



National Audit Office

THE HOME OFFICE

Reducing the risk of violent crime

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SUMMARY

1 Violent crime has high physical, emotional and financial consequences for individuals, families and society. The most recent estimates, undertaken in 2003-04, found that homicide and wounding, two offences included within the Home Office's definition of violent crime, cost society approximately £13 billion a year, of which around £4 billion is borne by the National Health Service and Criminal Justice System.¹ There is no one reliable measure which gives a complete picture of levels of violent crime but the combination of the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime figures indicate that the total volume of violent crime has fallen in recent years, in line with overall crime levels, but that serious violence has fallen less and remains a significant influence on people's fear of crime.

2 The Home Office has recently shifted its priorities from focussing on reducing overall volumes of violent crime to reducing, "the most serious violence, including tackling serious sexual offences and domestic violence" as part of its revised Public Service Agreement for 2008-11.² This shift in focus is because these more serious offences in which people are killed or seriously physically and emotionally injured are the ones that cause the most harm to victims and to society more generally.

¹ *The economic and social costs of crime against individuals and households 2003-04*, Home Office, June 2005.

² *PSA Delivery Agreement 23: Making Communities Safer*, HM Government, October 2007.

3 Policy responsibility for tackling the causes of violence lies with a number of departments. Consequently the Home Office needs to work with other government departments at a national level when developing policy and then implementing it. It must also ensure that local responses to violent crime are co-ordinated between relevant local agencies. The Home Office's main vehicles for coordinating multi-agency interventions locally are Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Community Safety Partnerships in Wales (Partnerships). These are statutory partnerships between the local police service, police authority, local authority, fire and rescue service, and NHS Primary Care Trust, with responsibility for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Staff tackling violence in the Partnerships we visited often came from the front line of crime reduction, including the police, probation services, and criminology.

4 The great majority of the work done to protect the public and reduce violent crime is carried out in local communities by frontline practitioners, including the police. This is a vital part of their core business, prioritised within their mainstream funding. The Home Office's role is to set the national direction, create and implement the appropriate

legislative framework, help co-ordinate local delivery, and, through some dedicated additional funding and the provision of other support, drive forward specific initiatives. This report focuses on this part of the Home Office's role.

5 The Home Office defines violent crime as robbery, sexual offences, and a group of Violence Against the Person offences ranging from assault without injury, through wounding, to homicide.³ This report examines the extent to which the Home Office has worked effectively with other national and local agencies to reduce the risk of wounding and homicide. We have not looked at measures to reduce the risk of robbery, because these have been covered in an earlier NAO report (*Reducing Crime: The Home Office working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships*, HC 16 2004-05). Nor have we included consideration of sexual offences because the issues raised are sufficiently different from those relating to wounding and homicide to make it difficult to cover both topics adequately in a single report. A description of the scope of our examination is set out at paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 and a detailed description of our methodology is set out at Appendix 1. **Figure 1** sets out some key facts about violent crime.

1 Key facts about violence in England and Wales

Violent crime has fallen by around nine per cent since 2002-03, but more serious violence has not fallen by as much as less significant types of violence.¹

In 2006-07 the risk of being a victim of violence was approximately 3.6 per cent.²

Young men are at almost four times greater risk of being a victim of violence than the rest of the adult population.³

Gun crime more than doubled between 1998-99 and 2005-06, though it fell slightly afterwards.⁴

Violence is expensive: homicide and wounding cost society around £13 billion annually, £4 billion of which is borne by the National Health Service and the Criminal Justice System.⁵

Violence impacts upon public feelings of safety: 17 per cent of adults report that they have high levels of worry about violent crime.⁶

More than 45 per cent of violent offenders are thought to be under the influence of alcohol.⁷

The homicide rate for England and Wales is 1.4 per 100,000, which is low in international comparison.⁸

Violence reduction activities are delivered by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Community Safety Partnerships in Wales, statutory partnerships between the local police service, police authority, local authority, fire and rescue service, and NHS Primary Care Trust.

NOTES

1 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 2.01, Home Office, July 2007.

2 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Section 3.7, Home Office, July 2007.

3 *Ibid*

4 *Homicides, Firearms Offences and Intimate Violence 2005-06*, Table 2.03, Home Office, January 2007 and *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Section 3.10, Home Office, July 2007.

5 *The economic and social costs of crime against individuals and households 2003-04*, Home Office, June 2005.

6 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 5.02, Home Office, July 2007.

7 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 3.06, Home Office, July 2007.

8 *Home Office Statistical Bulletin*, January 2007.

3 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/violent-crime/>

Value for money conclusion

6 The Home Office has been effective at raising the profile of domestic violence and alcohol related crime and encouraging local action to address these issues. Such action is likely to have made some contribution to the overall fall in levels of violent crime. However, it has not yet managed to address successfully barriers which are reducing the effectiveness of crime prevention activities at a local level and which have been raised in previous reports by the National Audit Office and the Committee of Public Accounts. Examples of these barriers include poor data-sharing within local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, insufficient analytical capacity to analyse the risks of violent crime, a lack of engagement with other partners at the local level, and inconsistent delivery of funding. However, the Home Office has made some progress in addressing these barriers, including bringing in regulations to make the sharing of certain data between partners mandatory and encouraging the sharing of good practice through a dedicated programme to tackle violent crime. Although the Home Office has moved to a three year flexible funding arrangement in respect of policing, this regime has not yet been extended to funding of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The persistence of these barriers means that good practice has not been extended from small initiatives, and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships have not been able to take a long-term, strategic approach to tackling violent crime. The Home Office's Tackling Violence Action Plan (published in early 2008) has been designed to address these barriers.

Detailed findings

7 **Violent crime is both highly detrimental to society and very expensive.** In 2006-07 17 per cent of people reported that they were very worried about violent crime.⁴ Some groups are much more at risk of violent crime than others. For example, young men aged between 16 and 24 are nearly four times more likely to be a victim of violent crime than the general population.⁵ According to Home Office analysis, wounding and homicide cost society in England and Wales approximately £13 billion a year.⁶

8 **The volume of violent crime overall has fallen in line with the general trend in crime levels but levels of serious violence have fallen by less.** Overall violent crime levels have fallen by 9.0 per cent over the period 2002-03 to 2006-07, slightly more than the general trend in crime, which has fallen by 8.5 per cent over the same period.⁷ However, more serious violence has fallen by only 5.9 per cent since 2002-03 and within this trends include an increase in both recorded crimes involving a firearm and the number of convictions for unlawfully having a blade or point in a public place.⁸

9 **Local agencies have worked together to address those issues, primarily domestic violence and alcohol related crime, promoted by the Home Office as important.** The Home Office has been successful at raising the profile of both domestic violence and alcohol-related crime and encouraging local Partnerships to take action against them. When asked about the changes that have brought most improvement over the last 5 years, more than 25 per cent of Partnerships gave responses about domestic violence measures. Furthermore the majority of Partnerships which were recipients of specific Home Office funding streams aimed at tackling domestic violence and alcohol-related crime viewed them as effective.

10 **The Licensing Act 2003 enables local areas to tackle violence related to pubs, bars, and clubs, but there is variation in the extent to which it is being used effectively by local Partnerships.** The Licensing Act has given the Responsible Authorities designated under the Act, and in particular local authorities, the chance to assert more control over problematic licensed premises by placing tailored sets of conditions on licences to reduce crime and disorder. However, some areas have taken a more systematic approach than others to collecting data on incidents of violent crime in and around licensed premises and using this information to review the conditions of licences. This variation is likely to account for the mixed views amongst Partnerships about the Licensing Act. More extensive and rigorous use of the conditions of the Act could help to reduce the risk of violent crime related to alcohol.

⁴ *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 5.02, Home Office, July 2007.

⁵ *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Section 3.7, Home Office, July 2007.

⁶ *The economic and social costs of crime against individuals and households 2003-04*, Home Office, June 2005.

⁷ *Crime in England and Wales*, Table 2.01, Home Office, July 2007

⁸ *Crime in England and Wales*, Table 2.04, Home Office, July 2007

11 The majority of Home Office funding for tackling violent crime is contained within police funding to tackle all types of crime and disorder. In 2007-08 the Home Office provided funding of around £9 billion to police forces in England and Wales for all of their activities. The Home Office also provides direct funding to Partnerships. In 2007-08 it provided funding of £64 million to Partnerships to tackle all types of crime and disorder through the Safer and Stronger Communities arm of Local Area Agreements and, over the period 2005 to 2008, has provided a further £30 million of funding on programmes specifically to tackle violent crime (see Figure 8 on page 14).

12 The majority of Partnerships who received funding through Home Office programmes designed to reduce the risk of violent crime viewed the programmes as effective but their value was diminished by the Home Office's poor administration of funding streams.

Partnerships generally view the programmes through which violent crime funding is provided as effective, but they could be significantly more so. The current unreliable nature of funding streams provided directly to Partnerships has meant that Partnerships are largely using additional funding for measures geared towards managing the consequences of violent crime, rather than tackling its root causes. The unreliability of these funding streams particularly endangers contributions from the community and voluntary sectors, which have a vital role in undertaking preventive work to minimise the risk of violent crime. Partly as a result of a Public Accounts Committee recommendation in 2005 the Home Office has, from 2008-09 onwards, changed its provision of general policing grants from an annual to a three yearly basis. This should allow the police to take a more strategic approach to the use of their funds. The arrangement also gives greater flexibility regarding how funds are used. However, it has not yet taken the same approach in relation to its direct funding of Partnerships, who report that they often receive funding allocations part way through the financial year and for one year at a time.

13 The Home Office's performance at spreading good practice has been mixed. Half of Partnerships viewed the Home Office as effective at spreading good practice and half had neutral or negative views. The Home Office has been effective at rolling out Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences designed to protect high risk victims of domestic violence and has used its Tackling Violent Crime Programme to identify and spread good practice in relation to violent crime more generally. However, Partnerships reported a wide range of short term and small scale interventions across the country and noted a lack of evaluation and support to enable them to scale up these programmes, such as information about their comparative cost-effectiveness. In particular, whilst the Home Office views Safer School Partnerships as integral to intervening with young people at risk of violent crime it has not collected reliable data on the number of these partnerships which exist, nor has it investigated the different models in existence or undertaken any evaluation of which are the most effective.

14 Further engagement and data sharing between partners in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships could help to reduce significantly the risk of violent crime in local areas. New regulations came into force from October 2007 which made sharing of certain data sets amongst members of Partnerships mandatory (see Appendix 2).⁹ However, in July 2007, when we undertook our case study visits police recorded crime remained the only data set that was shared routinely. Although members of Partnerships were increasingly sharing other data sets, such as data on violence-related wounding recorded in Accident and Emergency departments, this was not done on a routine or universal basis. However, even if data was to be shared routinely, Partnerships do not currently have sufficient analytical capacity or expertise to make good use of it. Anonymised data on violence-related woundings from Accident and Emergency departments and on children excluded from school for violence would be particularly helpful, but this data had been used in 45 per cent and 26 per cent of Partnerships respectively within the last 12 months. This reflects the fact that Partnerships said that Primary Care Trust and schools representatives in local authorities were the partners most difficult to engage in crime prevention work, primarily due to their competing priorities. Where these relationships are well developed, this is frequently due to the efforts of individuals rather than established protocols.

9 Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007.

Recommendations

15 To improve the effectiveness of violence reduction at a local level the Home Office should:

- In line with the changes that it has made to the provision of general policing grants, set funding plans for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships at least three years in advance, so Partnerships can plan strategically for the use of these funds rather than simply use money on measures which have only a short term impact on the risk of violent crime. It should also use the new Local Area Agreements to encourage Partnerships to undertake long term interventions aimed at tackling the root causes of violent crime.
- Support better data sharing within Partnerships in line with Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act to enable them to focus their activities on the factors most likely to increase the risk of violent crime in their local area. In particular, the Home Office should work with the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families to help them communicate to Primary Care Trusts and schools representatives in Local Authorities the benefits of collecting and providing anonymised data sets on victims of violent crime who present at Accident and Emergency Departments, and on children excluded from school. This should include explaining how such data sharing can be achieved without breaching data protection legislation. For example, the Home Office could design and roll out a tool which local areas could use to predict the costs that could be avoided by different partners by reducing violent crime, and run regional workshops to bring partners together to discuss how to resolve data protection issues.
- Help Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to make effective use of the additional data which they should receive as a result of the introduction of the Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007. The most cost effective solution should be considered. This could include encouraging the police to dedicate more of their analytical resource to analysing information on violent crime from all organisations within the Partnership to inform local strategy and operations, encouraging Partnerships to share existing analysts at a regional level to be dedicated to analysing violent crime, and providing additional training to equip analysts to identify the primary risks relating to violent crime in their local area.
- Arrange with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to collect national data from the police and schools on the number of Safer School Partnerships in existence, their location, the different models in operation, and their effectiveness.
- Raise awareness amongst Partnerships and the police about how the Licensing Act has been used successfully in some areas to reduce alcohol related violence and ensure that all areas are using the Act to its maximum potential to reduce the risk of violent crime by, for example, extending the good practice that has been put in place in some cities to the surrounding towns.

