

Implementing Integrated Drugs Market reduction Initiatives

A guide for practitioners

Thames Valley Partnership and
Evidence Led Solutions Limited

for

The Government Office for the
South East



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH EAST

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THAMES VALLEY
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Working for safer communities

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Acknowledgements

This guide has been produced by the Thames Valley Partnership on behalf of the Government Office for the South East. We very much hope that you will read, enjoy and, most importantly, use this guide to shape the work tackling drug supply. The guide is the result of much hard work by many people and to very tight deadlines - without this extraordinary effort there would be no guide. I would particularly like to acknowledge the role of the following people:

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Whilst many people have contributed to the guide, responsibility for any errors lie with the Thames Valley Partnership. If you wish to know more about our work or to give us feedback on this report, please contact us on admin@thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk.

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Thames Valley Partnership.

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1. About this guide

This guide provides advice on planning and implementing integrated drugs market reduction initiatives. These consist of approaches that combine a range of methods to tackle local drugs markets, including enforcement, outreach / support and treatment. The guide is based on the experiences of two projects operating in the South East – Operation Reduction in Brighton and Hove and Operation Iceberg in North Kent. Both projects were undertaken within a police Basic Command Unit (BCU) area and both were in areas with non-intensive Drug Intervention Projects (DIPs). Both projects have demonstrated significant reductions in drug related offending. The guide also includes examples from Operation Brava – a similar project operating in Leeds.

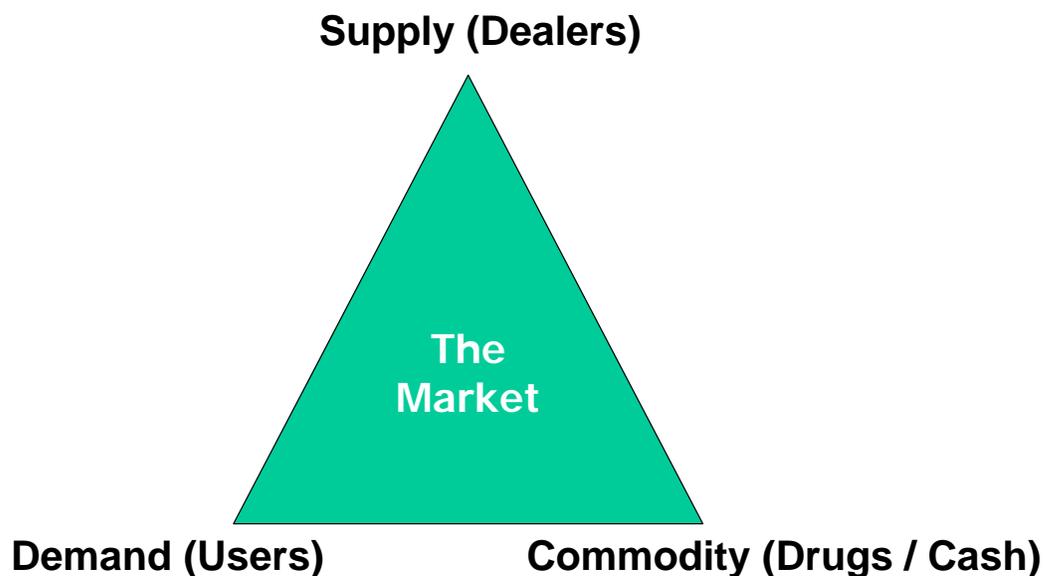
The following pages provide an introduction to integrated drugs market reduction initiatives, followed by advice on planning such initiatives; implementing different aspects of the projects; sustaining intervention and engaging with local communities about these projects.

This guide is in PDF format and designed to be downloadable. If you require hard copies please contact the Thames Valley Partnership at the address at the final page here.

2. What are Integrated Drugs Market Reduction Initiatives?

Integrated Drugs Market Reduction Initiatives (IDMRIs) describe projects that aim to tackle drugs problems from a number of perspectives. These initiatives are designed to tackle well established neighbourhood drugs markets, which have proven to be difficult to tackle using other enforcement approaches. As Figure 1 shows, these typically include tackling the supply of drugs in an area, the local demand for drugs and the availability of drugs and the money that is made from these.

