

Criminal behaviour order panel

A multi-agency criminal behaviour order (CBO) panel and training package for officers to improve the quality and quantity of CBOs.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Diversion Prevention Reoffending
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Crime prevention Criminal justice Drugs and alcohol Leadership, development and learning Neighbourhood crime Offender management Operational policing Violence (other) Vulnerability and safeguarding
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Key details

Region	London
Partners	Police Community safety partnership Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Health services Local authority
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	February 2024
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Communities General public Offenders Victims

Aim

The panel aims to:

- utilise CBOs as an opportunity to divert offenders with substance addictions into support programmes
- encourage the sharing of expertise and knowledge to improve wider understanding of CBOs
- encourage the use of CBOs as a tool to increase engagement with drugs and alcohol services

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are:

- a reduction in further offending by these individuals

- an improvement in governance of current CBOs and breaches
- an improvement in the quality and quantity of CBO applications going to court
- an improvement in information sharing amongst partner agencies

Description

The force identified an ongoing issue with shoplifting as part of the clear, hold, build (CBH) initiative in Harold Hill, Havering. Most of these offences were committed by individuals suffering with substance abuse, predominantly involving class A drugs. Offenders would also use violence, which had an adverse effect on the shop workers and members of the public. The local press labelled the area a 'no go zone', and confidence in local policing decreased.

One of the tactics identified to deal with this issue was the use of criminal behaviour orders (CBO). It became clear there was no agreed approach to applying for CBOs within the local basic command unit (East Area BCU). Each department was working in silo, with little information sharing between the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and local partners. The same offenders were repeatedly identified during meetings between the MPS and local authorities.

The CBO panel

The CBO panel was created to encourage collaboration between the local authority and MPS teams. The panel is co-chaired by the chief inspector of Havering Safer Neighbourhoods and a senior community safety officer from the local council.

Representatives from the MPS include:

- local safer neighbourhood team (SNT)
- integrated offender management (IOM) team
- Project Adder team (an initiative tackling drug misuse, focussing on diverting offenders into treatment)

Representatives from the local authority include:

- community safety team
- enforcement team
- anti-social behaviour team

- housing and rough sleepers team

Change Grow Live (CGL), a local support service for drug and alcohol misuse, and the North-East London NHS Trust (NELFT) which provides mental health services were also included.

The panel meets once a month to discuss the status and development of CBOs. Each representative has different specialist knowledge and access to different information. This allows the panel to have a holistic understanding of each individual and their circumstances.

The panel first discusses the status of individuals in the borough who currently have a CBO discuss:

- the individual's current status (including where they're living and who with)
- any recent offences
- if they are complying with the CBO requirements
- whether any further action is necessary from the police or local council

The panel then discuss the status of any current CBOs under development. This may include offenders who already have court dates for CBO hearings. They discuss the prohibitive requirements, positive requirements and exclusion zones for the CBO, all of which are tailored to the individual offender. For example:

- Exclusion zones – these are normally places where the offender has frequently committed crimes, providing respite for local communities by discouraging the offender from returning.
- Prohibitive requirements – these target the offender's modus operandi (MO). For example, an offender who tries to involve children with criminal activity may be required not to interact with individuals under the age of 18.
- Positive requirements – these are the main focus for the CBO panel as they divert offenders away from criminal activity. Individual offenders who are discussed at the panel often have drug and alcohol issues, and engagement with CGL is included as a positive requirement.

Once a CBO has been issued by the court, failing to follow any of these requirements results in a breach which can lead to a custodial sentence.

Individuals who are under consideration for a CBO are then discussed. Each panel member will give an update on any relevant information on the individual and any attempts at engagement they have made. If the panel agrees that a CBO is necessary, they will then decide which police team will develop it depending on where the offences are committed. If the individual has not committed any recent offences and is making positive progress, they are removed from the list.

The Project Adder team also carry out monthly analysis of frequent offenders within each borough. Repeat offenders are placed on a CBO watchlist, created by the acting chief inspector of Havering Safer Neighbourhoods. All members of the panel can access and edit the watchlist containing information on:

- the status of CBOs
- the conditions of breaches
- offences
- addresses
- whether the offender is in prison, on probation or on remand
- updates from panel members

This enables the panel to keep track of each offender and share information easily.

Training

The panel contacted the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to better understand the improvements that CBO applications needed. The CPS was not in favour of the CBO applications due to the substantial number of insufficient applications put forward to court. To resolve this, CBO development training was put in place for frontline police officers from the neighbourhoods and town-centre policing teams .

The training was led by a subject matter expert (SME) and included:

- what evidence was needed
- how to produce a lead officer statement
- potential prohibitive conditions
- how to use positive requirements to divert individuals with substance addictions into support programmes

Training was also delivered to staff from the local council on the use of community protection notices (CPNs) and warnings (CPWs), and how these could be developed into CBOs.

Overall impact

The impact of the CBO panel has been very positive so far and led to six successful applications at court with a 100% success rate of approval. Project Adder has taken the idea of CBO panels forward and introduced it to a neighbouring borough, with plans to extend it further across the MPS.

The local community have also provided positive feedback. The chair of a local shopkeepers' association contacted the panel to thank them for issuing a CBO against an offender who had been threatening workers. Effectively tackling repeat offenders has improved the relationship between police and the local community.

CBOs secured at court often included positive requirements to divert offenders into drug and alcohol support schemes. This has had mixed results, with some offenders attending sessions with CGL and others missing their mandated appointments. Offenders who fail to attend their CBO required CGL sessions can be sent to prison for a breach. This provides the police and local council a way of encouraging offenders to access support services.

A year-on-year comparison shows that reported crime in the CBH area has reduced by 37% since January 2024, with reported shoplifting reduced by 35%.

Learning

Collaborating with external support services helped the MPS understand the benefits of including positive requirements in CBO conditions. However, police officers are still facing difficulties due to the time-consuming application process.

Collaborative working with the force and local authority teams has been key for the success of the panels. This can be damaged by officer and staff turnover as it prevents close working relationships from developing. The CBO panel have found that having co-chairs for the panel, one from the police and one from the local council, has been helpful in making the panel feel like a joint initiative. It is important that all representatives feel listened to and have a chance to share their perspectives.

The local council and police had no way of viewing each other's databases, and the tracker was developed for this initiative, allowing the CBO panel to monitor offenders.

When the CBO panel first started, they identified many offenders who could potentially be given CBOs. Over time, the panel has focused on the most prolific and problematic offenders. It is important to remove individuals from the watchlist who are no longer committing offences.

Displacement

Displacement has been an issue with CBOs, as creating exclusion zones can lead to offenders committing crime elsewhere. This has been dealt with by using varying CBO conditions, meaning officers can apply for CBO requirements to be applied throughout the borough. This is quicker than applying for a new CBO, allowing the police to be more reactive once a CBO is in place.

Other boroughs within the east area of MPS are developing their own CBO panels. They are planning to hold regular meetings between the chairs of all three panels to discuss any offenders moving between boroughs once these are in place. This will enable a coordinated approach in the whole east area to prevent duplicate CBOs.

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