PART ONE

The context of violent crime

1.1 There are several methods for measuring the extent of violent crime, none of which in isolation gives a complete picture of trends. The British Crime Survey is widely accepted as the most accurate measure of long term crime trends in England and Wales but it does not include all sectors of the population or information on the most serious crimes. Police recorded crime figures are not an accurate measure of crime in totality because many crimes are not reported to the police, and because police activity can impact on trends, but they are a relatively accurate measure of the most serious crimes. Other data sources such as violence-related woundings recorded in hospitals can also be useful to supplement understanding of trends in relation to violent crime.

The scope of the study

1.2 The Home Office has overall policy responsibility for tackling violent crime in England and Wales. However, it should be borne in mind that reducing violent crime and protecting the public remains the primary responsibility of the police and other local statutory delivery partners. The Home Office defines violent crime as robbery, sexual offences, and a group of Violence Against the Person offences ranging from assault without injury, through wounding, to homicide.¹⁰ For the purposes of this study we have focussed on wounding and homicide. The report has not looked at measures to reduce the risk of robbery, which have been covered in an earlier NAO report (*Reducing Crime: The Home Office working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships*, HC 16 2004-05), nor has it looked at sexual offences because the issues raised are sufficiently different from those relating to wounding and homicide to make it difficult to cover both topics adequately in a single report.

1.3 Homicide and wounding are included within the police recorded crime classification of “violence against the person”. **Figure 2 overleaf** sets out the different offences included within this category of crime and highlights those on which we have specifically focussed during this study. Of those crimes included within “violence against the person” we chose to concentrate primarily on wounding and homicide as these are the crimes which result in the greatest physical, emotional, and financial harm to victims.

1.4 This study has investigated the effectiveness of the different levers employed by the Home Office to reduce the risk of homicide and wounding, as well as the barriers that prevent the effective use of these levers. Causal links between specific interventions and levels of crime are hard to establish, not least because of variation in recording levels and the difficulty of knowing what would have happened if an intervention had not occurred. This study has not therefore set out to undertake any analysis of the relationship between interventions and crime rates. Our evidence sources and the reasons for their selection are given in **Figure 3 on page 11**, and a more detailed description of our methodology is set out at Appendix 1. The National Audit Office does not have statutory audit access to the police so they have been included only to the extent that they form part of Crime and Disorder Reduction and Community Safety Partnerships.

¹⁰ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/violent-crime/>.

Levels of serious violence have fallen by a lesser amount than other crime types

1.5 Overall levels of violent crime have fallen although levels of the most serious violence have fallen by the smallest amount. The British Crime Survey provides an estimate of the number of incidents of crime experienced by people aged 16 and over in England and Wales and results are reported as the mid point of a possible range. Over the period 2002-03 to 2006-07 the number of incidents of violent crime reported in the British Crime Survey fell from 2.7 million to 2.5 million. This drop of 9.0 per cent is slightly greater than the overall fall in crime levels over the same period of 8.5 per cent. Violence resulting in injury reported in the British Crime Survey also fell by 11.9 per cent from 1.4 million incidents in 2002-03 to 1.3 million in 2006-07.¹¹ However, a separate measure of police recorded incidents of the most serious violence against the person fell from 20,400 incidents to 19,200 over the same period, a fall of 5.9 per cent.¹² Alongside government action to reduce crime, crime levels are

influenced by macro-economic and demographic factors. Factors thought to be associated with crime trends include the output of the economy, the unemployment rate, and the proportion of young males in the population.¹³

1.6 According to the British Crime Survey, weapons were used in 24 per cent of all incidents of violent crime in 2006-07. The most common were knives (seven per cent), hitting implements (six per cent), and glass or bottles (five per cent). Provisional figures for 2006-07 show that firearms were used in three per cent of police recorded incidents of more serious violence against the person (excluding homicide).¹⁴

1.7 The Home Office is increasingly concerned about the carrying and use of weapons, particularly by young people. The number of 15-17 year olds convicted of "having a blade or point in a public place" doubled between 1998-99 and 2005-06, although this is likely to be at least partly as a result of increased police activity.¹⁵ Research on behalf of the Youth Justice Board in 2004 found that young people who had been excluded from school were significantly

2 Different offences are included within "violence against the person"

The number of incidents of violence against the person in 2006-07 and the percentage of incidents which relate to each type of offence.

Offence	Number of incidents recorded in 2006-07	Percentage of total violence against the person
Less serious wounding	487,000	46.58
Harassment	257,000	24.59
Assault without injury	229,000	21.87
Other possession of weapons	34,700	3.32
More serious wounding or other act endangering life	17,300	1.65
Threat or conspiracy to murder	12,800	1.23
Offences relating to cruelty or neglect of a child	5,640	0.54
Homicide	755	0.07
Attempted murder	636	0.06
Causing death in vehicle-related offences	480	0.05
Other	500	0.05
Total violence against the person	1,046,000	100

Source: National Audit Office analysis of Home Office data, *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 2.04, Home Office, July 2007

NOTE

The lines highlighted in grey are the offences on which this study has focussed.

11 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 2.01, Home Office, July 2007.

12 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Table 2.04, Home Office, July 2007.

13 *British Crime Survey: Measuring Crime for 25 years*, Krista Jansson.

14 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07*, Section 3.10, Home Office, July 2007.

15 The source of this information was a presentation given by the head of the Home Office's Violent Crime Unit, Simon King, to the Violent Crime Reduction Conference, London, 23 May 2007.

more likely to carry a weapon than those in mainstream education. For example, 30 per cent of excluded young people said that they had carried a flick knife in the previous year compared to 9 per cent of those in mainstream education.¹⁶ Figure 4 shows the number of recorded crimes involving a firearm doubled between 1998-99 and 2005-06 although there was subsequently a small drop between 2005-06 and 2006-07. Firearms were involved in 413 serious injuries in 2006-07 and 58 homicides.¹⁷

1.8 International comparisons around crime rates are problematic because they are based upon different legal and statistical systems and different cultural contexts and situations. However, one area where comparisons are possible is homicide. England and Wales currently have a homicide rate of 1.4 per 100,000.¹⁸ The latest comparative data over the period 1999-2001 shows that England and Wales have a low homicide rate in comparison to other developed nations (see Appendix 4).

3 Our sources of evidence in carrying out this examination

Method

National survey of heads of community safety

Visits to six local areas with relatively high levels of violent crime and structured interviews

Consultation exercise

A selective literature review

Analysis of how activity to reduce violent crime affects hospital admissions

Expert opinion through a Reference Panel

Purpose

To gather evidence on the national picture of the effectiveness of Partnerships in tackling violence, looking at a range of issues such as information-sharing, risk management, and the barriers that exist in England and Wales to Partnerships more effectively tackling violence.

To gain an in-depth insight into the measures taken to combat violence in areas where it is comparatively high, as well as the barriers to effectiveness in these areas. Also to explore areas of good practice in sharing data pertinent to violence.

To gain the views of the Home Office's Third Sector partners in violence reduction to see how effectively they consider the Home Office to be working.

To assess the evidence available of interventions to reduce violence overseas that could be easily transferred to England and Wales.

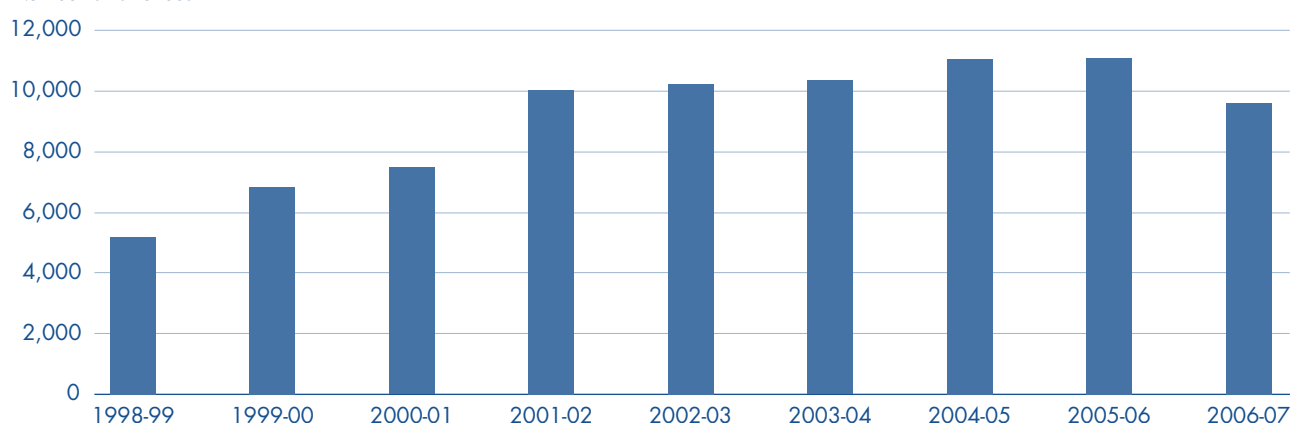
To estimate the costs of violent crime for particular areas and compare these with partnership resources used to tackle violence.

To provide expert advice throughout the study including a review of the study.

4 Recorded crimes involving a firearm almost doubled between 1998-99 and 2006-07

Recorded crimes involving firearms other than air weapons between 1998-99 and 2006-07.

Number of offences



Source: Homicides, Firearms and Intimate Violence 2005-06, Table 2.03, Home Office, January 2008

¹⁶ Mori Youth Survey 2004, Youth Justice Board, July 2004.

¹⁷ Crime in England and Wales 2006-07, Section 3.10, Home Office, July 2007.

¹⁸ Home Office Statistical Bulletin, January 2007.

Violent crime has high physical, emotional, and financial consequences

1.9 The Home Office estimates that homicide and wounding cost around £13 billion annually in England and Wales.¹⁹ A breakdown of costs incurred as a result of specific types of violent crime is given at **Figure 5**. Of the different categories which make up the total cost, the physical and emotional impact of violent crime contributes the greatest amount. The intangible victim costs of violence are calculated using a recognised method developed and used extensively in health economics.²⁰ Other costs relate primarily to lost economic output and the cost of providing public services.

1.10 Age, gender, ethnicity, and employment status all influence people's risk of being a victim of violent crime. Overall in 2006-07 the risk of becoming a victim of violence over a year was just over 3.6 per cent, and young men aged between 16 and 24 were at nearly four times more risk of being a victim of violence than the adult population as a whole.²¹ **Figure 6** sets out the difference in the proportion of adults reporting they had been victims of violence in the previous year according to their age and gender. In 2006-07 17 per cent of people reported that they were very worried about violent crime.²²

1.11 Some groups are more likely than others to be at risk of perpetrating violent crime. Risk factors which increase the likelihood of a person perpetrating violence are given at **Figure 7**.

5 Homicide and wounding cost society over £13 billion a year

Estimated total cost of homicide and wounding in 2003-2004 (£ millions) in 2003 prices.

Type of crime	Physical and emotional impact	Victim services	Lost output	Health services	Criminal Justice System	Total cost
Homicide	1,178	3	618	1	197	1,997
Serious wounding	346	1	89	102	1,091	1,629
Other wounding	5,463	8	1,399	1,617	1,173	9,662
Total violence against the person	6,987	12	2,105	1,720	2,461	13,288

Source: Home Office

NOTE

1 Numbers do not sum to totals due to rounding.

6 Young men aged 16-24 are at greatest risk of being a victim of violence

Individuals' risk of being a victim of violence, according to age and gender in 2006-07.

Age	Percentage of the population who report that they were a victim of violent crime in the previous year	
	Men	Women
16-24	13.8	6.5
25-34	6.2	3.9
35-44	3.9	2.4
45-54	3.1	1.9
55-64	1.7	1.0
65-74	0.8	0.5
75 plus	0.5	0.3
All	4.7	2.5

Source: *Crime in England and Wales, Table 3.01, Home Office, July 2007*

7 Some of the risk factors for being a perpetrator of violent crime

Gender. More than 85 per cent of violent offenders are male.¹

Age. More than 85 per cent of violent offenders are between the ages of 16 and 29.²

Alcohol. 46 per cent of violent crime offenders were thought by their victim to be under the influence of alcohol.³

Drugs. Around 17 per cent of violent offenders were thought by their victim to be under the influence of drugs.⁴

NOTES

1 Violent Crime: Risk Models, effective interventions and risk management, Rand Europe, May 2007.

2 Ibid.

3 *Crime in England and Wales, 2006-07, Table 3.06, Home Office, July 2007.*

4 Ibid.

19 *The economic and social costs of crime against individuals and households 2003-04, Home Office, June 2005.*

20 For further information see *The economic and social costs of crime against individuals, Home Office, June 2005.*

21 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07, Section 3.7, Home Office, July 2007.*

22 *Crime in England and Wales 2006-07, Table 5.02, Home Office, July 2007.*

Partnerships lead on tackling violent crime in local areas

1.12 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (Community Safety Partnerships in Wales) are statutory partnerships that deliver programmes and services to reduce crime and disorder in local communities. The statutory members of Partnerships are the police service, police authority, fire and rescue service, local authority, and NHS Primary Care Trust (Local Health Board in Wales). Members of Partnerships are expected to work together and with other local agencies and community groups to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder in their local area. Part of the role of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships is to prioritise and address those areas of crime and disorder which have the most significant impact on their local community. Consequently violent crime will be a higher priority for some Partnerships than others. Those Partnerships with the highest levels of serious violence form part of the Home Office's Tackling Violent Crime Programme, a programme to provide support and resources for the implementation of initiatives to reduce alcohol-related and domestic violence.