Figure 1: Dimensions of Integrated Drugs Market Reduction Initiatives



Understanding the mechanisms of change

There are a number of ways in which projects of this kind are expected to have an impact. These include the following:

- **Tackling the supply of drugs** will involve enforcement operations targeted at those selling drugs in an area. These are intended to reduce the availability of drugs by increasing the actual and perceived risk of detection, conviction and incarceration associated with dealing drugs. As a result, these operations should mean that there are fewer individuals willing to deal in drugs at the local level, thereby making it harder to obtain drugs. This approach will also help to provide a 'window of

opportunity' between drug users losing their dealer (due to increased enforcement) and finding a new dealer. This window may provide an opportunity to work with the users to encourage them into treatment.

- **Tackling the demand for drugs** will involve working closely with drug users to address their consumption of drugs. This will involve addressing both the direct issues with drug misuse, such as the need for medication and treatment, as well as the associated lifestyle issues such as the need for housing, employment etc. By addressing these issues, it is anticipated that individuals will reduce their drug consumption and this will in turn reduce their need for money to buy drugs. In turn, this will reduce the extent to which they need to commit offences (such as acquisitive property crime and prostitution) to obtain the required cash. This approach may also increase the effort involved in dealing drugs as suppliers need to work harder to find consumers for their products.
- **Tackling the commodity** will involve drug seizures as part of the on-going enforcement operations. Seizing drugs in this way is expected to have an adverse economic impact on drug suppliers as this represents a loss of assets in the form of stock which can only be replenished by making further purchases. As such, drug seizures reduce the rewards associated with involvement in drug dealing. Another approach to tackling the commodity involves seizing the assets of drug dealers through the use of the Proceeds of Crime Act (2002). This again will reduce the rewards associated with drug dealing, thereby making such activity less attractive. In addition, this approach may provide additional resources with which to tackle local drugs problems if the seized assets are re-invested in further drugs market reduction interventions.

As well as the crime reduction mechanisms associated with IDMRIs, there are also likely to be benefits in terms of **increased public confidence**. This may result from a number of factors, including observation / awareness of regular police enforcement activity, awareness of reduced drug market activity, awareness of reductions in crime in the area. However, this may rely on a proactive approach by those involved in the initiative to raise awareness in relation to these factors.

Integrated Drugs Market Reduction Initiatives can therefore be expected to reduce crime by:

- Increasing the risk associated with drug dealing

- Increasing the effort involved in drug dealing
- Reducing the rewards associated with drug dealing
- Reducing the motivations for engaging in acquisitive property crime
- Increasing public confidence that the problem is being addressed

Typical contents of an IDMRI

An initiative of this kind will typically consist of a number of elements. These will include:

- **Enforcement operations.** Police operations will be undertaken against the local drugs market. This will typically involve test purchase operations. Importantly, the operations will be undertaken on an ongoing, rolling basis, rather than as one-off exercises. This is important in order to maintain pressure on the local drug suppliers and to suppress growth in the market.
- **Targeting individuals with a ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approach.** Through a case management process, individuals will be selected for inclusion in the initiative. These will be subject to intensive work by both the police and drugs outreach workers, who will work in tandem with a carrot and stick approach.
 - *The stick* – Officers will contact individuals selected for the programme and inform them that they are being targeted. They will then seek to disrupt their offending behaviour through regular stop and search activities etc. The purpose of this work will be to encourage them into treatment and to desist from offending.
 - *The carrot* – Drugs outreach workers will contact those selected for the programme and offer on-going support. They will provide assistance with gaining access to treatment and help with day-to-day issues such as housing and benefits. The support is provided on a continual basis, regardless of the current status of the individual – whether in custody, in treatment, or in the community.

- **Fast track treatment.** Those targeted with the IDMRI will be offered a fast track into treatment. This will include a medical assessment, followed by the offer of a prescription. They will also be fast tracked into drugs treatment programmes.
- **Community engagement.** These initiatives also recognise the importance of ensuring the community are kept informed of developments. This is in order to show what is being done to address the local drug problem and to gain support and assistance for on-going operations.

All of the activity described here relies on close inter-agency work, which is the hallmark of initiatives of this kind. No one agency can expect to undertake the variety of work that is required here.

3. Planning an initiative

Initiatives of this kind require careful attention at the planning stages if they are to get off the drawing board. Here, we have identified a number of essential elements that need to be taken into consideration.

Understand the local drugs market

The starting point for developing an Integrated Drugs Market Reduction Initiative should be to gain an understanding of the local drugs problem. A drugs market profile should therefore be commissioned for the area, which provides an up to date picture of the local market. This could be undertaken by either the police or the DAAT, but in either case there is an expectation that they will work closely in partnership on a profile.

