

Local Focus Hub – a multi-agency hub model

Problem-solving hubs embracing joint working with partner agencies to resolve incidents of repeat crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Evaluated locally
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Public Protection, Safeguarding & Vulnerability Community engagement Neighbourhood crime
Organisation	Cumbria Constabulary
HMICFRS report	Police performance: Getting a grip (PEEL spotlight report)
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Key details

Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Community safety partnership Education Government department Health services Local authority Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2018
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults Children and young people Communities Families General public Offenders Victims

Aim

The aim of this intervention is to provide a model framework to improve inter-agency working and provide a problem-solving approach to identifying sustainable solutions to relevant community issues. The community issues that are relevant to this intervention largely relate to those that are having a demand on more than one partner agency within the hub. Diversity, equality and inclusion is considered in every case.

Intended outcome

The Local Focus Hub project provides a structured inter-agency framework to identify quality of life and crime and disorder incidents. It manages them using established problem-solving theory, and implements timely solutions that provide for more sustainable solutions, ultimately trying to prevent the issue from continuing and re-occurring.

This approach improves the outcomes for communities by reducing the likelihood of further harm incidents occurring. In the medium to long term, this reduces demand on the agencies involved.

The Local Focus Hubs have a wide range of interventions or outcomes available at their disposal. These include all police-related and criminal justice outcomes such as:

- arrests
- criminal behaviour orders
- community protection warning and notices
- community resolutions
- mediation
- summons

We also have a range of outcomes available from those partner agencies who are involved in the referral. This includes housing association powers such as evictions and injunctions, local authorities, environmental health, licensing and enforcement.

Description

Context

Prior to implementation of the Local Focus Hub model project, agencies such as police, local authorities, registered social landlords, community mental health, fire and rescue services, dealt with their demand and the underlying community harm in relative isolation. Often this would lead to limited interventions that did not really solve the underlying problems and often resulted in non-sustainable solutions. Partnership working was present, but it was limited and not consistent across organisations and their respective locations of responsibility.

Cumbria Constabulary has six identified neighbourhood policing teams. Within each neighbourhood policing team, a multi-agency Local Focus Hub has been set up.

Delivery

Each hub is to be located at the most appropriate location to provide for co-location by partner agencies wherever possible.

Each hub should have a hub manager whose role is to foster and maintain good inter-agency partnership working, whilst also ensuring that individual partner organisational expectations are being carried out and met. The hub managers are supported by a hub co-ordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day administration. This includes facilitation of information sharing and hub based problem-solving activities, such as arranging multi-agency case meetings. Predominantly, hub managers are employed by local authorities and hub coordinators are police constables with problem-solving expertise.

All partners that belong to a hub will sign an information-sharing agreement that allows for data to be shared.

The hub model provides for better working practices and arrangements to implement problem-solving tactics. The hub manages cases by following the established OSARA (objective, scanning, analysis, response and assessment) problem-solving model. It brings partner agencies together in a structured way to problem solve issues that have been reported to them. The hub itself is not usually forward-facing for members of the community.

The hub model is based upon the following referral mechanism:

1. Hub partner organisation identifies an issue that they consider requires multi-agency intervention.
2. Hub partner refers the case via a data platform (Microsoft teams based).
3. Referral is risk assessed which determines initial action timescales.
4. Information on the referral is shared across partner agencies to identify those agencies that have a part to play in the problem solving.
5. Initial scanning of the issue is completed by hub coordinator.
6. A multi-agency case meeting is arranged and carried out to 'analyse' the issue and agree appropriate 'responses'. The referring agency is usually considered to be the lead agency for the issue.

7. Relevant agencies, including those that can be signposted to (many agencies that provide intervention, such as third sector organisations, are not formally part of the hub structure), are tasked with providing intervention.
8. Actions are 'assessed' and OSARA reviewed and re-implemented as required.
9. Referral life depends on the issue and the level and nature of problem solving required.
10. Referrals are subject to regular monthly assessments by lead agency and/or hub manager, and at the point of proposed closure.

All elements of the OSARA problem-solving are recorded on hub teams database in an OSARA format.

Each relevant agency that is attached to the hubs will have their own powers and responsibilities. Identifying and implementing those that are most relevant to the problem have the best chance of success when applied. This results in improved sustainable solutions. For example, a warning letter from a registered social landlord about anti-social activities may deter further bad behaviour more than proactive police enforcement alone.

Hundreds of multi-agency referrals have been made through the Local Focus Hubs across the force to date. There is a low re-referral rate for those issues identified indicating that sustainable problem solving is being achieved.

The hub model is also used to bring partner agencies together on a monthly basis to share data and agree more general organisational priorities and hot spot locations/individuals/victims for further targeted intervention. This meeting serves as a platform for tactical delivery of strategic community safety partnership (CSP) action plan and contributes to neighbourhood policing tasking.

The hub manager and coordinator are co-located with access available for the neighbourhood policing team (NPT) team and other partners to visit or work out of the local focus hub building.

Overall impact

Evaluation is ongoing and led by the police force. Measures are being tracked during implementation. The force operates a performance framework that includes:

- the number of referrals into the hubs
- nature of referral and risk rating

- the originating organisation
- the intervention powers utilised
- the re-referral rate

OSARA dip sampling occurs by NPT managers monthly and these feed into monthly performance meetings.

In 2023, the Local Focus Hub in Cumbria had a positive problem-solving outcome of over 90%. This means that 90% of all the referrals made into the hub did not repeat throughout the year. The success is measured this way as it shows the interventions and partnership approach is effectively dealing with the problems and implementing long-term solutions. This means we are reducing harm in communities.

The hub model has provided an established structure to support multi-agency sustainable problem-solving across the force. Hubs have a solid mechanism to ensure multi-agency problem-solving and the expectation that community issues are, in many cases, a joint intervention responsibility. This has resulted in stronger relationships between professionals from different organisations and a more proactive common approach to solving problems, utilising a mix of powers outside of those available to the police in isolation. This approach has helped to prevent, reduce and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Learning

The intervention requires buy-in from all key agencies across a large geographical scale to ensure that there is sufficient representation as well as to drive effective responses that will deliver sustainable solutions to problems. Therefore, it requires sufficient buy-in at a strategic level across many different local authority areas, registered social landlords and NHS Trusts, for example. Obtaining strategic agreements across the whole force area at the start of the intervention is key to full roll out and success.

The use of an approved problem-solving model to document the problem-solving activity has been driven by the police. Other partner agencies have very limited use of problem-solving techniques. There remains an ongoing need to educate and share the need for problem-solving models to assist in achieving sustainable solutions and overall objectives.

Initial hub structure utilised generic computer systems to share communications on hub referrals. This created significant administration burden and particularly around email usage. National Enabling Programmes (NEP) worked with Cumbria Constabulary to enable safe usage of Microsoft teams for data sharing and direct input into case files by all partner agencies.

Best available evidence

Currently the [Crime Reduction Toolkit](#) does not include information on an intervention similar to local focus multi-agency hub models.

Elements of the tactical approach used in this intervention are covered by the best-available evidence on [problem oriented policing](#). You can also access [problem-solving policing resources](#).

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Tags

Crime reduction Neighbourhood policing Community engagement