Several funding streams contribute to reducing the risk of violent crime

1.13 The majority of the funding which the Home Office provides in relation to crime and disorder is not ring-fenced to tackle specific types of crime. By far the largest Home Office funding stream which contributes towards tackling violent crime goes to the police, who received around £9 billion across England and Wales in 2007-08 to tackle all types of crime and disorder. The Home Office also provided funding of around £64 million in 2007-08 to the 371 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales through the Safer and Stronger Communities arm of Local Area Agreements and also provides smaller amounts of funding which are specifically for the purpose of tackling violent crime.

Figure 8 overleaf sets out the main Home Office funding streams which contribute towards tackling violent crime.

1.14 The direct funding which the Home Office provides through funds specifically for tackling violent crime and through Local Area Agreements is designed to catalyse greater funding for violence reduction initiatives from within local partners such as local authorities and the police and does not constitute the majority of financing for violence reduction activities in Partnerships. In Liverpool, for example, in 2006-07 15 per cent of the Partnership's annual expenditure on community safety went towards violence reduction measures, but less than 1 per cent of this came from the Tackling Violent Crime Programme.

The Home Office is focussing on reducing serious violence

1.15 The Home Office is shifting its focus from reducing volume crime to reducing serious violent crime. Under its Public Service Agreement 1 target for 2005-08, the Home Office was committed to reducing all crime by 15 per cent, with further reductions in specific high crime areas, by 2007-08.²³ In consequence, the Home Office sought to work with Partnerships in reducing violent crimes that occur in large volumes. However, through the publication of Priority Action One of its Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement 23, published in October 2007, the Home Office is now prioritising a reduction of the most serious types of violence, focussing specifically on incidents including homicides, grievous bodily harm, and some of the most serious domestic violence offences including sexual violence. The Delivery Agreement emphasises the importance of early interventions, especially in preventing the escalation of domestic violence and that committed by youths.²⁴

1.16 To support the Delivery Agreement, the Government has developed its Tackling Violence Action Plan, which links to the Home Office Crime Strategy.²⁵ This action plan has outlined its approach to addressing violent crime and particularly serious violence. The plan seeks to reduce the harm caused by violent crime in two main ways: by strengthening the arrangements at a local level for agencies to work together to identify those individuals who are at risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violent crime and intervening to prevent this, and by providing better care and support for victims of violent crime. Key bodies responsible for this plan are the Home Office, Department of Health, and the Department for Children, Schools and Families; and at local level Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, the Crown Prosecution Service, and offender management services.

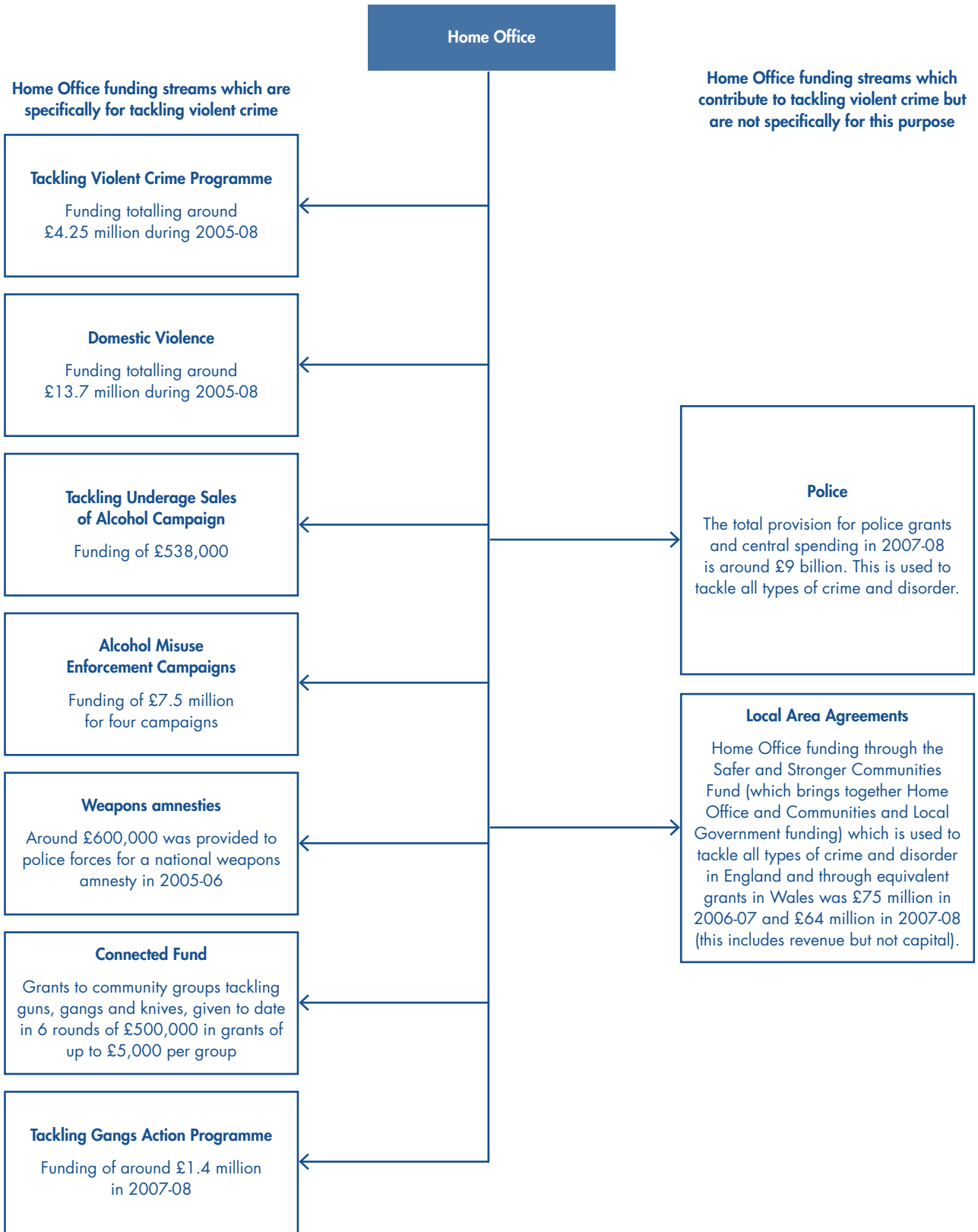
23 *Home Office Targets Annual Performance Report 2006*, Home Office, available at <http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/ho-autumn-performance-report?version=1>.

24 *PSA Delivery Agreement 23: Make Communities Safer*, HM Treasury, available at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/4/pbr_csr07_psa23.pdf.

25 *Cutting Crime 2008-11*, Home Office, July 2007 at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/crime-strategy-07/crime-strategy-07?view=Binary>.

8 There are several Home Office funding streams which contribute to tackling violent crime

Home Office violence reduction funding streams



Source: National Audit Office analysis of Home Office data

PART TWO

National initiatives to reduce the risk of violent crime

2.1 Until the publication of its Tackling Violence Action Plan in early 2008, the Home Office has not had a specific strategy to address violent crime as a whole. The Home Office has, however, undertaken work in relation to addressing the risk of violent crime which has primarily fallen into three strands:

- Attempting to drive down the incidence of violent crimes which occur in relatively large volumes, focussing primarily on domestic violence, alcohol related crime and more recently guns, gangs and knives;
- Introducing or influencing legislation which could reduce the risk of violent crime;
- Spreading good practice amongst Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

This section evaluates the Home Office's work in relation to these areas and considers the barriers which the Home Office needs to address to make its current and future work in relation to violent crime more effective.

The Home Office has focussed its work on domestic violence and alcohol-related crime

2.2 The Home Office has been successful at raising the profile of domestic violence in local areas and encouraging action against it. When asked which changes have most improved their violence reduction efforts in the last 5 years, 27 per cent of the Partnerships we surveyed gave responses about domestic violence measures, including Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (see paragraph 2.3) and dedicated domestic violence services. **Case Example 1** outlines Liverpool's domestic violence services, demonstrating Liverpool's prioritisation of the issue in recent years. Twenty seven per cent of

Partnerships report that they have designated domestic violence operations or strategy groups and there are designated Domestic Violence leads in all Government Offices whom the Home Office meets on a regular basis to provide them with information that they can feed down to their local Partnerships. The Home Office also provides Government Offices with ring-fenced funding to promote domestic violence initiatives locally.

CASE EXAMPLE 1

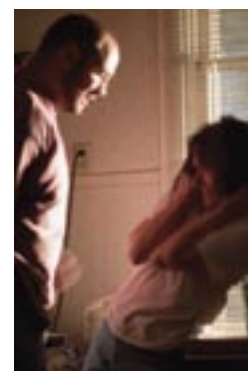
Tackling Domestic Violence in Liverpool

Tackling domestic violence in all its forms is a high priority for Liverpool, and the city provides a wide range of services for victims of domestic violence, including:

- A free pan-Merseyside telephone helpline;
- Two Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, one for each of the Liverpool police Basic Command Units;
- A special domestic violence court, at which the aim is to take domestic violence cases to trial within six weeks;
- Two refuges for victims and their children, one of which is for members of ethnic minorities.

Liverpool's domestic violence service providers believe that, while they have successfully reduced the acceptance of domestic violence locally, some barriers persist to effective domestic violence prevention. This lacks the high media profile of other types of violent crime, such as gun violence. They also believe that in order to have greater intelligence about the causes of domestic violence in Liverpool they require more engagement with mental health and drug and alcohol addiction agencies, as well as registered social landlords.

Source: National Audit Office



2.3 A key Home Office measure to improve partnership working to reduce domestic violence has been the introduction of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, which involve identifying high risk victims of domestic violence and providing them with support through representatives of health, housing, the police, and the voluntary sector in an attempt to prevent them from suffering further abuse. In March 2007, 40 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences were in place in England and Wales, with funding for this to increase to 100 within a year. Evaluation of Cardiff's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference found that repeat victimisation dropped from 32 per cent to below 10 per cent.²⁶

Home Office initiatives focussing on domestic violence and alcohol-related crime have been well received by Partnerships

2.4 The Home Office has in recent years run a series of initiatives based on its national violence-reduction priorities, including the Tackling Violent Crime Programme, Domestic Violence Enforcement Programme, Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns, and the Tackling Underage Sale of Alcohol Campaign. Partnerships that report that they have received funding from these specific targeted Home Office violence reduction initiatives generally consider them to have been effective (**Figure 9**).

2.5 The Tackling Violent Crime Programme, launched in November 2004, is a targeted programme focussed on the Partnerships in England and Wales with the highest rates of more serious violence.²⁷ The number of Partnerships involved in the Programme has increased from 12 in 2004-05 to over 50 in 2007-08. It provides these Partnerships with support and resources for the implementation of initiatives to reduce alcohol-related and domestic violence. In Bolton, for example, funding has contributed towards a night time economy manager who works with problematic premises to reduce their risk of violence.²⁸ Evaluation found that, while there was a fall in violence in areas receiving this support, the number of other ongoing initiatives makes it hard to draw conclusions about its overall effectiveness. However, anecdotal evidence, together with falls in violent crime in areas receiving this funding, suggests that this programme has been effective, particularly in facilitating innovation and multi-agency working in Partnerships.²⁹

2.6 Since 2004 the Home Office has run a series of Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns to spread good practice in preventing violence and clamp down on premises selling alcohol to minors. In Brighton, police used the campaign to enforce a designated public places order, confiscating alcohol from street drinkers who residents felt were damaging perceptions of public safety. The Home Office has taken further action to reduce the influence of alcohol upon violence with the Tackling Underage Sales of Alcohol Campaign, which was run in 2007. With this,

9 The majority of recipients of funding streams viewed them as effective at reducing the risk of violent crime

Programme	Number of respondents	Number of Partnerships viewing it as effective or very effective	Number of Partnerships viewing it as ineffective or very ineffective	Number of Partnerships viewing it as neither effective nor ineffective
Tackling Violent Crime Programme	17	12	0	5
Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign	81	61	0	16
Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign	59	41	0	12

Source: National Audit Office

NOTES

1 The number of respondents do not sum to the total number of responses because in some cases respondents chose the "don't know" category which is not represented in this table.

2 Our analysis of responses from Partnerships which formed part of the Tackling Violent Crime Programme was based on those that took part in the programme up to the end of March 2007. We received a 53 per cent response rate from this group.

26 *National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan – Annual Progress Report 2006-07*, Home Office, available at <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence066.pdf>.

27 Please note that with reform of Local Area Agreements some Government Offices are now choosing to distribute TVCP funding to CDRPs beyond just those with the greatest violent crime concentrations.