There should be a willingness to share this profile with other partner agencies so that other intelligence available from those agencies can be added to the local picture, thereby creating a more rounded profile of the local market. Sharing the profile will also help to ensure that all partners understand the nature of the problem in the same way, thereby avoiding misconceptions about the local drugs market.

In Brighton and Hove, analysis of the local drug market showed it to be a 'semi-open' market, where drugs are not openly offered to anyone, but a person wanting to buy drugs can quickly be referred into a dealer from a known contact. This meant that it was possible for undercover officers to be referred quickly to a dealer.

As the initiative develops, there is likely to be a considerable amount of police intelligence that is generated on the local drugs market and it will be important to refresh the drugs market profile on a regular basis, in order to take account of new intelligence and to take account of changes in the drugs market.

Seek buy-in from partners

Work will need to be undertaken at a senior level within partner organisations to obtain agreement to participate in the initiative. Initiatives of this kind will require organisations to work in different ways, share information not previously shared and probably devote additional resources. This will need organisations to sign-up to the initiative and to be fully aware of the implications of participating in the initiative in terms of the demands that may be placed on them.

The starting point will be to gain support from the Police and in particular, the BCU Commander, as without agreement at this level, the initiative is unlikely to secure the resources required to conduct on-going enforcement operations.

The partners who might be expected to be involved in this initiative are:

- Police
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Drug Interventions Programme Steering Group
- Local Criminal Justice Board
- Probation Service
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Primary Care Trust
- Treatment providers

Close links should also be developed with other local initiatives that may be targeting the same individuals. These include the Prolific and other Priority Offender scheme and the Drug Interventions Programme. Close links should also be made with police teams at the force level that may be targeting Level 2 drug dealers.

Develop structures of governance

The initiative should develop clear governance structures that address both strategic and operational concerns.

At the strategic level, there should be a regular meeting of senior representatives of partner agencies in order to oversee the direction of the project, resolve emerging problems and monitor expenditure. This may in the early stages of the initiative need to meet on a monthly basis as the work develops, but this can later be reduced to a quarterly meeting.

At the operational level, staff involved in delivering the project should meet on a monthly basis to discuss progress, share intelligence and plan future activities.

At the tactical level, staff working on the ground should meet on a fortnightly basis to discuss case management. At this level, decisions will be made about who is to be targeted and the work that is to be undertaken with each individual, as well as identifying the progress that has been made.

Be clear about the aim of the initiative

From the outset, those involved in the initiative should be clear about the aims of the initiative. This is probably best couched in terms of crime reduction, rather than reduced substance misuse as this is likely to be more inclusive for partner agencies. It will also help to avoid the danger of the initiative being wound down by the police if there are signs of the drugs market declining – crime reduction is always likely to be a priority for the police.

At this stage it will be important to clarify the aims with partners so that all are clear about what the initiative is for and how this is to be achieved. Partners should be clear about how this will contribute to their own targets and priorities. Differences in opinion should be aired at this stage and resolution to these differences sought. If these differences are not addressed at an early stage, this could result in disagreements between agencies later in the project.

Obtain commitment for resources

It is important to be aware that initiatives of this kind involve significant resources and cannot be done *'on the cheap'*. For example, Operation Reduction in Brighton and Hove involved expenditure in the region of half a million pounds a year. However, this is justified on the basis that the initiative has been shown to be cost-effective in terms of crime reduction.

The resources invested in Operation Iceberg included:

- 1 Police Sergeant**
- 3 Police Constables**
- 1 Detective Constable Investigator**
- 1 Financial Investigator**
- 1 Financial Intelligence Officer**
- 1 Project Analyst**
- 1 Arrest Referral Drug Outreach Worker**

It also included the use of BCU and Central Tactical Resources and joint partnership working with Criminal Justice Integrated Team (CJIT) / DIP.

At an early stage, commitment will need to be secured to resource the initiative appropriately. Officers involved in enforcement operations should ideally be ring-fenced from other duties and resources should be found for outreach work and treatment.

It is also important to note that the initiative can take time to show its greatest impact. There should be a commitment to resourcing the initiative for a minimum of **two years**.

An evaluation of Operation Reduction showed that those targeted for the demand side of the operation reduced their acquisitive property crime offending by 42% over one year and by 69% over two years.

There may be benefit in different partners involved in delivering the initiative working from the same office in order to assist the on-going communication that will take place on a day-to-day basis between staff. However, there may be practical reasons (availability of space, access to computer systems etc.) that mean co-location is not feasible.

