RAND EUROPE

This PDF document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Jump down to document ▼

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world.

Support RAND

Browse Books & Publications

Make a charitable contribution

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore RAND Europe

View document details

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

Tackling Violent Crime

Findings from regional workshops with 12 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

Emma Disley, Tom Ling, Jennifer Rubin

With

Matthew Wilkins

RAND EUROPE

The research described in this report was prepared for the National Audit Office.

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

Preface

This report and the workshops on which it is based were commissioned by the UK National Audit Office (NAO) to follow-up and further explore the findings of their earlier report *Reducing the risk of violent crime*[1] which examined the Home Office's efforts to tackle violence.

Much of the delivery of the Government's tackling violence agenda is undertaken by Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. These Partnerships are responsible for understanding local levels and trends in violence, for adopting local policies and measures to reduce violence (including gun crime, hate crime, and domestic violence) and for developing arrangements to manage individuals at risk of committing violence. This report documents the findings from six regional workshops involving participants from twelve CDRPs held across the country during October and November 2008. The aim of the workshops was to examine the barriers local practitioners face in their work to reduce violent crime, and how these might be overcome. They were organised by the commissioning team at the NAO and designed, led and analysed collaboratively by RAND Europe researchers and the NAO.

Conducting workshops to follow up and further explore findings from an earlier report is a novel approach for the NAO. Although the broad aim of the workshops was clear from the outset, the design of the workshops was deliberately flexible to enable them to be responsive in covering the specific interests and concerns of different CDRPs. For this reason the workshops were diverse in structure, participation and content. This report, therefore, does not claim representativeness across all CDRPs; rather, it draws key messages from the discussions and debates amongst workshop participants, shedding light on some of the challenges faced by local practitioners and highlighting successes and promising practices.

This report will be of interest to all those involved in the tackling violence agenda, including Government Ministers and policy makers, those working in Regional Government Offices, practitioners from criminal justice agencies, health services, local government and local councils.

RAND Europe is an independent, not-for-profit, policy-research organisation whose mission is to help improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. This

---

[1] National Audit Office, 1998.

report has been peer reviewed in accordance with RAND's quality assurance standards. The views expressed in this report are the authors' alone and not those of the NAO.

For more information about RAND Europe or this document, please contact:

Dr Jennifer Rubin.
Director, Emerging Areas
RAND Europe
Westbrook Centre, Milton Road
Cambridge CB4 1YG
United Kingdom

jkrubin@rand.org
Tel: +44-1223-353329.

Contents

Executive Summary

In 2008 the Home Office published an *Action Plan for Tackling Violence*, setting out the Government's agenda to reduce the harm caused by violent crime, especially the most serious forms of violence. Much of the responsibility for delivering the aims set out in the Action Plan lies with local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England and Community Safety Partnerships in Wales. These are local, statutory partnerships[2] responsible for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

The NAO reported on the Home Office's efforts to tackle violence in a 2008 report entitled *Reducing the risk of violent crime*, a key finding of which was that more needed to be done to address barriers which prevented effective multi-agency working among CDRPs and other partners at the local level.

In order to discuss these barriers and further explore local successes the NAO commissioned a series of workshops across England for local practitioners involved in work to tackle violent crime. The workshops represent a pragmatic approach to investigation. They allowed information to be gathered from practitioners who had extensive experience and knowledge of the issues, and for the capture of rich and detailed findings which provided insight into local, 'on the ground' context. The limitations of this approach, however, are that the findings reflect the particular perspectives and experiences of those people who attended each of the workshops, which carries the risk that wider perspectives are neglected.

Findings from the workshops are broadly in line with those from the NAO report, with the workshops enabling a richer and more nuanced understanding of the challenges practitioners faced in implementing the Government's plans for tackling violent crime. The following are the main findings from the six workshops conducted with 12 CDRPs in England.

Partnership working and strong relationships were prevalent amongst participating CDRPs

Discussions during the workshops indicate that partnership working is embedded in most of the participating areas, and that there are strong relationships between agencies, especially the police and local councils.