28 *Tackling Violent Crime Programme (TVCP) Good Practice Guide*, UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science November 2006, available at <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tvcp/tvcp02jdigoodpractice.pdf>.

29 *Tackling Violent Crime Programme (TVCP) Evaluation*, Sarah Czarnomski, Ben Marshall, Lucía Summers, UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science October 2006, available at <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tvcp/tvcp02evaluationreportfinal.pdf>.

licensed premises in England and Wales were targeted by test purchase operations by police and trading standards officers to check on whether they were selling alcohol to minors. There has been a significant fall in the number of premises caught selling alcohol to children in recent years. In 2004 the overall test purchase failure rate was 50 per cent, whereas in the most recent underage alcohol sales campaign in 2007 this had dropped to 15 per cent.³⁰ Partnerships we visited as part of this study viewed the targeting of underage sales of alcohol positively.

2.7 The Home Office has also run Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaigns. These are directed at improving police performance at evidence gathering around domestic violence and therefore improving the chances of bringing offenders to justice. In Liverpool, for example, a white ribbon campaign was funded, highlighting domestic violence, in partnership with football clubs and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

The Licensing Act 2003 is a useful tool for addressing alcohol-related violence but could be used more effectively

2.8 The Licensing Act 2003 has provided a lever for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to address alcohol-related violence but it is not yet being fully exploited by local areas. The Act, which was introduced by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport, brought in flexible licensing hours to prevent crime and disorder, enhance public safety, prevent public nuisance, and protect children from harm. It enables licensing authorities to place conditions on the licences of establishments where alcohol is sold in order to reduce crime and disorder. Forty six per cent of respondents to our survey found the Licensing Act either effective or very effective in reducing violent crime, whereas 13 per cent considered it to be either ineffective or very ineffective and 41 per cent had neutral views.

2.9 The Licensing Act 2003 provided an opportunity for the Responsible Authorities which have been designated under the Act, which are primarily local authorities, to assert more control over problematic licensed premises and extended the range of premises which had to obtain a licence. The Act requires local authorities to consider four statutory objectives when they decide whether to put conditions on the award of, or reject the award of a licence, of which one is the prevention of crime and disorder. Examples of the kind of conditions which can be imposed to prevent crime and disorder are the appointment of a minimum number of security staff, the use of plastic bottles and glasses, and the installation of

CCTV. The effectiveness of the Act as a tool for reducing violence is demonstrated by the example of a bar in Cardiff, as shown in **Case Example 2 overleaf**, where the police, with the bar's owners, used the Act's provisions to turn the city's top violent crime hotspot into a venue currently experiencing no significant problems.

2.10 The extent to which the Responsible Authorities were using the Licensing Act to assert more control over their drinking establishments varied between our different case study areas. Whilst all were using the Act to impose conditions on premises, some were taking a more systematic approach than others to collecting data on incidents of violent crime in and around licensed properties and using this to review the conditions of the licences.

2.11 Where the Licensing Act appeared to be being used most rigorously and effectively the members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and primarily the local authority and the police, had built up a good relationship with the licensed trade and worked to help them understand the business benefits of the Act. In Birmingham, for example, the Partnership and police, in conjunction with the licensed trade, run "BSafe", an initiative to reduce the risk of violence and anti-social behaviour in the city centre on Friday and Saturday nights. As part of this, extra police officers are funded who patrol the city centre and hand out "yellow cards" to warn people that they risk facing summons to court or arrest if they continue with behaviour which is typically a precursor to violence. In conjunction with BSafe, the Birmingham Licensing Task Force runs joint inspections of licensed premises involving the Police, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, and the Fire and Rescue Service every Friday and Saturday night. This allows the team to gather evidence on risks to public safety and to impose conditions on premises under the Licensing Act to help reduce the risk of violence.

The Home Office is increasingly concerned about guns, gangs and knives

2.12 The Home Office is taking action to address increasing public concern about the perceived prevalence of weapons in society and levels of gang membership, particularly amongst young people. Actions which the Home Office has taken include: introducing legislation to increase the penalties for carrying or using weapons; initiating national weapons amnesties; undertaking research into the use and prevalence of weapons; and setting up the Tackling Gangs Action Programme, which

30 Home Office press release, *Underage Sales Go Down*, available at <http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/underage-sales-down?version=1>.

has provided funding of £1.4 million in 2007-08 to four areas³¹ which have experienced high levels of violent crime including gang-related crime and the use of guns and knives. The Home Office is also seeking to make it easier to track gun usage by introducing a national ballistics analysis system which will use forensic analysis to link weapons to individual crimes.

2.13 Most of the provisions of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 came into effect during 2007; among its provisions are greater restrictions on the supply of imitation weapons and greater penalties for those caught with weapons. While the reception for this legislation was largely positive in those Partnerships we visited, our survey responses suggest that its recent introduction means that it remains too early to conclude on its effectiveness.

The Greater London Authority welcomed the steps the Government had taken to prioritise serious violent crime and also the increase in maximum sentences for possession of knives and firearms and restrictions on the sale of air weapons and imitation firearms.

2.14 Only 13 per cent of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships responding to our survey consider weapons amnesties to be very effective or effective, 30 per cent state that they are ineffective or very ineffective, and 57 per cent that they are neither effective nor ineffective. Interviews with police officers and community safety practitioners suggest that the value of amnesties is largely symbolic and lies in their potential to raise awareness rather than to take weapons off the street that are likely to be used for crime.

CASE EXAMPLE 2

Bar Zulu¹, Cardiff

Police in Cardiff used the provisions of the 2003 Licensing Act to turn the city's most violent bar into one which, within two years, reports very few problems even at its busiest times.

Between October 2004 and March 2005 112 crimes were recorded in Cardiff's Bar Zulu. Cardiff uses a traffic light system to rate the safety of their licensed premises, and Bar Zulu would have been during this period consistently labelled red. The number of violent incidents at the bar at weekends was so great that there were 2 police officers permanently based outside it between 7 p.m. and 4 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights – despite an average police shift for patrolling the entire city centre at night at the weekends consisting of an average of 15 officers.

Prior to the Act's introduction, police had twice attempted to introduce action plans with the bar's owners to improve the situation. However, on both occasions these failed as the licensee was not legally compelled to work with the police. When the Act came into force, it allowed the police to suggest that the bar's license was reviewed by the local authority, after which there was full cooperation between them and the bar's owners.

The police agreed together with the owners of Bar Zulu 19 further conditions to be placed on the licence. The owners of Bar Zulu applied themselves to vary their own licence conditions. These were designed to manage out the risk of violence in the bar and the area around it and related to issues including:

- **CCTV:** conditions specify the standard of cameras, their location, and how often the police could have access to camera footage;



- **Door staff:** the licence regulates the ratio of door staff to customers, and the time at which a certain proportion of them need to move to the exits to supervise customers leaving at closing time;
- **Entry and access to the bar:** the licence now specifies precisely where troublesome customers need to be evicted, and also where customers should queue in a supervised manner when entering;
- **Layout:** a condition of the licence is that at least 25 per cent of maximum occupancy is for seating;
- **Glass use:** the licence requires the use of plastic vessels for certain drinks and the premises has gone totally plastic, including bottles.

Between October 2005 and March 2006 just 14 crimes were reported at the bar – a fall of 88 per cent in a year. It is now rated green by the police, and the officers stationed outside it have been redeployed to mainstream policing of the city centre.

Source: National Audit Office

NOTE

- ¹ Name has been changed.

³¹ The four areas are Birmingham, Liverpool, London and Manchester.

2.15 Research undertaken on behalf of the Youth Justice Board³² suggests that a significant minority of young people carry knives regularly, yet it is difficult to track knife use through the crime recording system, and there is little evidence around knife usage and measures to prevent it. Crime analysts at police forces and Partnerships we interviewed during fieldwork reported that, when they record a crime in which the offender was carrying a knife, it is not presently mandatory to record the presence of the knife. In consequence, confidence in the reliability of data about knives is low. This lack of reliable data on the extent of knife usage is compounded by a lack of an evidence base around programmes to reduce knife crime, with consideration of issues such as why youngsters carry knives.³³ The Home Office plans to introduce mandatory knife markers for all incidents involving knives from 2008 onwards.

2.16 Case study interviewees in areas we visited with high levels of gang membership felt strongly that often gang members felt that they had few other options but to join a gang and that gang membership offered them some form of protection from bullying or threatening behaviour. This is substantiated by recent research in Waltham Forest which found that 25 of the Youth Offending Team's caseload of 59 were involved with gangs and of these 10 were "reluctant gangsters".³⁴ Some interviewees also reported that further research should be undertaken into the relationship between gang membership and weapon carrying with other social factors such as exclusion from mainstream education, future employment prospects, and teenage pregnancy. Better evidence on these relationships could allow Partnerships to design multi-faceted interventions which address these potentially linked aspects of young people's behaviour.

2.17 In our case study visits we examined interventions to tackle gang violence aimed at different levels of seriousness of gang involvement, ranging from deterring youths from joining gangs in the first place to encouraging long-serving gang members to cease gang activity. The X-it Gang Desistance Programme in Lambeth has been designed to show young people that there are alternatives to gang membership. As **Case Example 3** demonstrates, this programme was designed and implemented by Lambeth Youth and Play Services to work with a target group of young people identified as at risk of progressing to more serious levels of crime.

2.18 In Birmingham a range of interventions are used to reduce the impact of serious gang violence on the city's communities, including a legal services partnership and a gang mediation project. Since 2003, the city's council and West Midlands Police have operated a legal partnership, which is designed to enable enforcement and prevention agencies in Birmingham to work together effectively through the use of civil orders and injunctions. Where gang members cannot be brought before the courts because victims or witnesses may not come forward, they have received injunctions preventing them from entering certain areas and associating with each other in communities considered at risk of gang violence. **Case example 4 overleaf** outlines the mediation between rival gangs undertaken in the city as part of the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence Project.

CASE EXAMPLE 3



The X-it Programme, Lambeth

The X-it Programme engages with young people aged between 15 and 21 who are on the fringes of gang membership in order to:

- reduce levels of weapon use and serious crime;
- develop young people's self awareness and sense of identity, empowering them towards informed decision making; and
- identify and nurture a core group of young leaders who will inform future initiatives addressing this target group.

The programme is designed as a series of modules progressing from a youth work approach through to structured group sessions and eventually to therapy-based leadership sessions. Each programme takes on around 22 participants and runs over a period of 32 weeks. It costs approximately £55,000 to run including the cost of the week-long residential course. An evaluation of the programme in 2006 concluded that the programme had made a significant impact upon the attitudes, beliefs, behaviour and social and educational opportunities available to participants. 18 of the 25 participants in the programme which was evaluated (72 per cent) desisted from offending during their involvement with the programme.

32 *Mori Youth Survey 2004*, Youth Justice Board, July 2004.

33 *Knife Crime: Ineffective reactions to a distracting problem? A Review of Evidence and Policy*, The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, King's College London, August 2006.

34 *Reluctant Gangsters: Youth Gangs in Waltham Forest*, John Pitts, Vauxhall Professor of Socio-Legal Studies, University of Bedfordshire, February 2007.

The Home Office's effectiveness at spreading good practice has been mixed

2.19 The Home Office has undertaken a number of strands of work to try to spread good practice within Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in relation to tackling violent crime. These include:

- Setting up a crime reduction website for practitioners with good practice information in relation to all types of crime. This receives approximately 60,000 hits a week.
- Producing good practice guides and DVDs to promote the lessons learned from the different Home Office funded campaigns such as the Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign and the Tackling Violent Crime Programme.

CASE EXAMPLE 4



The Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence Project

The Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence Project is a partnership approach to reducing gang-related violence in the city involving, amongst others, the police, probation, and community and voluntary sector groups. Its objectives are to:

- reduce gang-related violence and shootings;
- reassure the community in relation to gang-related violence; and
- enhance the reputation of Birmingham.

As part of this work it provides funding for a non-profit making company to run a mediation service in relation to disputes between Birmingham's two most serious criminal gangs using twelve mediators who have all been trained in mediation techniques used in Northern Ireland. The project participants have found that gang-related violence incidents are often preceded by a period of rumour and aggravation and that the mediation service provides a means for members of rival gangs to communicate with each other to attempt resolution over the dispute without being perceived by others within the gang to have lost face.

- Holding two national alcohol conferences to consider the best ways of reducing alcohol-related offending.
- Undertaking research into the effectiveness of different interventions in relation to domestic violence and pulling this together in a national domestic violence plan, and providing funding to scale up Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences designed to protect high risk victims of domestic violence.³⁵
- Holding the annual Tilley awards to publicise the use of problem-oriented approaches to crime reduction.

2.20 Despite the work undertaken by the Home Office, there is a mixed response from Partnerships about how they view the Home Office's efforts in spreading good practice about violent crime reduction. Half of respondents to our survey consider the Home Office to be either effective or very effective at spreading good practice and half had neutral or negative views on this. Moreover, when asked what they would like the Home Office to do to further assist in their efforts to reduce violent crime, 11 per cent of respondents to our survey gave answers related to sharing good practice. The police officers and heads of community safety we interviewed during our case study visits frequently suggested that there is a wide range of interventions across the country that are short-term and relatively small in scale, but there is a lack of "scaling up" of these interventions to target the root causes of violence strategically.