Operation Iceberg in Kent is now in the process of evolving into a larger and more generic Offender Management Unit and is working towards co-location with other agencies, in order to achieve a fully multi-agency unit.

Appoint a co-ordinator

Given the variety of workstreams associated with the initiative, it will be important to appoint an individual who can oversee the delivery of the project. This should ideally be a police officer operating at Inspector level. This individual should be able to liaise closely with other partner organisations to ensure all aspects of the initiative are delivered as planned, as well as championing the project from within the police organisation. This person will also need to be able to secure the funds required, manage the overall project and possibly act as a spokesperson with the local media. The range of skills required for this position highlights the importance of careful selection for this role.

Develop a project plan

At this planning stage, a project plan should be developed that takes into account the aim of the initiative (see above) and an outline of the work that will be undertaken by each partner agency to support the project. This plan should contain clear output and outcome milestones to enable the

strategic group to monitor whether the initiative is operating as intended. The plan should also include a breakdown of expenditure and the timescale over which the budget will be spent.

Partners will be expected to sign up to this project plan and it will be the basis for monitoring whether the initiative is on track to deliver as expected.

Develop a communication plan

As will be discussed later, communicating with the public is vitally important in initiatives of this kind. The planning stage should therefore include the development of a communication plan that outlines the key messages that are to be given to the community and how these are to be delivered. This should also contain a protocol for how enquiries from the media will be dealt with by different partners – ideally identifying a spokesperson to comment on behalf of the initiative.

4. Implementing the initiative

So many projects in general fail during the implementation stage for a wide variety of reasons. Therefore, careful attention needs to be paid to how the IDMRIs are implemented. While it would be difficult to cover every possible reason for failure, there are some common themes that, if addressed, should help to assist with implementation.

This section starts by examining the key elements of the initiative overall that need to be delivered if it is to be successfully implemented. It also highlights some issues that need to be avoided for success.

Things that should be done

There are a number of general features of the initiative that will need to be delivered.

Training for staff

At an early stage in the implementation process, staff involved in delivering the initiative should receive joint training in how the initiative should operate. The training should be led by the project co-ordinator with relevant input from key partners. This should include information on:

- The rationale and background to the initiative
- How each element of the initiative operates
- The governance structure and process
- Protocols for joint working
- Requirements for record keeping and information sharing
- How to address problems or concerns that arise
- Handling external communication

The level of intensity of the training will depend on the degree of involvement in the project. For example, those involved in the project on a day-to-day basis should receive the most intensive training. By contrast those involved in the project on a more ad-hoc basis (such as when involved in specific operations) should receive a much lighter touch of training. Nevertheless training for this group will be useful for showing how their involvement will contribute to the larger drug market reduction picture.

Further training events should be undertaken on a six monthly basis that could be themed to address specific aspects of the initiative. A training pack should also be available for new members of staff who join the initiative at a later date.

Understanding roles and responsibilities

At an early stage, partners involved in the delivery of the initiative should agree their roles and responsibilities. It should be clear who is responsible for delivering each aspect of the initiative and importantly, who has the final say on particular aspects of the work.

Sharing information

Key to the success of the initiative is the willingness of staff from different organisations to share information on individuals. This may require data sharing protocols between organisations if they do not exist already. More importantly, it may require a shift in the way of working, with information being shared that would not previously have been. This, for example, may include information shared by the police on future enforcement activities targeted at individuals and information from outreach workers on willingness to engage in treatment etc. The key here is that partners feel assured that the information they provide will not be abused or shared more widely.

When properly implemented, good information sharing can have a significant impact on the success of the initiative. One target of Operation Reduction once remarked of it that *'you can't fart without Operation Reduction knowing about it'*.

Holding case forums

On a fortnightly basis, case forums should be held at which each individual targeted by the initiative is discussed. These forums provide an opportunity to identify the progress that is being made by those targeted and discuss further work that might be undertaken in relation to these individuals. They also provide an opportunity to introduce new individuals into the scheme and to remove those that show good progress.

Agreeing criteria for the initiative

Linked to the importance of case forums, clear criteria should be developed and agreed among partners for the inclusion of targeted individuals on the initiative. This may involve the use of a risk matrix in which a set of criteria are scored, with inclusion on the programme being dependent

on meeting a certain score. An example of this may be the kinds of matrix used to identify Prolific and Other Priority Offenders and a modified version of this may be helpful for identifying targets in an IDMRI.