---

[2] The local partnerships include the local police service, police authority, local authority, fire and rescue service, and NHS Primary Care Trust.

Violent Crime is a priority for CDRPs

Tackling violence was on the agenda of all of the 12 CDRPs who took part in the workshops¸ all of which were undertaking some work to tackle violent crime, although the extent of this varied between CDRPs and depended upon the profile of each area. CDRPs covering large cities and towns reported significant investment of resources in tackling violence and the majority of CDRPs were undertaking a significant amount of partnership work in this area. Some CDRPs had produced a single strategic assessment[3] for their area, rather than different documents for the CDRP and each of its constituent agencies. When all agencies work from a single document which details the nature of crime and other problems in an area, coordinated action is more likely.

There is a call for greater involvement by health, the probation service and schools

Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are responsible authorities under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, and have a corresponding duty to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder. Practitioners taking part in the workshops wanted health agencies to be more involved in work to tackle violent crime (largely through greater sharing of information). Even where there was a commitment to partnership working at a strategic level, such as from the PCT, this was not replicated at lower levels in the organisation where the work in relation to violence takes place. Negotiating directly with individual accident and emergency departments or ambulance trusts, rather than with PCTs, was one way to overcome this barrier.

The workshops also found a desire among practitioners for greater input from the probation service and schools. Although these are not statutorily required to be involved in CDRPs, greater cooperation and input from these agencies was called for on the basis that they held relevant information, and because they could deliver services which might affect levels of violence.

More data sharing and collection would be beneficial – especially from hospital accident and emergency departments

Data sharing between agencies was taking place in all the areas represented at the workshops, especially through structures such as Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)[4] and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)[5]. However, work to tackle violent crime would be improved by greater sharing of both personalised and depersonalised information (the latter relating to, for example, numbers of violence related admissions to hospital or to the location of violent attacks).

---

[3] A Strategic Assessment presents and interprets the findings of analysis of local patterns and trends of crime and disorder. These assessments provide the information base for setting priorities within the partnership.

[4] MAPPA support the assessment and management of the most serious sexual and violent offenders.

[5] MARACs are commonly used in relation to Domestic Violence. Local agencies meet to discuss the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in their area, with the aim of reducing the risk of serious harm or homicide to the victim. The MARAC will help ensure that high risk victims are supported and better protected from further abuse by a coordinated effort from all agencies and organisations. The Government aims to extend their use to cover vulnerable victims of other kinds of violence.

A lack of data from accident and emergency departments, which could be useful in building a more accurate and detailed understanding about the level, nature and location of violent crime was mentioned in all workshops. The incentive for accident and emergency departments to share this information is that by doing so, harm to potential victims might be prevented and admissions to accident and emergency departments might, therefore, be reduced. For example, if departments shared information about where injuries resulting from violence were sustained, this information could be used by the police to target patrols which might reduce incidents of violence in that location and thus the number of injuries requiring hospital treatment.

Practitioners thought that the Home Office could suggest ways in which the benefits of information sharing can be 'sold' locally, for example by estimating the savings which different agencies could make through information sharing and cooperation. Practitioners also thought that the Home Office should work to achieve 'buy in' from senior officials in the health sector to share information and be involved in work to tackle violent crime.

Workshop participants, however, acknowledged that lack of data sharing did not always stem from a lack of commitment from health agencies or their unwillingness to share data. Rather, much of the information which might be useful in tackling violent crime is not routinely collected or collated by health agencies.

More and better information and analysis is needed to develop the evidence base

In line with the drive to make CDRPs and their constituent agencies 'intelligence led', practitioners wanted to develop their Partnership's analytical capacity by appointing dedicated analysts and increasing the quantity and quality of information which fed into the analysis processes. This would provide a more robust informational basis on which to make decisions about how to tackle violent crime in their respective areas.

There is a need for a more coherent, coordinated and long-term approach to funding

The amount of funding for violent crime work was considered by participants to be adequate, but the way in which this funding was allocated was said to be inefficient and uncoordinated. Multiple sources of funding and short notice of the availability of funding were considered to be barriers to partnership working.

