

Prevention directorate – organisational change programme

The establishment of a prevention directorate as part of an organisational change programme with the aim of reducing crime, harm and demand.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Diversion Prevention Reoffending
Topic	Leadership, development and learning Offender management
Organisation	Leicestershire Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Leicestershire Police
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Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police

Key details

Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	April 2024
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Children and young people Communities Disability Families General public LGBT+ Offenders Race/ethnicity Victims Women Workforce

Aim

The prevention directorate aims to:

- consolidate prevention activity across the force into a single directorate
- take a data-driven and evidence-based approach to preventing and reducing crime, harm, and demand
- provide crime and harm prevention strategies (primary prevention)
- invest in diversion strategies and activities to prevent the escalation of crime and harm (secondary prevention)

- invest in offender management strategies that prevent reoffending and future harm (tertiary prevention)
- develop purposeful partnerships that actively contribute to harm reduction
- monitor and evaluate prevention work to understand its impact and inform future investment

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the prevention directorate are to:

- increase prevention activity across the force
- improve collaboration with partner agencies
- reduce reoffending through effective offender management
- reduce the number of crimes, thereby decreasing the harm caused and the demand placed on the force

Description

The prevention approach

Leicestershire Police was in the process of implementing Operation Forefront, which sought to restructure the force. Operation Forefront revealed the need for an underpinning prevention ethos across the force. Prevention can be seen as having three levels:

- primary – which involves universal prevention activity targeted at the whole community
- secondary – which involves targeting those most at risk to divert them from criminality
- tertiary – which involves working with offenders to reduce reoffending

Leicestershire Police adopted a public health approach to prevention. The process involved examining the data behind the problem to establish the cause and prevention strategies. The force also adopted logic models, which involved each department mapping what happens and identifying any gaps. The logic models ensure departments comply with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) by outlining, step-by-step, the required actions.

Creating the prevention directorate

Leicestershire Police developed a prevention directorate to co-ordinate a response to criminal activity. Leicestershire Police conducted a scoping exercise across the force to decide which departments would benefit from the prevention directorate. Decision-making over which teams should come into the directorate were made using the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The structure of the directorate is as follows:

Prevention and problem-solving hub – focussing on delivering and supporting problem-solving activity:

- specialist data, evidence and evaluation team to strengthen the force's problem-identification, targeting resource and evaluating impact
- problem solving support team – to oversees all force problem-solving plans, delivers training to officers and staff, and maintains a bank of good practice
- hot spots and problem-solving – responsible for the delivery of the Home Office funded Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and serious violence hotspots
- threat assessment unit – identifies relationships where there is a significant risk of homicide and creates plans for how the risk can be reduced

Crime prevention and community safety department – focussing on primary prevention:

- rural crime and multi-agency travellers unit – focuses on community engagement and crime prevention in relation to these communities
- ASB support team – tackling ASB through a partnership approach and training officers
- hate crime team – reviews all hate crimes reported to the force and provides training, partnership working and educational inputs on the topic
- crime prevention team – a force-level resource for primary and secondary prevention, provides support for officers conducting prevention work as well as a designing out crime service

Diversion and youth justice – focus on secondary prevention:

- youth justice – work with interdisciplinary local authority youth justice teams to support information-sharing, out of court work and help prepare cases for the youth justice panel.
- youth/school engagement – manages force interaction with schools and delivers educational input in schools.

- substance misuse team – offers specialist support to officers, staff and partner agencies dealing with alcohol and drug issues.
- adult Out of Court Resolutions (OOCRs) coordination – processes adult OOCRs and provides support and training for officers

Offender management – focussing on tertiary prevention

- integrated offender management – a co-located team from a variety of agencies who work with prolific offenders
- the Phoenix Programme – a focussed deterrence programme funded through the Youth Endowment Fund and Home Office. A multi-agency team works with children and young people involved in serious violence and balances an offer of community-based support with swift and certain enforcement if engagement is poor or concerns persist

Governance and partnership working

The partnership and prevention board, chaired by an assistant chief constable and is attended by lead areas for each force. At each meeting, the board scrutinise whether the directorate is successfully embedding prevention across the force and examines the prevention activity across the force. Other areas of the force also seek advice from the directorate on how to carry out prevention work.

The directorate also works with the strategic partnership board, adult vulnerability and youth justice, helping integrate partnership work into each area and working with their partner agencies. Any OOCRs will come through the directorate, enabling them to connect with partners to make the right decisions.

Overall impact

The directorate is still relatively new, and prevention continues to be embedded in the force. The directorate is making progress coordinating prevention activity and the board promotes the awareness of prevention activity across the force. The directorate has also helped encourage partnership working and clarified how coordination between the police and partner agencies takes place.

It will take time to see the longer-term effects of prevention work on demand and harm within the force area.

Learning

Due to Operation Forefront, there is a high level of support for prevention activity among senior and chief officers. The directorate also benefits from being chaired by the prevention portfolio lead and they are willing to escalate any issues to chief officer level.

Articulating and embedding the underpinning approach has been essential as it provides discipline ensuring all resource and activity is aligned to the overall aims.

However, while the directorate drives prevention activity, prevention requires a whole organisation support to truly embed this way of working. This can be challenging as other areas of the force face competing demands and struggles with resourcing, meaning they may not view prevention as a priority. The organisation wide prevention and partnership board has helped to tackle this.

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