to escalate at a time of decreasing resources, particularly those dedicated to local roles, strengthening the need to find sustainable system-wide solutions across public services. Increased reporting of crime committed in private spaces, often against the most vulnerable in our communities, coupled with new and emerging threats means that the day-to-day activities of neighbourhood policing teams have changed dramatically. At the same time, they are using new technologies to engage communities and solve crime, and they are working to strengthen partnerships in new areas, for example, around mental health and social care.

When implemented effectively, the benefits of neighbourhood policing, whether directed at geographic communities or communities that share an interest, can include:

- a flow of vital community intelligence on a range of issues, from neighbourhood to national security

- promoting community safety and feelings of safety
- prevention of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour
- protecting the vulnerable and reducing repeat demands
- the opportunity to create resilient communities less reliant on police support
- the legitimacy necessary to enable policing by consent

At its best, and when properly integrated with other services, neighbourhood policing becomes an important part of neighbourhood management, which then has broader benefits for all.

In its 2016 Police Effectiveness Report, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue (HMICFRS) raised concerns that local policing had been eroded and that many forces had failed to 'redefine' neighbourhood policing in the context of reduced budgets and changing demand. These guidelines have been developed to directly address that concern. While they do not cover force structures and neighbourhood policing resources, as these are matters for chief constables and police and crime commissioners, they do provide an evidence base to assist forces in designing and implementing a modern neighbourhood policing function to get the best from local investment.

In developing these guidelines, College staff sifted over 1,600 studies for relevance and quality, supplemented with a call for practice evidence which received over 200 responses from forces and local partnerships. Their development was overseen by a guideline committee of frontline practitioners, subject matter experts and academics, who shared their experiences and views to augment the research material. This is, however, just the starting point. While the guidelines are based on the best available current evidence, we have also developed a comprehensive set of in-practice examples to enable forces to identify how the guideline principles are being used to practical effect. In addition, where there is an absence of evidence for newly emerging neighbourhood policing practice, we will work with forces to fill that gap.

Neighbourhood policing remains an essential element of modern policing. These guidelines focus on enabling the whole of the policing system to operate and ensure forces have the best available evidence on which to implement it effectively.

Tags

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