Practitioners reported that 'funding finder'-type software could help identify available sources of funding, but called on the Home Office to allocate funding for longer periods, give advanced notice of the opportunities to bid for funding (perhaps by publishing a timetable of future funding opportunities) and to consolidate funding opportunities. Overall, a more strategic approach to funding was called for, under which partnerships identified a problem, then bid for money to solve it, rather than having to allocate available resources more arbitrarily in order to meet Government spending requirements.

CDRPs need to take a more proactive approach to communications and managing the media

Reducing the disproportionate fear of crime and improving public engagement were priorities for all the CDRPs participating in the workshops. Practitioners strongly believed that was hindered by the media's disproportionate focus on 'bad news' stories.

Practitioners discussed the need for improved media management by CDRPs, including promoting positive messages and using (and if necessary creating) a CDRP 'brand'.

Practitioners would welcome good practice guidance from the Home Office on dealing with the media.

Information about good practice

As in many other policy fields, the sharing of good practice in tackling violent crime is actively encouraged by the Home Office. One approach to learning about applicable good practice in tackling violet crime which was mentioned in the workshops was linking with a Partnership's Most Similar Areas.

However, practitioners were also concerned about the lack of clarity as to what, exactly, constitutes good practice. The Home Office should consider setting criteria or standards for what can be called 'good practice', to allow practitioners to decide whether ideas from other areas are genuinely beneficial.

Workshop outcomes and feedback

Feedback from practitioners about the workshops was positive. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to meet with colleagues from their own and other areas, to discuss specific issues and problems and hear about practice elsewhere.

Summary of barriers and action points

Table 1 sets out some of the barriers to partnership approaches to tackling violent crime, which were identified in the workshops, and summarises participants' ideas as to how these might be approached and overcome.

Table 1 Action points for overcoming barriers to tackling violent crime

Barrier	Possible responses
1. Limited involvement of health agencies and the lack of collection and sharing of health data • Executives in the health service do not see violent crime as something on which the resources of the health service should be focused. • Even if there were a commitment at a strategic level (PCT level) this was not replicated at lower levels in the organisation. • Limited time, resources and personnel might effect the health sector's involvement in partnership working.	• The Home Office could suggest ways in which the benefits of information sharing can be 'sold' locally, for example by estimating the savings which different agencies could make through information sharing and cooperation. • Nationally, the Home Office should work to achieve 'buy in' from senior officials in the health sector to share information and be involved in work to tackle violent crime. • Negotiating directly with individual accident and emergency departments (receptionists or consultants, for example) or ambulance trusts, rather than with PCTs.
2. Limited analytical capacity within CDRPs	• Employing dedicated analysts in each CDRP allows the analysis of information from a multi-agency perspective, geared towards multi-agency action, rather than from within a single agency.

3.	Multiple, uncoordinated sources of funding	•	'Funding finder'-type software can help identify available sources of funding.
4.	Short notice of availability of funding	•	The Home Office should allocate funding for longer periods, and ensure that areas have greater advanced notice of the opportunities to bid for funding.
		•	Partnerships called on the Home Office to publish a timetable of future funding opportunities a year in advance.
		•	The Home Office should consolidate funding opportunities so that Partnerships make fewer bids for larger amounts rather than many bids for smaller amounts, since the latter is an inefficient approach to accessing funding.
5.	The media is only interested in 'bad news' stories	•	Improve 'media management' and take a proactive, strategic approach towards the media: promoting positive messages; publicising good work; budgeting for publicity and communications; using or employing a communications manager.
		•	Developing and using a CDRP brand.
		•	Good practice guidance from the Home Office on dealing with the media would be useful.
6.	Finding information about good practice which is applicable to the area	•	Some areas had met with colleagues from their Most Similar Areas to share good practice, and this had been useful in some Partnerships.
		•	The Home Office should consider setting criteria or standards for what can be called 'good practice', to allow practitioners to decide whether ideas from other areas are genuinely beneficial.
7.	Need for a more coordinated, joined up approach	•	Some areas had produced a single strategic assessment for the area, rather than different documents for the CDRP and each of its constituent agencies.
		•	When all agencies work from a single document which details the nature of crime and other problems in an area, coordinated action is more likely. A unified exposition and understanding of problems means that priorities for action can be aligned between areas.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The National Audit Office (NAO) published *Reducing the Risk of Violent Crime* in February 2008. This report set out the results of an investigation into the nature, extent and effects of violent crime in the UK, and examined how the Home Office was assisting local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in their efforts to tackle violent crime. As well as identifying many examples of local good practice and innovation, the NAO's report highlighted significant barriers to partnership working, relating, for example, to poor data-sharing between agencies, too little engagement by accident and emergency departments and ambulance services, and the disorganised way in which funding was allocated to partnerships by central Government.

