

Operation Respect – multi-agency event to tackle local anti-social behaviour

Encouraging pride and neighbourliness within communities.

First published

3 July 2024

Updated

31 July 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Community engagement Neighbourhood crime
Organisation	Cumbria Constabulary
Contact	Emma Thompson
Email address	emma.thompson2@cumbria.police.uk
Region	North East

Key details

Partners	Police Business and commerce Community safety partnership Education Government department Health services Local authority Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2021
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Children and young people Communities Families

Aim

The aims of Operation Respect are to:

- reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- educate and inform communities around incident reporting and crime prevention
- improve community health and wellbeing, and reduce suicide rates, through access to support services such as mental health, financial support and bereavement support
- promote diversity and inclusion through support services and support groups
- improve the presentation and appearance of neighbourhoods

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of Operation Respect are to:

- reduce ASB
- improve appearance of neighbourhoods
- improve partnership working between local agencies
- increase community policing presence
- improve trust and confidence in the police

Description

This programme aims to connect with some of the most under-served and in-need communities by meeting them where they work and live. It involves events that focus on building relationships between communities and partners built on trust and aligned values.

Multi-agency partners

24 partner agencies come together annually to run local community events. Members of the partnership include:

- Cumbria Constabulary
- Cumberland Council
- social housing providers
- community safety teams
- inclusion and diversity officers
- public health
- Drug and alcohol charity – Cumbria Addictions Advice & Solutions (CADAS)
- Andy's Man Club and Every Life Matters (suicide prevention charities)
- Family Action (a local authority children and families provider)
- Active Cumbria and Cumbria Cricket (who provide inclusive sports activities for young people)
- Cumbria Waste
- environment enforcement officers
- Cumbria Fire and Rescue
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- bereavement support services
- Groundwork Trust (who support communities in need)

The idea behind Operation Respect came during the Covid-19 pandemic when Cumberland Council were receiving lots of complaints about fly tipping. The council wanted to show the community that their environment was still being cared for during the pandemic. The Council were able to identify relevant stakeholders to approach about running events through an already established [Local Focus Hub](#) partnership.

Social housing providers are responsible for choosing the date and location of the event. They also take responsibility for attendees through inviting their tenants who are most in need. All other attending organisations take ownership for their own staffing, logistics, equipment and health and safety arrangements.

Cumberland Council host monthly meetings to discuss progress and any outstanding arrangements for the events. These meetings are a good opportunity to remind attendees of the objectives and the value of the events, and why their participation is so important. Outside of the monthly meetings, Microsoft Teams is used to plan the event. Each participating organisation is assigned tasks and must log updates to the Microsoft Teams channel.

Delivery of events

In terms of how the events run, attending organisations can bring stalls and gazebos creating a carnival atmosphere. An ice cream van provides free refreshments. Previously, organisations have provided:

- infant and pregnancy vitamins (public health)
- advice on alcohol, vaping, drugs and gambling harm (CADAS)
- interactive sessions with young people about suicide prevention and mental health (Andy's Man Club and Every Life Matters)
- support around dental hygiene, parenting and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (Family Action)
- inclusive sports activities for young people including those with disabilities (Active Cumbria and Cumbria Cricket)
- smoke alarm fit and distribution (Cumbria Fire and Rescue)
- advice and support around employment and volunteer opportunities for those out of education and employment (Groundwork Trust)
- improvements to dog fouling signage and street furniture (environment enforcement)

Neighbourhood policing teams and police dogs also engage. The police provide crime prevention advice and offer information around victim support and violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Costs

The event is considered low budget given the potential benefits it provides for communities. The main costs are for skips to be on site – these are funded by the respective housing provider and local waste services to reduce fly tipping. The local authority funds 50% of the cost of the ice cream van and the remainder is funded by social housing providers. The social housing providers fund waste disposal, general maintenance and for financial inclusion officers to attend the event. Outside of this, the only other costs involved are staff time and the cost of disposing waste. Refreshments and free gifts are provided by local supermarket ‘Community Champions’ and children’s services providers.

Overall impact

Operation Respect has now been rolled out across across the whole of Cumbria.

As the project grows we connect with more agencies who can deliver preventative support in communities, reducing the failure demand on services and reducing harm.

The engagement with young people improves their trust in services and their knowledge and understanding about service who can support them.

The events have reached over 400 community members. Although it is difficult to measure the impact of this initiative, some positive examples of impact have been seen. For example, a housing estate in Westfield, Workington received Operation Respect in July 2023. The local housing provider reported zero cases of ASB in the month that followed the event, and the positive feedback from the community could be felt on the street.

Operation Respect was awarded National Community Initiative of the Year in 2023 by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy.

Learning

- Accountability and responsibility must be shared between partner agencies. The multi-agency approach of the events includes the understanding that all resources and funding are a group

effort and are not the responsibility of one organisation. This approach has worked well in terms of ensuring everyone contributes fairly to the planning stages.

- Strong communication across multiple channels is vital. For example, social landlords texting tenants to invite them to the events has been found to get great results.
- In terms of trust and confidence in the police and other organisations, the organisers have found that fun breaks down barriers – community members enjoy seeing the 'human' side of police officers.
- Support and engagement has not been difficult to achieve from partner agencies. This is believed to be because the events offer the opportunity for organisations to show they are meeting objectives in key areas such as tackling ASB, promoting wellbeing and focusing on community safety. As these outputs meet statutory responsibilities, it has not been hard to gain support.
- It is crucial to emphasise that each organisation is responsible for their own health and safety arrangements.
- Ideally, the events should be held during school holidays when children are off school.

Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

Legal disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.

Tags

Community engagement Neighbourhood policing