Maintaining good records

As well as the usual information that will be collected on individuals (associated with treatment and processing through the criminal justice system), careful records should be kept on who is targeted by the initiative. There are likely to be at least two separate groups that need to be monitored – those subject to enforcement operations and those subject to the outreach / treatment element.

Where those subject to enforcement operations are concerned, a list should be maintained of their name, date of birth, the name of the operation under which they were targeted and arrest dates. Where available, information should subsequently be provided on whether further judicial action was taken against them and the court disposal that was received. This information can be used to identify the number of individuals against whom enforcement activity has been undertaken and the sentences they have received. It can also be used from an evaluation perspective to track re-arrest / conviction in the period following the operation.

A similar set of information should be maintained for those being targeted under the outreach / treatment part of the initiative. This should include details of the individual's name, date of birth, the date accepted on to the programme and the date removed from the programme. This information can be used to examine offending following commencement on the initiative and to track progress with treatment etc.

In addition, there may be a third set of individuals who consist of those that meet the criteria for inclusion on the initiative but whom, for whatever reason, have not been included in the programme.

Agreeing boundaries between interventions

Given the integrated nature of the initiative, there will be points at which the work of different agencies will overlap. For example, the initiative involves a balance of enforcement and treatment. In some cases, a decision may need to be taken on whether enforcement action should be taken against someone who is showing good progress in treatment (especially where

an offence relates to an old case). Issues associated with this kind of overlap will need to be addressed on a case by case basis.

Reporting progress

There will be an expectation that, on a regular basis, the initiative staff will provide written reports to the strategic group in order to allow the project to be monitored. This is likely to be important, given the multi-faceted nature of the intervention and the level of resources devoted to the initiative.

Things that should be avoided

Here we have identified a number of issues that need to be avoided in delivering the initiative.

Staff turnover

The initiative depends on close working relationships between staff who have a clarity of purpose. This is best achieved by maintaining the same staff who will build rapport over time. This means that high turnover of staff should be avoided where possible. For example, consideration should be given to asking staff to commit to the initiative for a certain period of time – say, two years.

Although probably difficult to control, changes in personnel at the senior management level may also affect delivery of the initiative, as new management may not support an approach to the same extent as a previous management.

Working in silos

At the heart of this initiative is the expectation that different partner organisations will work together to deliver effective interventions. This means that the old way of working in organisational silos needs to be avoided, with greater interaction between partners. This may be assisted with greater team working, possibly in a co-located office.

Beware of the local press!

Using local newspapers as a way of publicising the work associated with the initiative and the successes achieved may be seen as a way of raising public confidence in the agencies involved. However, with no editorial control over the eventual coverage, this could result in negative portrayals associated with the local drugs problem itself, rather than associated with the work that is being undertaken to address it. This means that careful consideration should be given to how the local press is engaged to promote the initiative.

5. Implementing the supply side of the initiative

The supply side of the initiative will involve targeting the dealers with police enforcement activity. This section examines the issues that should be taken into account in delivering such interventions.

Continuous enforcement

The experience of running police operations targeted at drug dealers operating at the local level is that these must be undertaken on a regular basis. The impact of operations tends to be short lived and this means that the dealers arrested and imprisoned as a result of a police operation may be replaced by other dealers within two or three weeks. As a result, one-off operations are of limited use.

This means that enforcement needs to be undertaken on an on-going basis, with police operations timed at regular intervals. This approach places sustained pressure on the local drugs market, making it more difficult to deal drugs in an area. This can result in arrests of higher tier drug dealers who may revert to dealing direct (rather than through street level dealers) because of the difficulty in replacing local dealers – this was an unexpected bonus in Operation Reduction.

Both Operation Iceberg and Operation Reduction employed test-purchase operations to gather intelligence and then conduct an arrest phase. These approaches were found to be successful when conducted on a regular basis.

Links with neighbourhood policing teams

There can sometimes be a reluctance among CID staff to discuss forthcoming operations with neighbourhood police officers for fear that news of the operation may be leaked to those being targeted. However, this does not appear to be borne out by experience and neighbourhood police officers may be able to provide valuable community intelligence prior to the operation and be able to assist in smoothing community concerns after an operation has occurred.

Close liaison with the Crown Prosecution Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) should be involved in reviewing the evidence prior to the arrest phase to ensure that all the evidence is in place. This has proven to be very useful and

prevents the requirement to release offenders on bail. It also addresses any problems early on in the process, prevents delays and increases the guilty plea rate.

Both Operation Iceberg and Operation Reduction used dedicated investigators to ensure that, when a case went to court, there was overwhelming evidence against the accused. This helped to increase the likelihood of a guilty plea, which helped to keep court time to a minimum.