The NAO commissioned RAND Europe to facilitate a series of workshops for practitioners involved in tackling violent crime, and to analyse and synthesise the findings from these workshops. At the outset of the project the stated aims of the workshops were:

- To examine the barriers local practitioners face in their work to reduce violent crime, and how these might be overcome

- to promote partnership working in tackling violent crime in local communities in general; and

- to share information about violent crime between the public bodies with this responsibility.

Six workshops were held, one each in the Government Regions of the North East, North West, East, South East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands. Each workshop involved two CDRPs and between four and six practitioners from each CDRP. Agencies represented at these meetings included the police, local councils and Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs) although not all of these were present at each workshop. Night Time Economy Managers, City Centre Managers, Domestic Violence Coordinators, Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinators and members of Licensing Teams, among other practitioners, attended from CDRPs and local councils. A representative from the licensed trade attended one workshop, and health was represented at two workshops.

The RAND Europe team and the NAO agreed that participants should be engaged in violence reduction partnership activity and should be senior enough to be able to act on learning from the workshops. The NAO then liaised with regional Government Offices and decisions about who to invite to the workshops were left to Government Offices, who were thought to be best placed to identify those local practitioners working on the violent crime agenda. Attendees were people who were knowledgeable about and involved in local

work to tackle violent crime, but not all agencies were represented, and we do not assume that attendees were representative of their agencies.

1.1   Methods and approach

Commissioning workshops to examine the barriers local practitioners face in their work to reduce violent crime, and how these might be overcome was a new approach for the NAO, whose remit includes auditing the accounts of, and producing value for money reports on, central Government departments and their activities.

In consultation with the NAO project team, RAND researchers designed the workshops to address the broad aims set out above. However, we also sought to acknowledge the concerns and issues specific to each area, and to be responsive to the fact that the expertise and knowledge of the participants varied by workshop. In light of this variation, rather than imposing strict parameters around content in all workshops, the format built in a degree of flexibility to enable practitioners to identify issues which they thought were important and to give facilitators scope to focus on issues emerging from the discussions. This workshop structure allowed certain core concerns to be covered, while also ensuring that each workshop could be tailored to specific issues and concerns of local areas and participants.

The benefits and limitations of this approach

By following up their report findings in these workshops, the NAO were going beyond making recommendations and suggesting items for action, which are the usual endpoints of their involvement in an issue. Undertaking this further work allowed the NAO to gain a more nuanced understanding of how the problems and issues investigated in their *Reducing the Risk of Violent Crime* report play out in practice.

The limitations of this approach, however, are that the findings do not represent the results of a systematic survey; rather they represent the contributions of practitioners who attended the workshops, which are valuable for their insight into the challenges facing the reducing violent crime agenda, but which are not necessarily representative or typical of their agency. The health services, in particular, were under-represented in the workshops, and this means that the findings in this report do not contain much information about what health agencies are doing in relation to violent crime, or about the problems and barriers health practitioners face in their work in this area.

