

## Thames Valley Chief Executives Meeting January 2009

### Good Practice in Community Safety Work Sharing, Finding and Using

#### 1. Good Practice

There has been much interest in recent years on how practitioners can share good practice better, particularly when the evolution of IT has made access to information much easier. There has been research in many fields, including criminology and crime prevention, although the leaders in this work are the medical profession with other fields (for example education) trying to emulate the medical model. The Research Utilization Research Unit based at Edinburgh University has many interesting papers on the subject and their work has informed this paper.

The concept of good practice is a very elusive one, it is extremely hard to pin down, very difficult to find the evidence to support and often what was found to have worked in one locality only produces marginal results elsewhere. However, most practitioners have a working definition which for these purposes could be summed up as;

**A well planned and executed project or plan undertaken by appropriately skilled and motivated practitioners and which has a clear link between the action and the expected outcome.**

Finding and understanding good practice therefore has four aspects;

**Knowing What to do** - knowing what has worked in other places, knowing what research there is, knowing what would be politically, economically and socially acceptable.

**Knowing How to do it** - understanding how to turn ideas into projects, how to gather the right people with the right skills, and knowing how to manage the project from the beginning to the end, including how to learn as the project progresses.

**Knowing Who can help** - finding out other practitioner's experience of tackling similar problems, knowing who in a locality can help. Practitioners often report that sharing ideas with other practitioners is the most effective way to set up a project.

**Knowing When to do it** – understanding what external circumstances are needed for a successful project, understanding the time scales for changes to be brought about.

This paper will provide a structure for finding examples of good practice, website resources that address each of the aspects of good practice and make some suggestions for how sharing good practice can be improved across the Thames Valley.

#### 2. How to find Good Practice

As the internet has expanded, searching for the right sort of information has become quite an art. Essentially, finding good practice is a balancing act between thinking broadly around a subject, whilst being specific and ruthless with the search terms. It has been

said that there are only two places to look for information about good practice; time and space. Research has shown that good practitioners are able to recycle old ideas as well as recognise innovation and so should be encouraged to be imaginative about where to look for examples including other countries and older projects. At the same time, the more specific the search is, the more likely you are to find the information you require and not a lot of junk. Most websites with search engines will have guidance on searching and there are several good guides available.

### **Clarify what you want to find**

The more specific a practitioner can be about what they need to find out, the easier it will be to identify relevant information and cut out the need to wade through erroneous material. It takes thinking time to be specific, to identify what problem is being addressed, what resources are available and what time scales you are operating within. It also needs some thought about the circumstances that may knock the work off track, or make it less effective and finally how you know if the project was successful. It is helpful to write these thoughts down for future reference and to consider what things might come up in a search that you are not interested in (and hence be discarded quickly).

### **Talk to other people**

Most practitioners have their own networks of trusted and valued peers and such people can often provide first steps towards identifying interesting or useful projects. Sometimes, just talking can spark ideas that can then be developed.

### **Initial Broad Search**

An initial search using a general search engine such as Google can bring some interesting and useful leads. However, it can also be extremely frustrating with lots of blind alleys and many results having little reflection on the quality of work undertaken. For example, many Google searches will bring up publicity materials or press cuttings which give little indication of quality. A time limit for such a search is helpful.

### **Targeted search**

A second more targeted search can use the resources below and should use specific search terms. It is really helpful to keep track of the sites visited as it is easy to forget where you have searched for what, wasting time revisiting sites already searched.

### **Record Results**

Keep a note of what you found where and a commentary on how useful it was. Although it may seem tedious, this can save so much time in the future. Searches can often take you so far from your original source that it is very easy to forget where you found the most important piece of information.

The following pages list useful sites to include in a targeted search.

### 3. **Sources for What to do**

#### **Crime Reduction Website** ([www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk))

A website owned and managed by the Home Office which provides a range of information and links targeted at community safety practitioners. It provides information on current issues relating to community safety and has two databases that can be searched for examples of projects that have run across the country.

##### **a) Effective Practice Database**

The Effective Practice Database is a database of projects that have been tried around the country. The entries are organized around the Police 'SARA' model for problem solving and the database is searchable in a number of different ways. The blurb invites practitioners to 'use it to research what works, and to avoid reinventing the wheel'. It goes on to remind practitioners that what works in one location will not automatically work everywhere (or anywhere) else and that practitioners will need to consider the factors most relevant to your area. The database also has links to other sources of information.