2.21 Government Offices for the Regions play a role in spreading good practice and providing support to Partnerships. However, the overall response from Partnerships about the effectiveness of their Government Offices varies according to whether they consider themselves to be a priority for violence reduction. Seventeen per cent of Partnerships consider Government Offices to be effective in sharing good practice. Thirty four per cent of Partnerships report that they consider their Government Office to be effective in general or at a particular aspect of violence reduction, such as encouraging partnership working or domestic violence measures. However, 34 per cent of Partnerships report that they regard the support they receive from their Government Office as not very good, ineffective because they are not a priority for violent crime, or have little or no contact with their Government Offices.

35 *National Plan for Domestic Violence*, Home Office, available at <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence51.pdf>.

The Home Office has not promoted Safer School Partnerships effectively

2.22 The Home Office's new Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement for safer communities emphasises the importance of early interventions in reducing violent crime, and this is in keeping with current international research on when to intervene with children in order to prevent their behaviour escalating into serious violence.³⁶ Research we commissioned for this report from RAND Europe found that early interventions are a highly effective means of targeting expenditure for reducing violent crime.³⁷ While research suggests that interventions before five years old are the most effective at preventing violent and criminal behaviour, there are effective evidence-based and evaluated interventions during the school years from the United States.

2.23 The Home Office views Safer School Partnerships as integral to its efforts to intervene with young people at risk of committing violent crime. Safer School Partnerships were launched in September 2002 with objectives including reducing victimisation, criminality within schools and their communities, identifying those children at risk of becoming victims or offenders, and creating a safer learning environment.³⁸ There is no set model for a Safer School Partnership but they generally involve police officers working in either one or across several secondary schools. Consultation with the Youth Justice Board suggests that there are presently over 450 Safer School Partnerships in operation across England and Wales, and **Case Example 5** describes an example of one.

2.24 Senior police officers we interviewed during our case study visits unanimously regarded Safer School Partnerships extremely positively. They consider there to be a strong linkage between bullying and harassment within schools and violence in the communities outside of them. Having police officers based in schools, however, enables children to develop trusting relationships with authority figures and establishes intelligence sources for reducing crime. There is no conclusive evidence about the relationship between Safer School Partnerships and reductions in violence, but the police officers we spoke to perceived them to be very effective in this respect.

CASE EXAMPLE 5



Inside a Safer School Partnership: Parklands School, Speke, Merseyside

Parklands Secondary School has been a Safer School Partnership since 2002, when it relocated to a new site. The school's head teacher believes that having a police officer on site has contributed to improvements in attainment and attendance at the school, and that this impact has been achieved by effective multi-agency partnership.

Parklands School has 689 pupils, drawn primarily from one of the most deprived areas in England. Their officer is funded jointly by the police and the local authority. He attends some lessons and assemblies, and is involved in a range of extra-curricular activities including the student council and the development of "S.h.a.r.p" (Schools Help Advice Reporting Page System), an Internet-based bullying reporting system. Intelligence gathered at the school has led to the recovery of a firearm from the local community. Parklands was also the first school in the country to have weekly visits from a fire service schools liaison officer in order to reduce attacks on fire crews. There are now no attacks on fire crews by youths reported locally.

36 See, for example, *The WAVE Report 2005: Violence and what to do about it*, available at http://www.wavetrust.org/index.htm?http://www.wavetrust.org/WAVE_Reports/WAVE_Report_intro.htm.

37 *Violent crime: Risk models, effective interventions and risk management*, RAND Europe, May 2007.

38 *Youth Justice Board: Safer Schools Partnerships*, Roger Bowles, Maria Garcia Reyes and Rima Pradiptyo of the Centre for Criminal Justice Economics and Psychology, University of York, available at <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/Publications/Resources/Downloads/Safer%20Schools%20Partnerships%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

2.25 Despite the perceived effectiveness of Safer School Partnerships, there are substantial barriers to their implementation at the grassroots level. In many of the areas that we visited community safety teams and police officers stated that they felt that there was a strong disincentive for head teachers to admit to having a problem with bullying or violence. The Home Office and the predecessor to the Department for Children, Schools and Families have undertaken work to encourage the promotion of Safer School Partnerships. This has included producing a document to support the mainstreaming of Safer School Partnerships and writing to all Chief Constables in England and Wales to encourage them to develop Safer School Partnerships in the local areas in their communities that they believe would most benefit from it.³⁹ However, they have not collected data on the number of Safer School Partnerships in existence, their location, or the different models in operation. The best available estimate is that around 450 of the 3,600 secondary schools in England and Wales are a Safer School Partnership.

“What incentive is there to you to push funds into having an officer in school? My knowledge that it reduces crime, it reduces hate crime, it reduces truancy, it improves all the school facilities. I’m a Safer Schools convert basically and the work that it actually does around crime reduction is phenomenal and the intelligence build up is enormous; the way in which I can have an early intervention and prevent crime is a real big win for me.”

Police Borough Commander, Peterborough

Poor administration of funding streams is diminishing the effectiveness of violence reduction activities

2.26 Police funding has moved to a three year settlement and gives greater flexibility to police forces to tackle policing priorities, including violent crime. However, funding for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships has not yet moved to a three year cycle. A Committee of Public Accounts enquiry into Crime and Disorder Reduction and Community Safety Partnerships’ crime reduction activities in 2004 found that Home Office funding streams for community safety placed a considerable administrative burden on Partnerships and frequently emphasised spending allocated funds quickly rather than effectively. In addition, notification about

community safety funding allocations was often given only shortly before the money needed to be spent.⁴⁰ In responding, the Home Office agreed to make funding announcements as early as possible, to reduce the complexity of funding arrangements in order to reduce the administrative burden of Partnerships, and also agreed to reduce the number of limitations imposed upon Partnerships’ ability to spend allocated funds.⁴¹ Appendix 5 provides an overview of the recommendations of previous National Audit Office and Committee of Public Accounts reports on how effectively the Home Office works with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

2.27 Despite the Home Office’s assurances about funding streams, however, our survey and case study visits found that, even for those programmes viewed as effective in reducing violent crime, the administration of violent crime reduction funding continues to be viewed by Partnerships as burdensome and untimely and, consequently, reduces the effectiveness of violence reduction programmes. One Partnership that we visited reported that they receive approximately twelve funding streams from national government for community safety purposes, and two full time staff are employed for the administration of these funding streams. These staff are paid out of the funding streams which they administer, reducing the amount available to spend on interventions to reduce the risk of violent crime.

2.28 One of the most frequent complaints about the Home Office from Partnerships is that information about funding often arrives late, funding itself arrives late, and when funding does arrive it is generally prescribed for a very limited time period. Two Partnerships that we visited reported that funding for domestic violence interventions had either arrived or was due to arrive well into the financial year 2007-08, with the requirement that it be spent by the end of the financial year. When asked what they would most like the Home Office to do to help them reduce the risk of violent crime in their areas, one in five Partnerships responded that they would like to see funding streams become more consistent and regular, for example by stopping one-off grants. This was second only to Partnerships calling for more funding. Partnerships we visited also stated that they would like to see fewer conditions placed on the funds they receive, such as requirements to spend a certain percentage of funds on capital equipment.

39 *Safer School Partnerships Mainstreaming*, Department for Education and Skills, 2006.

40 *Committee of Public Accounts, Treasury Minutes on the Twenty-third, Twenty-fifth to Twenty-sixth and Twenty-eighth to Thirtieth Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts 2004-2005*, available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm66/6668/6668.pdf>.

41 *Ibid.*

2.29 Government Offices for the Regions are responsible for distributing funding from the Home Office to individual Partnerships, and a significant proportion of respondents to our survey consider them to be ineffective at this. When asked about the effectiveness of their local Government Office, 11 per cent of respondents to this question responded that they regard them as effective at the distribution of funding, but 13 per cent regard them as ineffective.

Poor funding administration prevents funding being used strategically

2.30 The unreliable nature of funding for violence reduction activities means that additional money received by Partnerships for reducing violent crime is largely going towards measures which are not geared towards tackling its root causes, but to managing its consequences. Our survey found that 22 per cent of Partnerships reported that they spent funding received from sources in addition to mainstream Local Area Agreement funding on police overtime, 15 per cent on victim support, and 14 per cent on CCTV. Local Partnerships find it easier to finance situational interventions than long-term preventative measures. For example, the head of community safety in one Partnership we visited said that funding makes all violence reduction activities very short termist and very difficult to establish an enduring programme. This exacerbates the inability of Partnerships to strategically “scale up” interventions to reduce violent crime, as already identified at paragraph 2.20.

2.31 Partnerships we visited also suggested that the unreliability of funding streams endangers procurement from the voluntary sector, which they consider essential for tackling especially sensitive violent crimes, such as domestic violence. This point was echoed by respondents to our stakeholder consultation including the Greater London Authority, the National Association of Crime Reduction Organisations, Crimestoppers, and the Trident Independent Advisory Group, which all called for greater funding sustainability, in particular in relation to the community and voluntary sector.

“Receiving funding on an annual basis makes it difficult to plan work strategically in areas where there is real need for development. If funding was given over a longer period of time, and wasn’t constrained by the end of the financial year I believe the funding would be spent in a more efficient and effective way.”

Community Safety Team Member, Peterborough

2.32 While the current administration of funding streams is regarded by Partnerships as poor, the Home Office does have the opportunity, with the new arrangements for Local Area Agreements, to make funding arrangements more strategic and less short-term. Under these new arrangements, Local Area Agreements will form the central delivery mechanism between central and local government, and will set out around 35 individually tailored priorities for improvement in an area. However, the new arrangements also bring a risk that Partnerships will be more willing to use funding to tackle issues against which outcomes can be easily measured, and those issues where outcomes are difficult to measure or which are unlikely to show short-term improvements might be neglected.

PART THREE

Reducing the risk of violent crime at a local level

The Home Office has set out its hallmarks of effective partnership working

3.1 The Home Office sees high performing, responsive and accountable Partnerships as part of its vision of communities where local people are engaged in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour but has stated that in some areas partnership is more virtual than real.⁴² To address this, and to take account of the change in the delivery landscape since 1998, the Home Office has reviewed the operation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and has introduced new legislation aimed at improving the variation in the effectiveness of Partnerships.⁴³

3.2 As a result of the review, the Home Office has abolished the previous requirement for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to produce three yearly strategies and audits and to produce annual reports for the Secretary of State. The change in legislation has led to the introduction of the following key requirements:

- The introduction of a set of National Standards which include statutory requirements which form part of the Home Office's six "hallmarks of effective partnership" (**Figure 10**).
- The extension of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships' duties from solely preventing crime and disorder to include anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and behaviour that adversely affects the environment.
- The introduction of a duty on agencies to share information for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder.

10 The Home Office has set out six Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships

The six hallmarks of an effective Partnership as set out in the Home Office's guide to effective partnership working.

- Empowered and Effective Leadership
- Visible and Constructive Accountability
- Intelligence-led Business Processes
- Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures
- Engaged Communities
- Appropriate Skills and Knowledge

Source: Home Office

NOTE

Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working, Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships, Home Office, July 2007.

To help Partnerships understand the new arrangements and to encourage good practice the Home Office has published a guide to effective partnership working.

3.3 An example of many of the key elements of effective partnership in tackling violence is provided by Cardiff Community Safety Partnership, where statutory partners and others have made strong use of data, leadership, and engagement with the local community to manage the risk of violent crime in the city, as is shown in **Case Example 6**.

⁴² *Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working*, Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships, Home Office, July 2007.

⁴³ This has mainly been achieved by the introduction of Schedule 9(3), 9(4) and 9(5) of the Police and Justice Act 2006 which came into force on 1 August 2007 in England and 1 November 2007 in Wales.

3.4 In judging the effectiveness of Partnerships we have used both the six hallmarks set out above and the good practice that we identified during our fieldwork which closely matched that identified by the Home Office. We identified the ability to collate and use meaningful data from all partners to inform actions to reduce the risk of violent crime as a particularly important element of the work of Partnerships. Significant savings can be achieved by an approach which includes better use of data to tackle violent crime, as is also demonstrated by case example 6 on Cardiff Community Safety Partnership's use of data and **Figure 11 overleaf**, which shows the potential annual savings in nine local areas which would occur as a result of a 10 per cent drop in violence related admissions.

Many local areas do not have a designated violent crime group or strategy

3.5 Reducing anti-social behaviour is a higher priority for more Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships than reducing violent crime (**Figure 12 overleaf**). Partnerships' priorities tend to reflect the Home Office's focus in its 2005-08 Public Service Agreement targets on driving down volume crime and on reducing fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. However, violence is a priority for many Partnerships: 21 per cent of respondents listed wounding, domestic violence, or city centre violence as their highest priority.