There may also be benefit in working with the Local Criminal Justice Board, who may be able to help with addressing problems that may arise in relation to the criminal justice system.

Asset recovery

Asset recovery under the Proceeds of Crime Act (2002) is an important element of the initiative as it removes the rewards of dealing drugs.

However, the investigation of assets can be complex. This suggests that either a trained financial investigator be included on the team, or training be provided to officers to identify assets that may be confiscated by the courts in these cases.

Operation Iceberg aimed to identify and act on every opportunity to seize financial assets of drug suppliers under the Proceeds of Crime Act (PoCA) and other suitable legislation (e.g. in production and supply cases). For example, officers were encouraged to take a wider view of offenders arrested for other offences by, for example, considering their lifestyle and whether they could reasonably be expected to be able to afford it on what was known about their legitimate sources of income.

Recycling recovered assets

Consideration should be given to applying to the courts for confiscated assets to be handed over to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) for re-distribution in the form of further community safety work. This could create a virtuous cycle in which seized assets are reinvested in further work (both prevention and detection) designed to reduce drug related crime.

In Kent, there is a proposal for confiscated assets to be sent directly to the CDRP, which is funding Operation Iceberg. However, in practice the money for the operation was provided by the Government Office for the South East and EU Urban Regeneration funding.

6. Implementing the demand side of the initiative

The demand side of the initiative is concerned with the case management associated with individuals known to be problematic drug users. This will include close monitoring of such individuals with the threat of enforcement activity if they continue to offend. It will also include outreach work with the individuals to help achieve stable lives and rapid access to treatment.

Importance of key workers

Ideally, key workers should be employed to undertake outreach work with the targeted individuals. Unlike, for example, DIP workers, these key workers should be assigned to work with the clients regardless of what happens to them. This means that they should continue with a client, even if they are in prison, in residential rehabilitation, or even if they are no longer in the criminal justice system. This continuity of support is felt to be important for providing a degree of stability in the lives of individuals who often lead chaotic lifestyles. However, there should be close links maintained with DIP and Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) workers as there may be significant overlap in the client group with whom they are working.

The key worker should be able to provide a wide range of support, including not only addressing substance misuse problems but also dealing with housing issues, benefit claims and medical help.

Close liaison between those with the stick and those with the carrot

Police officers involved in the targeting of those included on an IDMRI should be in constant contact with those supporting the targeted individuals from a welfare perspective. Failure to engage with key workers may be a reason to increase enforcement pressure on individuals and good progress in treatment may be a reason to relax police attention. The important point here is that there should be a continuous dialogue between police staff and key workers to ensure the most appropriate degree of carrot and stick are being applied.

Joint outreach work should be undertaken by the key workers and the police officers involved in the initiative. This will provide a consistent message to those targeted, with the offer of on-going support, with the threat of increased police attention if they fail to engage as expected.

Fast track into treatment

Recognising the importance of addressing the substance misuse problem, those targeted should be provided with rapid access to medical assessment and subsequent treatment. In fact, the credibility of the scheme from the perspective of the drug using offender will lay largely on the ability of the team to provide treatment quickly for those targeted.

Operation Reduction provides a dedicated community charge nurse who works exclusively with Operation Reduction clients. She conducts a comprehensive assessment on each client and a medical appointment is arranged with a doctor. They are also 'fast tracked' to the front of the queue for prescriptions.

The nurse will see the client on a regular basis and act as a link between the client, the key worker and the police. If a client misses a number of appointments, the nurse will inform the key worker / police, resulting in a home visit by the key worker to encourage them to re-engage in the process.

7. Sustaining the initiative

It is important to note that sustaining the initiative is not the same as setting it up. It may be hard to sustain a project once it is up and running for a number of reasons:

- The local political will to continue funding a project once the problem has begun to decline can wane. It can become difficult to argue for a project that doesn't seem to exist from a statistical perspective and it can be hard to prove the problem will return once the initiative is dropped.
- Projects are often funded on a '*demonstration*' basis, on the understanding that they will be mainstreamed in future. However, it can be difficult to find the additional funds required from within existing budgets, even when the cost savings have been demonstrated.
- New initiatives are often seen as the '*pet projects*' of particular members of senior management. As they move on to new roles (as is often the case) there is a danger that they will be replaced by other pet projects, even if the existing projects are effective.
- There can be a danger of '*mission creep*', with additional objectives or interventions being piggy backed on to the IDMRI. This can result in it losing its focus.

