

Police support volunteers at unlicensed music events

Using police support volunteers to protect sites where unlicensed music events are held and improve community feelings of safety.

First published
15 November 2024

Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Crime prevention Neighbourhood crime Operational policing
Organisation	Devon and Cornwall Police
Contact	Joe Champness
Email address	joe.champness@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk
Region	South East
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2024
Scale of initiative	Regional

Aim

The use of police support volunteers (PSVs) at rave sites aims to:

- protect sites where unlicensed music events (UME) are held
- improve community feelings of safety
- increase trust and confidence in the police

Intended outcome

- Enhanced partnership working between police, volunteers, and the local community
- A reduction in the number of UMEs throughout Devon and Cornwall

Description

Throughout Devon and Cornwall, there are over 90 identified UME sites. Devon and Cornwall police have faced issues with UME raves being held at these sites, causing feelings of being unsafe in the local community and damage to the sites involved.

Through partnership working with the citizens in policing team, eight PSVs were recruited to complete a one-day bespoke qualification in practical crime prevention training. This training was created by the crime prevention and business crime lead, alongside the police-owned training provider, Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (PCPI). The training was specifically designed to focus on UME rave sites.

The training covered:

- national legislation
- principles of crime prevention
- unlicensed music events – including the force wide list of locations
- how to complete a crime prevention survey

Following the training, the PSVs were partnered with a local police community support officer (PSCO) or police constable (PC) and attended all identified UME sites throughout Devon and Cornwall, starting with high-risk sites. All rave sites in Devon and Cornwall are graded as red, amber or green by the force operations planning team. The volunteers started with all red sites, then moved to amber and finally green sites.

The role of the PSVs was to complete a crime prevention survey for each site and make recommendations for 'target hardening' the sites and improving their security measures. These recommendations could include suggestions such as new fencing and gates, or installing new CCTV and lighting.

The survey completed by each volunteer was passed to the force operational planning team and the rural affairs team. These teams could then liaise directly with the owner of the land to put any necessary measures in place to safeguard the sites and communities.

PSVs are voluntary and their time came at no additional cost, except for any expenses incurred while the volunteers undertook the training. The training day was funded through an internal crime prevention and business crime budget. In total, the training cost £1,595 plus VAT for twelve candidates.

Once in role, the volunteers are managed by the Devon and Cornwall Citizens in Policing team. In terms of future plans, the current volunteers will continue to use their skills to assess UME sites. This will involve re-visiting sites and assessing any new sites.

Overall impact

There has been a reduction observed in UMEs since the PSVs started in post.

While it cannot be said for certain that rave sites are no longer being used solely due to the work of the volunteers, their preventative methods are believed to have played a part in the reduction in crime.

Learning

Target hardening a UME site can be a challenge due to the complex geographic nature of some sites. Therefore, using pictures to support the site crime prevention survey is paramount. Using pictures enables more effective partnership engagement with key stakeholders. It also means stakeholders are more likely to act on the advice and recommendations given.

The use of PSVs in supporting crime prevention initiatives is planned to be rolled out wider. As time progresses, the skills of the volunteers could be utilised to support wider initiatives outside of crime prevention at UMEs.

Although the training is sufficient to enable PSVs to undertake an assessment of a site independently, they currently attend sites with a PCSO or PC as a 'buddy' to optimise safety.

For other organisations looking to implement PSVs or similar volunteer roles, it is important to note that there can be variation between the amount of time PSVs are able to conduct their role, with some committing several hours and others committing less. There are no set expectations placed on volunteers with regard to how much of their time is taken up by their PSV role. However, a great uptake has been observed from the volunteers.

Additionally, the PSVs don't need to have any specific skills or experience when applying for the role. The training provided is designed to provide PSVs with all the knowledge they require. If there are volunteers who have a similar skillset already, these would be utilised, but there is no set experience required