CASE EXAMPLE 6

Multi-agency tackling of violent crime in Cardiff

Participants in Cardiff Community Safety Partnership's Violent Crime Group include representatives of the police, the local hospital and university, the council's licensing team, and the city's licensees' forum.

The group was founded in 1997 under the leadership of a consultant at Cardiff's University Hospital, whose experience of Accident and Emergency and also facial reconstruction surgery had given him a strong interest in understanding and reducing the causes of violence. A further influence was research suggesting that only between 25 and 50 per cent of violent offences resulting in treatment in the United Kingdom were reported to the police.¹ His seniority enabled him to establish strong working relationships across Health and law enforcement.

Since its foundation, the group has used a wide range of data sources, and these have enabled it to take an intelligence-led approach to reducing violence in the city. Records of violence-related admissions to the Accident and Emergency department at the hospital are used to inform the targeting of interventions to reduce violent crime locally.

In order to collect the data the hospital required its IT Department to add six questions on to the Patient Administration System, which it uses to collect data on patients. The hospital then anonymises this data and supplies it to the Partnership analyst to combine with police recorded crime figures and produce a summary for Violent Crime task force meetings. The summary includes information on violence hot spots, trends, weapons use, assailants, and victims. This data is also supplied to the council licensing team, who use it to inform decisions about licensing, such as that taken about Bar Zulu in Case Example 2.

Source: National Audit Office



Cardiff University's involvement in the group has provided a lead on effective analysis of violence data and its use in decision-making about interventions to reduce it. Examples of decisions that have been made using this data include: changes to police patrol routes, the introduction of more taxi ranks and late night buses, and moving or shutting fast food outlets in locations where there were a large number of violent incidents.

As the example of Bar Zulu demonstrates, the Violent Crime Group manages the risk of violence emanating from the city's bars and clubs, and because of this relies upon close engagement with licensees, one of whom has chaired the group.

Since starting to use this more targeted approach Cardiff has moved from being average in its "family" of most similar Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in 2000, to being the least violent Partnership from 2004 onwards. Since 2002, Cardiff has outperformed its family's average monthly number of police recorded crime incidents by 111 incidents a month, a reduction of over 30 per cent. Assuming a cost of approximately £9,600 per offence these results suggest a total annual saving of approximately £12.8 million, of which £2 million relates to the NHS.^{2,3}

NOTES

- 1 *Recording of violent offences by the police: an accident and emergency department perspective*, Shepherd JP, Shapland M, Scully C Med Sci Law. 1989;29:251-257.
- 2 *The economic and social costs of crimes against individuals*, Home Office Online Report 30/05, June 2005.
- 3 *Developing an Accident and Emergency Based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Performance Measure*, Violence and Society Research Group, Cardiff University, November 2007.

3.6 Many Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships do not take a strategic approach to reducing violent crime in their local area. Fewer than 30 per cent of the Partnerships which responded to our survey had a written violent crime strategy and only 43 per cent had a specific strategy or operations group to consider violent crime, although in many cases violent crime will have been considered

in other groups such as domestic violence or night time economy groups. Partnerships were however more likely to be taking a strategic approach if they formed part of the Home Office's Tackling Violent Crime Programme: 47 per cent of these Partnerships which responded to our survey had a violent crime strategy and 76 per cent had a violent crime strategy or operations group.

11 Sizeable savings could be achieved by a fall in violence related woundings

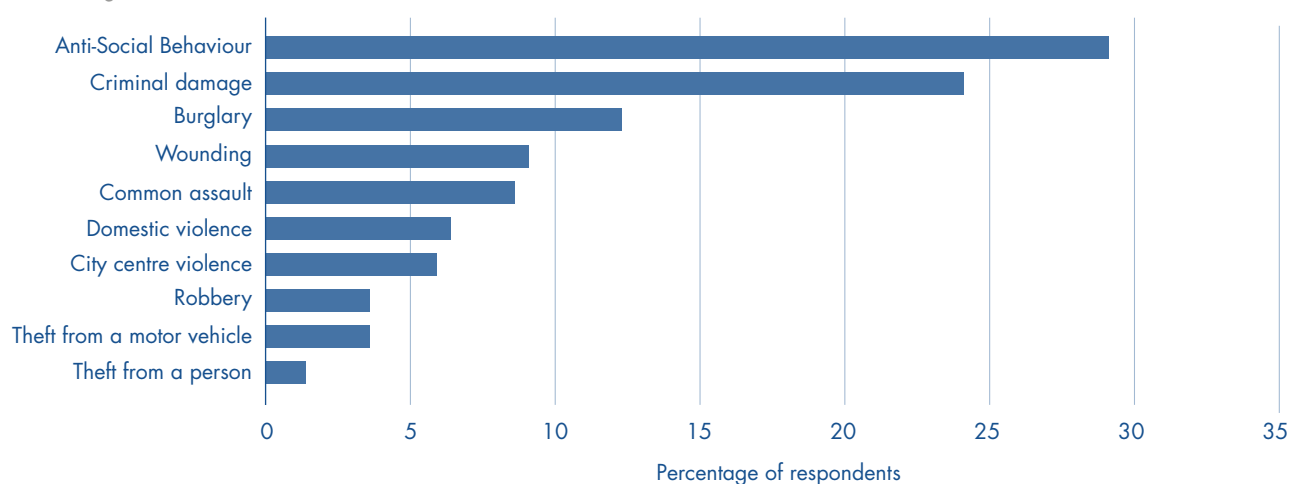
Savings across 9 Accident and Emergency Units in England and Wales that would be achieved as a result of a 10 per cent reduction in the treatment of violent incidents.

Accident and Emergency Unit	Physical and emotional impact on direct victims (£000)	Victim services (£000)	Lost output (£000)	Health services (£000)	Criminal Justice System (£000)	Total (£000)
Isle of Wight	308	0	79	91	120	599
Cardiff	1,659	3	425	491	647	3,224
Royal Sussex	856	1	219	253	334	1,663
North Devon and District	196	0	50	58	77	381
Hinchingbrooke	195	0	50	58	76	379
Darlington	1,161	2	297	343	452	2,256
Bassetlaw	296	0	76	88	115	575
Peterborough	470	1	120	139	183	913
Stoke Mandeville	314	0	80	93	122	610

Source: National Audit Office commissioned research by the Violence and Society Research Group, Cardiff University

12 Anti-social behaviour is the category of crime and disorder prioritised by the most Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

The percentage of respondents who listed each crime and disorder category as their highest priority in the ten most commonly listed categories.



Source: National Audit Office

Partnerships believe that multi-agency working can reduce the risk of violent crime

3.7 The members of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships value multi-agency working as a method of reducing violent crime. Twenty three per cent of Partnerships who responded to our survey cited improved multi-agency working as one of the two main contributory factors which led to reducing the risk of violence in their local area. This was the largest response in any category. The individuals we interviewed during our case study visits saw multi-agency working as key to reducing violent crime: they recognised that solving violence could not be the responsibility of the police alone and that partnership working was a way of addressing the linkages between violent crime and other social factors such as deprivation, health, and education.

“I refer to these ‘clients’, if you like, as ‘the million dollar characters’ because by the time Health, Housing, Education, Social Services and we’ve all had our input, a million quid’s been spent on every one of them!”

Local Head of Community Safety

3.8 Multi-agency working encourages the use of interventions to change people’s behaviour to reduce the risk of violent crime. During our case study visits we reviewed several projects where the involvement of different local partners encouraged innovative ideas to try and reduce people’s risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violent crime, one of which is reviewed in **Case Example 7**. This example shows the wide range of different agencies and community and voluntary sector groups that are often involved in just one such programme. Their involvement allows access to a wide range of skills and expertise, which was helpful in designing initiatives addressing people’s behaviour. Our case study interviewees considered that the involvement of voluntary sector groups was particularly important to tackling violent crime. This was a view supported by the stakeholders who responded to our consultation.

Many barriers prevent effective partnership

3.9 Whilst multi-agency working is valued as a means of reducing the risk of violent crime there are many barriers in place preventing it working effectively. In answer to an open question on the obstacles to effective partnership in our survey, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships stated that the main barriers which they encountered were a lack of resources or budget cuts, the inability to access data and share information, and a lack of engagement from other members of the Partnership (**Figure 13 overleaf**).

Funding

3.10 As set out in paragraphs 2.26 to 2.32 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships viewed lack of funding and the short term nature of the funding they receive as significant obstacles to undertaking efficient and effective interventions. Thirty per cent of survey respondents cited lack of resources or budget cuts as the major barrier to undertaking effective partnership working to reduce violent crime. However, our analysis did not explore

CASE EXAMPLE 7



Partnership addresses the link between violent crime and other social factors and encourages the use of interventions aimed at behavioural change

Some examples of innovative interventions brought about through partnership working

The Gaia Centre, Lambeth

The Gaia Centre was opened in May 2006 with the aim of providing a centre where a range of voluntary, statutory, and private sector agencies could work together to provide support and advice to women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence in Lambeth.

Key players in the development and implementation of the Gaia Centre include: Lambeth’s domestic violence forum; Lambeth Council; Lambeth Police; local women’s refuges and domestic violence outreach services, including Women’s Aid, Refuge and Solace; independent domestic violence advocacy services; Victim Support; a worker offering advice on substance misuse; an organisation providing advice to refugees and asylum seekers; organisations supporting victims from a number of ethnic minority communities; and local solicitors’ firms.

The wide range of agencies working at the centre means that women who are referred can access all the services they need at a “one stop shop”. Examples of some of the interventions provided at the Centre include: referral to social services, provision of emotional support, support with obtaining new housing, arranging appointments with solicitors, provision of interpretation services, and liaison with the Crown Prosecution Service and the police.

The budgeted cost of running the centre over the period 2007-08 is £200,000, funding for which has come from a mixture of sources including the Home Office, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Lambeth Council, Lambeth Police, and charitable trusts.

whether these individual Partnerships were using their existing funding effectively and we recognise that, in an environment of limited resources, it would be inappropriate for the Home Office to provide Partnerships with additional funding solely on the basis that they believe they would be able to put it to use.

Data sharing

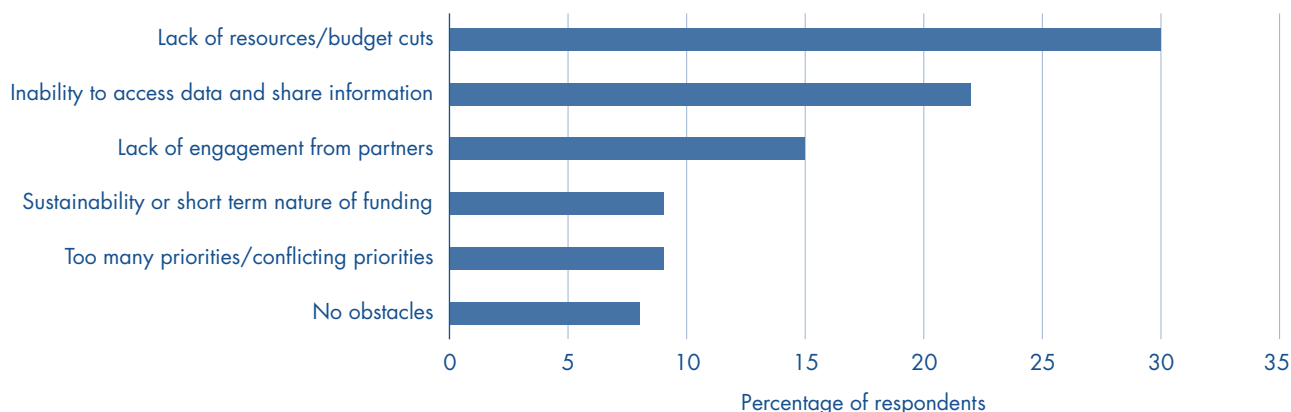
3.11 An inability to access data and share information between different partners was the second most common obstacle cited by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships as reducing their effectiveness at tackling violent crime. The Home Office recognised this issue in its 2006 review of the Crime and Disorder Act and as a result, since 1st October 2007, it has become obligatory for the responsible authorities within the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to share certain sets of depersonalised information that they hold on at least a quarterly basis.^{44,45} This includes data on incidents of anti-social behaviour, school exclusions, and hospital admissions as a result of assault (see Appendix 2 for a full list of data to be disclosed). However, **Figure 14** shows that in July 2007 when we conducted our survey of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, there was significant variation in the extent to which different Partnerships used different sources of data to

analyse their risk of violent crime and police data was the only source used by almost all Partnerships. This suggests that many Partnerships have a very incomplete picture of where violent crime occurs and the risk factors contributing to it. **Case Example 8** demonstrates how partners within the Manchester area have designed a system to share data between themselves.

3.12 Our interviewees from Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships reported particular difficulty accessing data from Primary Care Trusts. Violence places an estimated cost burden on the National Health Service of £1.7 billion a year⁴⁶ and Primary Care Trusts and Acute Trusts have an important role helping prevent violence, primarily through providing anonymous data on violence related injuries to help Partnerships target interventions. Research undertaken by Cardiff University's Violence and Society Research Group found that, when they compared records of attendance at Swansea Accident and Emergency Department for violent injury with police records of violent crime over the same period, 65 per cent of attendances were not reported to the police.⁴⁷ Within England and Wales, Cardiff Community Safety Partnership has led the way in using Accident and Emergency Department data to target interventions and reduce the risk of violent crime (see Case Example 6).