To ensure the initiative is sustained for the long term, one should:

- **Prove it works.** First and foremost, one should show that the initiative works as intended and is having a positive impact on the local drugs market.
- **Have a plan from the outset.** At the planning stage, there should be a succession plan for how the project will be continued or wound down once initial funding has ceased.
- **Set a review date.** Given the significant resources to be invested, it is important to review progress on a regular basis. This should be annually, but with a major review undertaken at the two year stage. At this point, one should expect to see a significant impact on both the demand and supply sides of the project. If this is not found to be

the case, consideration needs to be given to either changing the initiative, or to closing it down.

- **Seek wide support.** Support for the work of the initiative should be sought from within the partner organisations funding the initiative and with the wider community. This will make it harder to close down a project that is well regarded by all those involved.
- **Secure resources.** Additional resources to continue the initiative should be sought well before it is due to end as it often takes a considerable time within organisations to agree expenditure plans. Allow at least three months for this process.

Initiatives of this kind also need to be responsive to changes in the drugs market, with new interventions being shaped in response to new intelligence. This may mean changing enforcement tactics, targeting new geographic areas, or targeting new drug supply networks.

8. Communicating the initiative with the public

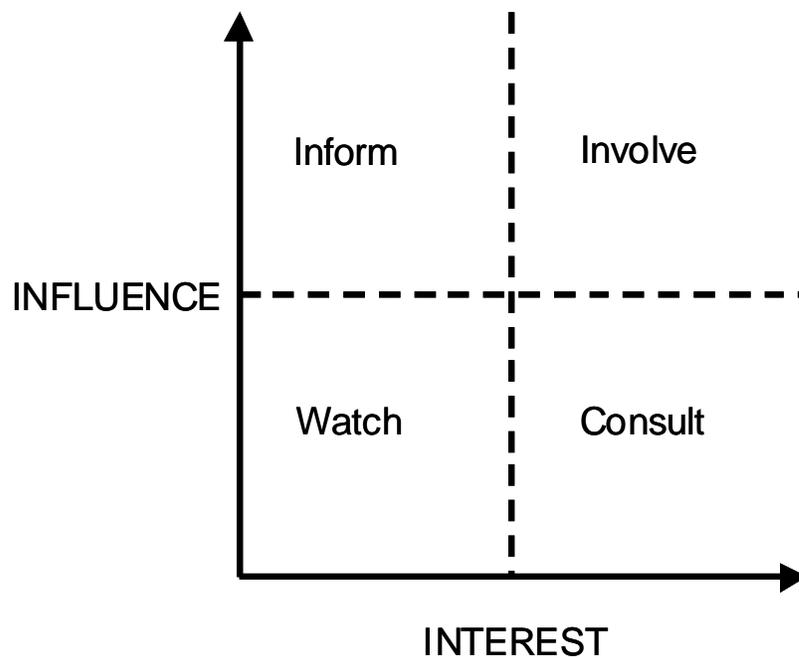
Communicating the work to the local community is an essential element of the project. Good communication can be beneficial for a number of reasons:

- It can help to reassure the public that a local drugs problem is being taken seriously by the authorities.
- It can help to quell concern that the police are unnecessarily picking on particular groups or areas by focusing on the reasoning behind activity.
- It can help to generate community intelligence on local drugs problems by reassuring the public that information is acted upon.

Framework for communication

A communication strategy for the IDMRI should be based around the framework used in Figure 2, which will help to identify the audiences for different forms of communication.

Figure 2: Communication framework



This framework recognises that the type of communication used will depend on the amount of interest a group have in the initiative and in the amount of influence they have on the problem or on the delivery of the intervention. For example, community members with a high degree of interest in reducing the local drugs market and a high degree of influence locally should be involved in the delivery of the project. Similarly, those with a high degree of interest but with little influence should be consulted on the project. Those with little interest and little influenced should be watched to monitor whether their degree of interest increases over time. Finally, those with a high degree of influence but limited interest should be informed of developments on the initiative.

Strategies for involvement

Those targeted for involvement should be approached on a one-to-one level and invited to become involved in the IDMRI. This is likely to consist of a relatively small group of local community leaders and elected members. These individuals could be invited to participate by being involved in a strategic group in an advisory capacity to the initiative. Ideally, these individuals should be approached at an early stage in the planning process, once a decision has been made to proceed with the initiative.

