

Operation Subpole – reducing anti-social behaviour by working with schools

Implementing monthly multi-agency meetings with local secondary schools to reduce anti-social behaviour among students and improve attendance.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Contact management
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Region	West Midlands
Partners	Police Community safety partnership Education Local authority
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	September 2022

Key details

Completion date	September 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Children and young people Families

Aim

The aim was to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime among a group of young people by working with schools and other partners. The group itself was diverse and each person was treated as an individual. One-to-one work carried out by the school, social care and violence reduction team allowed an individual approach. The aim of this individual approach was inclusion to enable learning and deter from crime or ASB.

Intended outcome

The intended outcome was a reduction in ASB among young people and a reduction in crime in the Hednesford and Cannock town centre areas.

The activity diverted those involved with ASB and crime away from this by providing activities, interests, schooling and, in some cases, preventing contact with others.

Description

This operation was implemented to tackle ASB based around a local park with a group of young people. There was a group of around 12 young people involved, although this was fluid with more joining the group on the periphery. The young people were from a mix of local secondary schools and all eight of the district's secondary schools attended the regular meetings we set up. These monthly meetings involved:

- the schools
- violence reduction team

- local police officers
- social care
- housing

There was a representative from each school, two officers, social care workers as well as three local housing group workers. Staff members were involved at different times. Up to 15 or 20 local police officers had some involvement and would usually work in pairs with the young people. They may have had different partners with them depending on what they were trying to achieve at that time. For example, joint visits with housing or social care, or working with school safeguarding leads.

The relationships were largely formed by a meeting arranged by one of our neighbourhood's sergeants who identified the problems caused by the ASB that was linked to this group of individuals. He asked the schools, social care and others to meet as a group to discuss what could be done collectively. This process led to the interventions described being agreed. There was no cost required as this formed part of business as usual for the agencies involved. However, this involved all agencies committing resources.

Activities

An example of specific activities would be that some of those involved worked with the Prince's Trust. One was enabled to start an apprenticeship and others were reintegrated back into school. This was a gradual process achieved by working with parents and the young people, slowly building up school contact over a period of weeks or months. There was no timescale set as it was generally agreed that the importance of getting young people back into school was the main driver.

The operation commenced in September 2022 is now running as business as usual activity, due to its effectiveness and positive outcomes. There has been:

- a reduction in ASB and associated criminality
- better youth engagement
- improved youth engagement with schooling (including much higher attendance)
- improved community satisfaction with local policing

Overall impact

- Monitoring is being led internally by the police force, including a survey conducted with individuals involved and police data on crime and ASB in the relevant areas.
- 12 students were at risk of permanent exclusion from school. Nine have since returned to full-time education. The remaining three are having intensive partnership work by youth offending teams, the Youth Offending Service and external providers. This has reduced the demand on officers' workloads but has also reduced the demand for calls to service regarding these persons.
- Logs of poor behaviour kept by the schools relating to the 12 students involved have dropped by 84%.
- Anecdotal evidence gathered from speaking with the community has suggested improved community feeling and a greater use of parks and open spaces due to a reduction in ASB.
- Positive relationships have been built with local schools and the community. This has been highlighted through anecdotal evidence from community members and local police officers.

Learning

Multi-agency meetings to discuss and identify the problem are central, alongside those agencies subsequently agreeing and carrying out the solutions. Regular face-to-face contact between agencies and partners at the monthly meeting was key, albeit officers would meet with partners and schools in between these meetings. Continuity of those involved was important so that we were able to move forward at each monthly meeting.

Having buy in from all those with the right skills was important. This was achieved by having difficult, honest conversations at the outset. Some schools did not accept there was a problem. To overcome this, officers showed CCTV of young people causing damage and committing assaults at the initial meeting. This enabled us all to agree a starting point for dealing with the problem.

One challenge faced in the beginning was lack of police resources to patrol hotspots and help to identify those involved in ASB. Identifying those involved was the starting point and overtime was requested and used to ensure this initial part of the work could be done.

Persuading all schools that there was a problem and that working with the police was the way to tackle it was a challenge. Accepting there is a problem in a school can be seen as negative when schools need to attract and retain students for funding purposes. As noted above, showing schools the scale of the problem using CCTV was key to them accepting the problem so we could move forward with finding solutions.

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Tags

Crime reduction Neighbourhood policing