13 There are several obstacles preventing Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships from effectively tackling violent crime

The obstacles which Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships stated were reducing their effectiveness at tackling violent crime.



Source: National Audit Office

NOTE

The percentages do not sum to 100 because some respondents did not answer and others cited more than one reason.

44 *Review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Report of findings*, Home Office, January 2006.

45 *Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007*.

46 *The economic and social costs of crimes against individuals*, Home Office, June 2005.

47 *Recording of community violence by medical and police services*, Sutherland I, Sivarajasingam V, Shepherd JP, *Inj Prev* 2002; 8; 246-247.

3.13 The Government Office of the South East has assisted hospitals in its region to roll out data-sharing between Accident and Emergency departments and Partnerships. As of November 2007, 22 of the approximately 30 Accident and Emergency units in the region were collecting injury surveillance data. This has been enabled by the Government Office of the South East spreading good

practice by paying for visits to Accident and Emergency departments which are collecting injury data to see how this was achieved. The Government Office has also made payments of £10,000 to train reception staff on how to use software to record data gathered from victims of violence, pay for software changes, purchase analytic time, and regularly transfer data to Partnerships.

14 There is significant variation in the extent to which Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships use different sources of data

Percentage of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships which use different data sources to analyse the violent crime in their local area.

Data source (Number of responses)	Always use	Started to use in last 12 months	Have used in the past but not in the last 12 months	Never use
Police recorded crime (218 responses)	98	2	0	0
Police incidents (210 responses)	89	5	1	5
Council/registered social landlord data on anti-social behaviour (209 responses)	53	25	6	16
Fire service records of emergency calls (197 responses)	32	24	13	31
Ambulance service data (190 responses)	14	17	14	55
Accident and emergency data (196 responses)	10	35	13	42
Safer School Partnerships (189 responses)	7	10	3	80
Local education records of children excluded for violence (187 responses)	7	19	12	62

Source: National Audit Office

CASE EXAMPLE 8

The Greater Manchester Against Crime Data System

Greater Manchester Against Crime is the business process for the sharing of community safety data across the ten Greater Manchester districts; this simplifies partnership working and reduces unnecessary duplication of data-gathering and research.

The system was established in 2003 and is a mainstream crime reduction data-sharing business model jointly funded by Greater Manchester's 10 Partnerships with the aim of linking them and providing them with support in their community safety activities. It is now a central team with analysts located in all Greater Manchester districts. The Partnership uses data from sources such as the fire service, transport, and police, as well as socio-demographic information.

Data collected or analysed by this central hub is distributed to local Partnerships and has been used to inform a range of outputs, including the production of strategic assessments and

measurement against targets in the Local Area Agreements. Historically, anti-social behaviour and volume crimes have been a priority for the project, and recently they have linked more into violent crime in line with the local crime strategy, and are linked to Manchester's multi-agency gang strategy. The contents of the data hub are subject to continual review in the light of developments such as the introduction of new national indicators for Partnerships.



Evaluation of the team's work has found that it has effected improvement in joint working in gathering crime data.

Source: National Audit Office

3.14 In relation to domestic violence the Home Office has undertaken specific initiatives which have increased effective information sharing. These include, as one of the criteria for being selected to be a Specialist Domestic Violence Court, the existence of an information sharing protocol which include key statutory agencies, Independent Domestic Violence Advisers, and other voluntary and community sector organisations which support victims through the court process. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences have also increased information sharing in relation to domestic violence as a result of Home Office funding for the development of specific guidance on data disclosure at the Conferences and for Partnerships to purchase multi-agency data collection and case management tools.

Engagement of partners

3.15 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships continue to experience major obstacles in engaging some partners in violent crime reduction. The partner most frequently cited by our case study interviewees as being difficult to engage was Primary Care Trusts. The World Health Organisation has recognised violent crime as a public health issue;⁴⁸ however, many Primary Care Trusts do not appear to view it as such. Of the 43 per cent of Partnerships who had a violent crime strategy group, 31 per cent included a representative from the local Primary Care Trust and 7 per cent from the local Acute Trust, compared with the police and the local authority, which were both represented on 54 per cent of groups.

3.16 Another partner which Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships cited as being difficult to engage were schools representatives in local authorities although their involvement could help to address the increasingly high profile issue of violence and young people. Just 18 per cent of Partnerships with a violent crime strategy group reported participation by the schools representative in their local authority.

Partnerships do not have the capability or capacity to analyse the root causes of violent crime and potential solutions fully

3.17 In its Treasury Minute response to the 2004 Committee of Public Accounts report on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, the Home Office committed its Research, Development and Statistics regional staff to providing increased analytical and research capacity to regional teams and Partnerships (please see Appendix Five). There nevertheless is a lack of analytical capacity within Partnerships to undertake analysis of violent crime within local areas. Forty-two per cent of Partnerships which responded to our survey reported that they did not have sufficient resources and personnel in place to analyse violent crime within their local area, with 66 per cent reporting that they do not have any of the time of an analyst dedicated to violent crime. Partnerships which formed part of the Home Office's Tackling Violent Crime Programme reported greater analytical capacity than others with 3 of the 17 of these Partnerships that responded to our survey reporting that they had a full time analyst dedicated to violent crime (18 per cent) and 10 reporting that they had at least 25 per cent of the time of an analyst (59 per cent). However, these figures indicate that, even if the new "duty" for partners to share information is implemented successfully (see paragraph 3.11), many Partnerships will not have the capacity to analyse and use the new data they will receive.

3.18 Despite the lack of capacity to undertake analysis of violent crime, the majority of Partnerships reported that they collected data on where and when violent crime was being committed and who was committing it. Where Partnerships did not have their own analyst working on violent crime it is likely that this analysis was done by the police drawing primarily on police recorded crime but not on sources of data from other partners. Eighty eight per cent of Partnerships responded that they were able to determine the geographical location of where crime occurred, 88 per cent also said they knew when violent crime occurred, and 72 per cent said they knew who was committing it. Partnerships generally said that they used violent crime data to inform strategic and tactical decision-making in their area but decision-making appeared to be focussed largely on short term interventions, such as where to place police resources, rather than interventions which were likely to make a difference to violence reduction in the long term.

⁴⁸ *World Report on Violence and Health*, World Health Organisation, 2002.

APPENDIX ONE

Methodology

1 The study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of the different levers employed by the Home Office to reduce the risk of homicide and wounding, as well as the barriers that prevent the effective use of these levers, looking in particular at how the Home Office is facilitating the effective working of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships (Partnerships) in England and Wales.

The questions this study investigated are:

- Is the Home Office working effectively at a national level to reduce the risk of violence against the person?
- Is the Home Office effectively influencing Partnerships to help reduce the risk of violence against the person?
- Are Partnerships working effectively to reduce the risk of violence against the person at a local level?

The study does not consider sexual violence because the issues raised are sufficiently different from those relating to wounding and homicide to make it difficult to cover both adequately in a single report. Nor does it cover acquisitive crimes such as robbery which have been covered in an earlier NAO report (*Reducing Crime: The Home Office working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, HC 16 2004-05*), or lower order crimes defined as violence, such as harassment. To enable us to reach a considered judgement on these issues, we employed a number of methodologies, details of the main strands of which are set out below, as well as more specific information regarding each of our individual case study visits.

Survey of Heads of Community Safety in England and Wales

2 We conducted an online survey of all heads of community safety or their equivalents in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales, which we distributed by email containing a link to the web site hosting the survey. The survey asked a range of questions on topics including the prioritisation given to types of crime, the use of violent crime groups and violent crime strategies, the use of data pertinent to violence, and the effectiveness of Government Offices. Please see http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/0708241_census_questionnaire.pdf for a copy of the survey questions.

3 The survey ran between 27 July and 24 August 2007 and was sent to all 371 Partnerships in existence in England and Wales at the time. In total we received 220 responses, a 59 per cent response rate. This included 17 of the 32 Partnerships which had been identified by the Home Office as experiencing particularly high levels of violent crime and therefore formed part of the Home Office's Tackling Violent Crime Programme at the end of 2006-07. Prior to distribution, the survey was piloted by members of the National Community Safety Network as well as the community safety team in the Government Office of the South West region.

Analysis of how activity to reduce violent crime affects hospital admissions

4 We commissioned the Violence and Society Research Group at Cardiff University to conduct analysis of how activity to reduce violent crime affects hospital admissions. This analysis sought to estimate the costs of violent crime for particular areas and compare these with partnership resources used to tackle violent crime. The analysis compared data from nine Accident and Emergency units from between April 2002 and December 2004 with information from each Partnership to understand how Partnership activity affects hospital admissions. A lack of data from Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and the difficulty of isolating the impact of single projects made it impossible to reach a conclusion about the effectiveness of specific interventions. The research was, however, able to assess the relationship between levels of wounding in Accident and Emergency departments and levels of recorded violent crime and to estimate the savings that could be made by reducing levels of wounding. Please see http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/0708241_performance_measure.pdf for a copy of the report.

Consultation exercise

5 We conducted a written consultation exercise with a wide range of organisations with a role in reducing the risk of violent crime, including recipients of Connected Fund grants, to gain their opinion of how the Home Office is assisting their efforts to reduce violence in their communities. We received responses from the following organisations: Crimestoppers, the National Association of Crime Reduction Organisations, the Youth Justice Board, the Greater London Authority, the Trident Independent Advisory Group and Mothers Against Violence.

International literature review from RAND Europe

6 We commissioned RAND Europe to conduct a selective review of relevant literature on interventions to prevent violent crime. This review sought examples of risk management practices and interventions to prevent violence, such as through the better tracking of violent offenders and reducing violent re-offending. The review examines effective interventions in preventing violent crime in areas affected by high rates of violence overseas, with a particular focus on North America. The full document is published separately on our website at http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/0708241_risk_models.pdf.

Case example visits and interviews

7 We identified particular examples of good practice in the multi-agency sharing of information relevant to violent crime in Cardiff and Manchester and visited these Partnerships to conduct interviews with key stakeholders.

Case study visits and interviews

8 The Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate supplied us with police-recorded crime figures for both wounding and more serious wounding for every Partnership in England and Wales for 2004-05 and 2005-06. Using this information, we selected Birmingham, Lambeth, and Liverpool for in-depth case study visits because of their comparative rates of violence and more serious violence, as well as Peterborough, as an example of a medium-sized town with a high rate of violent crime when compared to similar conurbations. We conducted case study visits to these areas between August and September 2007. In each visit we interviewed the head of community safety or their equivalent, the local police borough commander or other senior officer available, and police and partnership crime analysts – 11 interviews in total as in one visit we met with the police and head of community safety jointly. For interviews with these figures we used a framework of questions that was previously piloted and meant that their answers could be easily compared. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed using ATLAS software. We also interviewed a range of other stakeholders, and visited a number of projects in each Partnership designed to tackle violent crime, the details of which are set out further below. A total of 28 such interviews were conducted in the 4 case study visit areas.

Birmingham

9 In addition to meeting with the police, community safety team, and local data analysts, in Birmingham study team members also met with representatives of organisations including:

- Fire and rescue services
- Local authority anti-social behaviour unit
- Primary Care Trust
- Domestic Violence support services
- Young Offenders services

We also toured the city centre at night to see at first hand the impact of Birmingham's night time economy regeneration management upon violent crime, and met with the co-ordinator of the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence project.

Lambeth

10 In Lambeth, in addition to meeting with analysts and representatives of the police and community safety, team members visited or met with the representatives of a range of interventions designed to target violent crime:

- The Phoenix Programme, which aims to reduce gun-enabled crime by involving community organisations in the delivery of interventions around numeracy and literacy, sport, and arts and crafts.
- Flipside, which focuses on young people and knives, with programmes currently being delivered at the Pupil Referral Unit and the Youth Inclusion and Support Panel.
- The *X-it* Programme, which works with young people in Lambeth at risk of involvement in gangs and violent crime; modules include conflict resolution.
- The Executive Commission, which aims to develop solutions to reduce the number of young people becoming involved in criminal and violent gang activity and address the factors that lead to their involvement.
- The Gaia Centre, which provides information, advice and advocacy for women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence.

We also accompanied representatives of the local authority licensing team, Environmental Health, the Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards on a joint inspection of a local supermarket.

Liverpool

11 In Liverpool we discussed violent crime with representatives of a wide range of organisations involved in tackling the issue, including:

- Citysafe, Liverpool's city centre joint action group
- The Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group, which analyses trends in wounding using Accident and Emergency data
- Domestic Violence services, including those provided by the police, the Crown Prosecution service, and an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
- Liverpool's alcohol awareness campaign run by the National Health Service
- Trading Standards and the police's licensing team.

Study team members also toured the city's night time economy at a busy time in order to interview police officers, door staff and others about their experiences of violence, visited the city's closed circuit television control room, and met staff at Parklands School, a Safer School Partnership.