##### **b) The Ideas Exchange**

A slightly older database with examples that have been tried out in community safety projects over the past ten years. More general information on the projects and contacts available, although some of these will have undoubtedly moved on since the entry was made.

The Crime Reduction Website also houses a number of mini sites (such as the Criminal Damage mini site and the PPO mini site), has useful links to other websites and holds a number of resources for practitioners (such as the Toolkits developed under the Crime Reduction Initiative in the 1990's).

#### **Community Safety Information** ([www.community-safety.info/index.html](http://www.community-safety.info/index.html))

The Community Safety Information website says that its purpose is 'providing information and advice on crime & disorder prevention, combating drug and alcohol misuse & related police, justice & penal reform issues; to help develop safer communities'. This site is very comprehensive and informative, particularly considering it is run by one man in his own time (Martin Davis, a former Community Safety Officer in a London Borough). Contributions to the site are welcomed.

#### **Crime Reduction Partnership News** ([www.crp-news.com](http://www.crp-news.com) )

The Crime Reduction Partnership News is a site sponsored by Smart Water, Action Against Business Crime and Crime Stoppers, amongst others, although it is not clear exactly who runs or owns the site. However, it does provide some useful information including a good practice section and provides weekly news feeds.

The website states that 'Crime Reduction Partnership News aims to be the one-stop website for all professionals involved in crime reduction partnerships in the UK. Its target readers are government (local and national), police, and Partnership administrators and members'.

CRP News offers

- News, opinions and analysis of current issues
- Good Practice and shared experiences
- A comprehensive archive of relevant documents and reference materials, classified by subject and location
- A means for professionals in the sector to publicise their activities among their peers
- A classified list of useful websites and other resources
- A weekly email newsletter which allows readers to keep up-to-date with latest developments without even needing to visit the website

**Communities and Local Government** ([www.communities.gov.uk/communities](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities) )

The CLG website includes sites on neighbourhood renewal, community empowerment, integration cohesion as well as sustainable communities. There is an active link to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit site ([www.neighbourhood.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk)), which has some very useful examples of practice, but is no longer being updated.

**Public Safety Canada** ([www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/index-eng.aspx](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/index-eng.aspx) )

Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre is responsible for implementing the National Crime Prevention Strategy. Their site states that their work provides national leadership on effective and cost-effective ways to prevent and reduce crime by intervening on the risk factors before crime happens. They promote the implementation of effective crime prevention practices and develop and implement results-driven programs that target specific crime issues in regions and communities across Canada. They do this by providing communities with tools, knowledge and support to undertake crime prevention initiatives, many of which can be found on the website.

**COPS USA** ([www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov))

The Office of Community Orientated Policing Services based in the US Department of Justice, have an extremely useful and active Resource Information Centre which is well worth searching for examples of practice ([www.cops.usdoj.go/RIC/ResourceSearch.aspx](http://www.cops.usdoj.go/RIC/ResourceSearch.aspx) ).

**CrimNet** ([www.law.usyd.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/crimnet](http://www.law.usyd.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/crimnet))

A useful update from Australia and New Zealand on developments in criminology and which has many evaluations of local practice. A subscriber based system.

## **Campbell Collaboration**

([www.campbellcollaboration.org/resources/links/CCJG\\_bibliographic\\_databases.php](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/resources/links/CCJG_bibliographic_databases.php) )

The Campbell Collaboration is attempting to introduce rigorous systematic reviews of social interventions to match the work in the medical world under the auspices of the Cochrane Collaboration (which is by the way an interesting read for hypochondriacs). The Campbell Collaboration covers the whole of social research, but includes a section on criminology. This link takes you to the bibliographic resources that are available free on-line and that may have examples of research or evaluated practice in your area of interest, although the site also lists many other useful resources (such as the Nordic Campbell collaboration and various sites in the United States).

## **4. Sources for How to do it**

### **The POP Guides**

([www.cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ResourceList.aspx?It=Series&SID=1&srt=Title&pn=1](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ResourceList.aspx?It=Series&SID=1&srt=Title&pn=1))

Put together by the COPS department in the US Ministry of Justice, these guides pull together practice and research evidence to provide guidance to practitioners about how to address certain crime types in a locality. All designed to link to problem orientated approaches to crime reduction. Also provides links to Crime Mapping work.

### **The Improvement Network**

<http://www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/imp/core/page.do?pageId=1068162>

Sponsored by the Audit Commission, CIPFA, IDeA, the Leadership Centre and the NHS Initiative, this site offers advice, guidance and case studies on partnership work. It lists case studies, some of which will be relevant to Community Safety.