Strategies for consultation

Those targeted for consultation are likely to consist of engaged members of the community who are interested in local issues. These could be targeted through use of the media, through contact with the neighbourhood policing teams and through community forum meetings. This should be undertaken at regular intervals throughout the implementation process.

Strategies for informing

Those targeted for informing may consist of other professionals working in the area and community leaders / representatives from neighbouring areas. These could be targeted during the life of the project with newsletters and presentations.

Modes of communication

As the above paragraphs show, the type of communication used will depend on the audience and on the purpose of the communication. The modes of communication that should be considered include:

- **Leaflets and newsletters.** These could be distributed to households in the areas targeted for police enforcement operations to inform local residents about the success of operations.
- **Emails.** Where email lists of local residents are available (such as those signed up through the police website for regular updates), an email newsletter could be distributed.
- **Community forum meetings.** The regular meetings held by neighbourhood policing teams, or other meetings in the area could be used to discuss the initiative with local residents.
- **Door to door calls by neighbourhood police team staff.** These face to face encounters could be used to inform the local community about work that is underway and use it to gain additional local intelligence. This approach could be taken during the arrest phase of an operation in order to reassure the local community about police action.
- **Removable signs.** Signs could be placed in the streets when search warrants are being executed in order to raise awareness of the operation.
- **Press releases.** Information on the success of the initiative could also be released to media outlets. However, it is important to note that this is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can help to disseminate news of successful operations widely across an area. On the other hand, one has no control on the spin placed on a story by editors. For example, the initiative could either be presented as successfully addressing a problem, or as highlighting a particular community as having a problem.

Regardless of the approaches taken, the communication strategy needs to be seen as an integral part of the process and developed at an early stage in the life of the initiative.

9. Evaluating the initiative

The final aspect of the initiative discussed here is the importance of evaluating the initiative. This is important not only for assessing whether the initiative worked and was cost effective, but also for identifying ways in which the project can be further improved.

Collecting baseline measures

Before the initiative is implemented, it is important to consider whether any information needs to be collected prior to implementation. While much of the data required for evaluation will be available from existing administrative data sources, there may be a need to conduct some forms of data collection in advance. For example, if the initiative aims to change the way people feel about the local drug market, or how they feel about their local area in general, one might want to undertake a survey of the local community, which is later repeated (post implementation) to discern whether there has been any change in community perceptions as a result of the initiative. The ability to collect information prior to the implementation process requires the evaluation to be planned in advance, rather than leaving this until the initiative has been running for a period of time.

Operation Brava in Leeds conduct community surveys to identify problems affecting local communities and the results of these surveys inform police operations. Follow up surveys are conducted after an operation to judge the impact it has had on the problem from the community perspective.

Keeping records of those targeted

Records should be kept on those targeted by both the demand and supply sides of the initiative. This will enable the evaluation to explore the judicial outcomes from the initiative (such as the number of individuals arrested, prosecuted, sentenced etc.) and individual outcomes (such as the number of arrests / convictions pre / post intervention).

Being conservative about claims of impact

There can be a tendency for project staff to overstate the claims of impact associated with a project as the future can be dependent on such outcomes. However, it is important to maintain a degree of objectivity and to be clear about the shortcomings in the methodology used to evaluate the project – remember that no evaluation methodology is perfect and all have weaknesses.

Timing the evaluation

Careful attention will need to be paid to when the evaluation is undertaken. If it is undertaken too soon, insufficient time may have been allowed for the project to bed in, or to show an impact. If it is left too late, there may not be enough time to use the findings to secure additional resources for the future.

Operation Reduction employed independent consults to evaluate the initiative. This included a process evaluation of how the project developed. It also included an impact evaluation that examined offending both across Brighton and Hove and at the individual client level. In addition, the evaluation estimated the costs and benefits associated with the initiative. The initiative was found to be successful in reducing offending by individuals targeted, which contributed to reductions in acquisitive crime across the area.

Deciding who should do the evaluation

It may be possible to find the required skills to conduct the evaluation from within one of the partner organisations involved in the project and this should be the first port of call. If internal staff are to be used, it is important that they are given the necessary time to conduct the research required. They should also be given assurances that negative findings will be treated seriously and that they will not be pressurised to 'prove' that the project worked.

If an external evaluator is to be used, a clear research brief should be provided for them to work to, with the expectation that they will provide a proposal that outlines how they will conduct the evaluation. A budget in the region of £20,000 should be sufficient to conduct a robust evaluation. Although this may seem high for some, it is important to recognise that this will probably only amount to about 2% of the costs of the project over two years.

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