Peterborough

12 In Peterborough, as well as interviewing the police, head of community safety, and police analyst, team members interviewed participants in violence reduction from organisations such as:

- Fire and Rescue Services
- Primary Care Trust
- Young Offenders' Services
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team

We also conducted a focus group with members of the licensed trade involved in Peterborough's Evening Project, which is designed to improve the safety and order of the city's night time economy.

13 We would like to thank each of these Partnerships for their hard work, hospitality, and assistance to this study.

Expert Panel

14 We also convened an Expert Panel which advised us on emerging findings and issues arising as our fieldwork progressed. We thank them for their time and assistance. The members of the Expert Panel were:

- Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, Head of the Violence Reduction Unit, Strathclyde Police
- Karyn McCluskey, Deputy Head of the Violence Reduction Unit and Principal Intelligence Analyst of Strathclyde Police
- Professor Jonathan Shepherd, Director of the Violence and Society Research Group, Cardiff University
- Professor Betsy Stanko, Senior Adviser – Strategic Analysis and Head of the Strategic Research Unit, Metropolitan Police Service

APPENDIX TWO

Data to be shared between partners under the Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007

1 Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 outlines requirements for sharing data between partners in crime reduction, and this has been strengthened by Schedule 9 (5) of the Police and Justice Act, which introduces a duty on agencies to share information that they hold for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder. Previously there was a power to share depersonalised data, something which Partnerships could do if they chose, whereas now partners must share this where they hold it in line with the Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007.

2 The requirements for data-sharing are:

- Certain sets of depersonalised information from police, fire and rescue authorities, Primary Care Trusts (England), Local Health Boards (Wales) and local authorities, must be shared where held at least on a quarterly basis, starting on 1 October 2007.
- The disclosures will be made in an electronic form.

The information disclosed should be depersonalised and consist of the time, date and location of each incident. The sets of information that are to be disclosed are as follows:

Information held by the police force:

- Anti-social behaviour incident
- Transport incident
- Public safety/welfare incident
- Burglary
- Criminal damage
- Drug offences
- Fraud and forgery
- Robbery
- Sexual offences
- Theft and handling stolen goods
- Violence against the person

Information held by each Primary Care Trust of persons admitted to hospital as a result of:

- Assault
- Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use
- Toxic effect of alcohol
- Incidents where there is evidence of alcohol involvement
- Domestic abuse
- Mental outpatient first attendance
- Receiving drug treatment
- Ambulance calls relating to crime

Information held by the local authority:

- Time, date and location of each road collision
- Area, age and gender of pupils excluded from school
- Time, date and location of racial incidents
- Each incident of anti-social behaviour

Information held by the fire and rescue authority:

- Deliberate primary fire
- Deliberate secondary fire
- Incidence of violence against employees
- Fire in a dwelling with no smoke alarm

APPENDIX THREE

The Violence Reduction Unit, Scotland

- 1 Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit is a national centre of excellence that seeks to influence more effective violent crime prevention. Its recent key achievements have included spreading good practice to local government and police forces in Scotland, improvement in intelligence gathering about violence, and national violence awareness campaigns.
- 2 The Violence Reduction Unit was established by Strathclyde police in 2005 and in 2006 received Scottish Executive funding for its activities to be rolled out nationwide, in recognition of its swiftly engaging with a wide range of partners in presenting violence not just as a law enforcement issue, but also a public health problem. The Unit was established to tackle Scotland's high rate of violence. In 2002, the World Health Organisation reported that Scotland had a homicide rate of 5.3 per 100,000 males aged 10–29. The rate in England and Wales for the same age group was 1.0 per 100,000.
- 3 One instance of the Violence Reduction Unit spreading good practice to police and local authorities occurred when it used its analysis to identify potential bottlenecks in Glasgow city centre linked to the night time economy, as well as measures that could be used to prevent these leading to violent crime. Despite a significant increase in licensed premises and their opening hours, the number of taxi licences in 2007 was the same as it had been 30 years previously, even though public transport closes at 11:30 p.m. To reduce the risk of violence among people waiting for transport home, Glasgow introduced the "Nite Zone" initiative, with taxi marshals and high visibility policing during periods of high risk for violence. The Unit also spoke to bus companies and identified routes with violence problems, where the police then stopped certain buses and confiscated knives and alcohol in a highly-publicised campaign.
- 4 The Violence Reduction Unit has piloted injury surveillance in Glasgow's hospitals to enable greater reporting of violent crime. At the Glasgow Royal Infirmary nurses use a standardised reporting system for violent crime, based on protocols developed in Cardiff. This anonymously takes information such as the victim's age, postcode, and why they believe they have been assaulted. Once the police receive wounding data, this information is used to inform decision-making around issues such as whether to grant licensed premises extended alcohol licences. Also to encourage increased reporting, the Violence Reduction Unit has paid for free phones in casualty units. As of 2007, there are plans for this data collection to be rolled out electronically across the whole of Scotland. In order to engage with the healthcare sector, Unit staff visited every Accident and Emergency consultant in Glasgow and established personal relations with them, stressing how injury surveillance assists Accident and Emergency units in their fundamental duty to protect the public. The Unit now plans to establish injury surveillance links with other healthcare providers who will see evidence of less serious violence, such as GPs and dentists.

APPENDIX FOUR

Homicide rates in member states of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Country	Homicides per 100,000 population, average per year 1999-2001
United States	5.56
Finland	2.86
Turkey	2.67
Northern Ireland	2.65
Slovakia	2.55
Czech Republic	2.52
New Zealand	2.50
Hungary	2.34
Scotland	2.16
Poland	2.05
Australia	1.87
Belgium	1.79
Canada	1.77
France	1.73
England and Wales	1.612
Netherlands	1.51
Italy	1.50
Ireland (Eire)	1.42
Greece	1.38
Austria	1.23
Portugal	1.17
Germany	1.15
Spain	1.12
Switzerland	1.12
Sweden	1.11
Japan	1.05
Denmark	1.02
Norway	0.95

Source: Home Office

NOTES

- 1 Excludes Mexico and Iceland
- 2 The current homicide rate in England and Wales is 1.4 per 100,000.

APPENDIX FIVE

The Home Office's response to relevant previous recommendations from the Committee of Public Accounts

1 The effectiveness of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships was previously examined by the National Audit Office in 2004 in a broader examination of their effectiveness in crime reduction.⁴⁹ The following table sets out the conclusions

of the subsequent Committee of Public Accounts report, the commitment of the Home Office given in the relevant Treasury Minute response, and the findings of this report in relation to these areas.⁵⁰

PAC Conclusion(s)	Home Office commitment, as given in Treasury Minute	Violent crime study key finding/ recommendation
<p>Sharing good practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Home Office should support successful local initiatives by promoting such schemes to other Partnerships and encouraging wider sharing and take up. In reviewing Partnerships' strategies, Home Office Regional Directors should question Partnerships about the extent to which they are adopting successful projects from elsewhere which are relevant to the crime problems outlined in their strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good practice being shared through the Home Office Crime Reduction website, regular newsletters such as the Crime Reduction Digest, workshops and seminars. The Home Office will seek other opportunities which can be captured through the proactive performance management of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships by Government Offices, and is committed to bring about substantial improvements in the capture, evaluation and promulgation to Partnerships of information about what does and does not work in community safety. 	<p>Key finding: The Home Office's performance at spreading good practice has been mixed.</p> <p>Recommendation: Specific recommendations on working more closely with the Departments for Culture, Media and Sport and Children, Schools and Families on spreading good practice about the implementation of the 2003 Licensing Act and Safer School Partnerships.</p>

49 *Reducing Crime: The Home Office working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, HC16 2004-05*, National Audit Office, December 2004.
 50 *Twenty-third report of session 2004-05*, Committee of Public Accounts, April 2005.

PAC Conclusion(s) *continued*

Analytical capacity

- The Home Office should develop a framework to assist Partnerships in designing projects which will have a visible impact in reducing crime. Such projects are likely to be underpinned by rigorous analysis; to be targeted to achieve a demonstrable reduction in crime; to be a rational solution to the crime problem; and to be of sufficient scale to tackle the problem.

Funding

- There is evidence that the Home Office has placed more emphasis on Partnerships spending money allocated to them quickly and before the financial year end rather than on the value for money to be obtained from funds. The Home Office should make use of existing flexibility for funding non-government organisations by granting funding for more than one year where a project has been clearly defined.
- The Home Office has failed to notify Partnerships of their funding allocations on a timely basis, making it difficult for Partnerships to start projects promptly. Funding allocations for 2004-05, for example, were only notified to Partnerships in March 2004. In its timetable for allocating departmental resources, the Home Office should give greater recognition to Partnerships' need for greater certainty of funding, if projects are to be a success.

Home Office commitment, as given in Treasury Minute *continued*

- The Home Office continues to provide support and advice to Partnerships on the implementation of crime reduction projects. This includes the work of Research Development and Statistics regional staff in providing increased analytical and research capacity to regional teams and Partnerships and the work of the regional teams in challenging and agreeing local plans to deliver Local Area Agreements and the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund.

- The Home Office is making funding announcements as early as possible and has reduced the limitations on Partnerships about how money is spent. In providing greater freedoms and flexibilities to Partnerships to use their budgets to support local crime reduction initiatives, the Home Office is seeking to further reduce the burden on them.

- The Home Office seeks to make funding announcements as early as possible, and to reduce the limitations on Partnerships about how they use this money.

Violent crime study key finding/ recommendation *continued*

Key finding: Partnerships do not have the capability or capacity to analyse the root causes of violent crime and potential solutions fully.

Recommendation: Help Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to make effective use of the additional data which they should receive as a result of the introduction of the Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007. The most cost effective solution should be considered. This could include encouraging the police to dedicate more of their analytical resource to analysing information on violent crime from all organisations within the Partnership to inform local strategy and operations, encouraging Partnerships to share existing analysts at a regional level to be dedicated to analysing violent crime, and providing additional training to equip analysts to identify the primary risks relating to violent crime in their local area.

Key finding: The Home Office has changed the provision of its general policing grants from an annual to a three year basis. This should help police forces to act more strategically. However, Home Office funding to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships continues to be on an annual basis and often arrives part way through the financial year. The effectiveness of violence reduction activities at a local level is significantly diminished by the Home Office's poor administration of funding streams.

Recommendation: In line with the changes that it has made to the provision of general policing grants, set funding plans for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships at least three years in advance, so Partnerships can plan strategically for the use of these funds rather than simply use money on measures which have only a short term impact on the risk of violent crime. It should also use the new Local Area Agreements to encourage Partnerships to undertake long term interventions aimed at tackling the root causes of violent crime.

GLOSSARY

British Crime Survey

The British Crime Survey measures crime in England and Wales by asking people about crimes they have experienced in the last year, including crimes which are not reported to the police. The survey seeks to identify those most at risk of different types of crime, and also looks at people's attitudes to crime, such as their fear of crime and what measures they take to avoid it. The British Crime Survey involves over 50,000 interviews of people aged 16 and over. Estimates that are produced of the number of offences committed are reported as the mid point of a possible range.

Basic Command Units

Police Basic Command Units cover over 300 areas in England and Wales, variously named as districts, areas, operational command units and divisions.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships/Community Safety Partnerships

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Community Safety Partnerships in Wales. This legislation enshrined in law the principle that crime reduction is not the responsibility of the police alone, but is a partnership responsibility. Statutory partners are the police, local authorities, fire and rescue services, and Primary Care Trusts (Local Health Boards in Wales).

Government Offices

Regional Government Offices were implemented as a move towards decentralising government in 1994. They are designed to offer experience and expertise to government departments in policy development and implementation. Government Offices can draw on their expertise to feedback to and challenge both regional partners and central government departments. The regional Government Offices are involved in regenerating communities, fighting crime, tackling housing needs, improving public health, raising standards in education and skills, tackling countryside issues, and reducing unemployment. They are responsible for negotiating Local Area Agreements on behalf of the Home Office.

Local Area Agreements

A three year agreement, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that sets out the priorities for a local area. The primary objective is the delivery of sustainable communities, through better outcomes for local people. Local Area Agreements also have secondary objectives including improving relations between central and local government and enhancing the efficient working of partnerships.

Multi-Agency Risk
Assessment Conferences

These conferences are used to identify victims of domestic abuse who are most at risk of experiencing violence in the future. The key element is the risk assessment, which seeks to gather information from victims that can be shared with other agencies, identify those who will need more intensive support, and make agencies aware of the most dangerous offenders. Information gathered during these risk assessments is then shared among relevant agencies to promote the safety of victims of abuse and their children, where relevant.

Primary Care Trust/Local
Health Board

Primary Care Trusts commission services from health care providers in accordance with the identified needs of the local population and monitor performance against these contracts. In April 2003, Local Health Boards replaced health authorities in Wales; these commission similar services to Primary Care Trusts on behalf of local communities.

Public Service Agreements

Public Service Agreements were introduced by the Government in 1998. They set out the Government's key priorities for each national department of state and aim to ensure value for money from public services and that outcomes are delivered in return for resources. Each department of state publicly reports performance against these targets twice annually.