The site says, 'Many organizations have successfully overcome problems in their partnerships to achieve real improvements in their services and quality of life for residents. Learn from others through accessing practical examples, tools and guidance.' This site also has salvaged the case studies from the former Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's website which is now obsolete.

**IDeA Website** ([www.idea.gov.uk/idk/laa/home.do](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/laa/home.do))

The website to support effective practice for local authorities and their partners includes an excellent knowledge bank. This includes an area relating to LAA's and Partnerships and includes many case study examples.

### **Crime Reduction Website - Mini Site on Partnerships**

([www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm) )

A mini site on the Crime Reduction Website includes all the Home Office information relevant for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and includes the guidance to CDRP's on the Hallmarks for Effective Partnership Working and the self assessment tool kit.

**The Audit Commission** ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk/policeandcrime/index.asp?CategoryID=english^573](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/policeandcrime/index.asp?CategoryID=english^573) )

The Audit Commission has responsibility for auditing police authorities and local government and seeks to improve and share good practice where it can. The website includes a section on community safety, but is currently limited and refers back to the Home Office partnership sites. The National Studies group of the Commission undertakes a number of very interesting research projects (including one currently on 'use of leisure and sport activities to address youth crime') and the published reports can all be found on the site. One report looks at how the Audit Commission work impacts on practice, which is an interesting read ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk/improvingimpact/downloads/improvingourimpact.pdf](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/improvingimpact/downloads/improvingourimpact.pdf) ).

**Local Government Association** ([www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=18980](http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=18980) )

The LGA promotes the health and safety of local communities and supports councils in achieving improvements in community safety. There is a Safer Communities Board which oversees the work and which is well networked across the country. Their information section can undertake searches and provides a very useful research update as an e-mail alert.

**5. Sources of Who can help****Thames Valley Partnership** ([www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk](http://www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk))

The Thames Valley Partnership is an independent charity set up in order to work with organisations across the counties of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and the former Berkshire in order to reduce crime and enhance community safety. Our articles of association set out how we should do this including:

- facilitate networks of practitioners,
- undertake and support local initiatives and innovation,
- provide research and evaluation,
- improve co-ordination and communication between localities and practitioners,
- provide training and learning opportunities to people working within the area.

Over the fifteen years since we were set up, we have developed good relationships across Thames Valley and beyond and have access to a wide range of skills and knowledge. All practitioners are welcome to talk to us about any aspect of their work and if we are unable to help, we can often signpost to other resources. The Partnership is currently reviewing its strategy for the next three years and the new strategy will seek to enhance our role in working with practitioners in the area.

**National Community Safety Network (NCSN)** ([www.community-safety.net](http://www.community-safety.net))

The National Community Safety Network (NCSN) is the leading practitioner-led membership organisation supporting those involved in promoting community safety/crime reduction throughout the United Kingdom. Currently the NCSN supports and represents

over 400 members in the public, private and voluntary sectors, all with a common interest in promoting safer communities. They are supported by a national team based in Chester and are able to use their network to field requests for information or questions for practitioners. They are seeking to regionalize their structure and would be glad to hear of any practitioners willing to become involved.

The NCSN produces regular newsletters with examples of projects in it and holds events throughout the country including an annual conference. Members can contribute to the newsletters and may also be a guest editor. The conference presents an excellent opportunity for practitioners to get together to share ideas and practice and in the view of the Thames Valley Partnership, attendance should be a priority for practitioners seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills.

### **Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN)**

([www.communitysafetyscotland.org/Home.htm](http://www.communitysafetyscotland.org/Home.htm) )

The Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) is the national forum for officers who are responsible for developing strategic work on community safety in partnership with others.

### **European Crime Prevention Network ([www.eucpn.org](http://www.eucpn.org))**

European wide network for accessing non English speaking countries work. However, it is run from the UK and as we are considered the fore runners in Europe on dealing with crime prevention, this site can seem to promise more than it delivers.

### **CSAS (Community Safety Advisory Service) ([www.csas.org.uk](http://www.csas.org.uk) )**

CSAS are an umbrella organisation for community safety practitioners based in the London boroughs. Whilst access to their services are only open to people working in London boroughs, their website is available on-line to all and their staff are happy to field calls from other parts of the country. They are very well connected in London and are very knowledgeable about the work which is going on.

It is one a few organisations across the country which provides services not dissimilar to the Thames Valley Partnership. Other such organisations include Safer Tees and Safer Merthyr Tydfil whose websites are also worth visiting ([www.safeinteesvalley.org/cgi-bin/sitv.pl?fname=index](http://www.safeinteesvalley.org/cgi-bin/sitv.pl?fname=index) and [www.smt.org.uk](http://www.smt.org.uk) respectively).

### **Government Office South East ([www.go-se.gov.uk/gose/communitySafety/?a=42496](http://www.go-se.gov.uk/gose/communitySafety/?a=42496))**

The Government Office for South East has a team who work on crime and community safety and who provide a vital link between the field and central government departments. Their website states

'We support ...CDRPs and DAATs [who] are responsible for reducing crime, the fear of crime and anti social behaviour, and tackling the misuse of drugs and alcohol in local areas.... by ensuring that they have access to:

- possible additional financial support

- a wide range of information in the form of newsletters, websites and briefing documents
- training opportunities, conferences and seminars
- one-to-one support to assist them to be more effective and inclusive and to improve their performance'

### **National Police Improvement Agency** ([www.npia.police.uk](http://www.npia.police.uk))

The NPIA has a website which is developing into a useful tool for all practitioners and it is growing all the time. It includes a mini site for Neighbourhood Policing Teams which is particularly relevant for any community safety practitioners and has some useful links. ([www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk/default.asp](http://www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk/default.asp) )

### **IDeA Communities of Practice** ([www.communities.idea.gov.uk/welcome.do](http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/welcome.do) )

A community of practice (COP) is a network of individuals with common problems or interests, usually with a specific area of knowledge. They explore new ways of working, develop solutions to problems, and share good practice and ideas. This can happen face-to-face or in an online environment. To help communities of practice in local government create and share their knowledge the IDeA has developed an online environment that provides a range of collaborative tools including:

- blogs – personal online diaries
- discussion forums
- document libraries
- event diaries
- people finders
- wikis – a resource that allows users to create and modify pages online

There are several COP's running which seem relevant to crime reduction (search for 'offenders' listed 3 communities). However, without joining it is difficult to work out how useful they are. The site also offers the opportunity to set a COP up, which may be an option.

### **Winners of National Awards**

There are many national awards schemes run by different government departments and other organisations. The winners of such awards are often pleased to discuss their work and may have useful tips for entering competitions in the future. Here are a few examples of national awards which may be useful for community safety practitioners;

#### The Tilley Awards ([www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tilley/tilleyawards2008.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tilley/tilleyawards2008.htm) )

Run by the Home Office to recognise examples of good practice in problem orientated partnerships working and designed to be the British equivalent of the Goldstein Awards in

the United States of America ([www.popcenter.org/goldstein](http://www.popcenter.org/goldstein) ). Since 2008, the Tilley Awards have included regional and national winners.

European Crime Prevention Awards ([www.eucpn.org/eucp-award/index.asp](http://www.eucpn.org/eucp-award/index.asp))  
Run by the European Network and has a comprehensive list of previous winners.

The Justice Awards ([justiceawards.cjsonline.gov.uk](http://justiceawards.cjsonline.gov.uk))  
Run jointly by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice to recognise work undertaken by exceptional practitioners in their day to day work.

FRANK Awards ([drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/communications-and-campaigns/frank-campaign/awards/](http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/communications-and-campaigns/frank-campaign/awards/))  
Also run by the Home Office, to recognise excellent practice in tackling drug misuse.

Thames Valley Criminal Justice Awards for Outstanding Practice  
Nearer to home, our local LCJB recognises work undertaken by practitioners in this locality. Winners can be contacted through Mike Curry, the CJB Co-ordinator.

The Beacon Scheme ([www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1](http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1) )  
Now run by the IDEa, this award scheme was set up originally by the Cabinet Office to recognise good practice in local government. The scheme includes awards for work in community safety.

Partners of Prisoners Crystal Hearts Awards ([partnersofprisoners.org.uk/events.html#](http://partnersofprisoners.org.uk/events.html#))  
Run by a voluntary organisation, these awards recognise exceptional work in supporting the partners of offenders.

Howard League Community Programmes Award  
([www.howardleague.org/index.php?id=commpenalties](http://www.howardleague.org/index.php?id=commpenalties))  
Run by the voluntary organisation, the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Community Programmes Award recognises good practice in work with offenders in the community. Part of the Howard League's campaign to encourage better use of community sentences.