1.2   Participants' feedback on the workshops

It became clear in the early workshops that practitioners appreciated the opportunity to meet with colleagues and discuss specific issues and problems. In feedback, participants' reported that the workshops provided a space to engage in discussion with colleagues from their own CDRP. Having time to discuss local problems with colleagues led to the identification and clarification of issues and problems, and to the generation of ideas for addressing these. Hearing the perspectives of, and activities going on in other areas helped practitioners to reflect upon and evaluate their own performance and allowed some sharing of ideas and good practice between areas. Several practitioners took away ideas from other areas to apply in their own work.

There was little negative feedback. One practitioner reported that elements of the discussion were not relevant to her job role, and some felt that the workshops would have benefited from the participation of more representatives from health and the probation service. Some felt that wider participation from their own CDRP would have enabled a more detailed and useful discussion – since those present did not have enough knowledge about the issues under discussion.

1.3   The structure and content of this report

This report sets out the key themes and issues arising during the six workshops. It is based upon the experience and opinions of those practitioners who attended the workshops, who, as explained above, were not necessarily representative of all agencies, or of all practitioners within those agencies, but whose comments and experiences are informative about several aspects of partnership working in their CDRPs. In this report we do not attribute comments to individual practitioners or to particular agencies or stakeholder groups. This is firstly in order to protect the anonymity of the participants; only one representative from each agency attended each workshop, so if comments were attributed to an agency it would be easy to link them to an individual. Secondly, this is because representation at the workshops was not systematic; each workshop had a slightly different mix of practitioners from different agencies and of different seniorities. We did not assume, therefore, that participants represented their agencies or spoke for their agency. Rather we treated them as knowledgeable informants, and for this reason we decided not to attribute comments to stakeholder groups.

In the report we highlight local practices which were identified by workshop participants as interesting, promising or good practice. While the effectiveness of these practices has not been established, they can provide interesting lessons or ideas for others involved in tackling violent crime.

Chapter 2 sets out findings as to the state of partnership working within CDRPs in tackling violent crime. Chapter 3 discusses information sharing and Chapter 4 looks at the analysis of information by CDRPs. The allocation of funding to CDRPs to tackle violence is the subject of Chapter 5, and workshop discussions about changing public perceptions of violent crime are described in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 is about the sharing of good practice between areas and Chapter 8 looks at Partnerships' progress towards the actions in the Home Office Plan for tackling violent crime.

Each chapter follows the same structure; following a brief introduction we set out our findings as to the current situation in the participating CDRPs in relation to each of the topics (partnership working, information sharing, analysis, and so on). Secondly, we set out the issues, barriers and problems discussed by practitioners in relation to each topic, and finally, explain any actions or promising practices suggested in the workshops to address or overcome the problems and barriers.

Partnership working

Many of the issues explored in the workshops were about partnership working generally, rather than being specific to violent crime. This section highlights the key findings about partnership working arising from workshop discussions.

2.1 Description of the current landscape

2.1.1 A positive attitude towards partnership working

The generally positive attitude towards partnership working amongst those attending the workshops was striking; after 10 years of the Crime and Disorder Act, partnership was an accepted and normal way of operating for many local practitioners.

2.1.2 Strong relationships and good commitment

Practitioners spoke of strong relationships, good commitment, and joined-up responses to local issues. Practitioners were of the opinion that there were shared priorities between agencies. A comment made several times was that practitioners felt that their Partnership was 'positive', 'creative', innovative' and had a 'can do' attitude. The partnership between the police and the Local council was described as being particularly strong in several areas, and some areas said that the relationship between the police and licensed premises was good.

2.1.3 Effective structures

Practitioners from six areas commented that the structure of their CDRP facilitated strong partnership working, decision making, governance and accountability – with generally good two-way communication between strategic-level groups, sub-groups and tasking groups. Structures seemed to be complimented by good strategic plans, intelligence assessments and corporate documents, as well as by arrangements for monitoring and reporting. Filtering down from, and feeding into these structures, all areas mentioned some kind of CDRP tasking process[6], although perceptions of the effectiveness of these varied; only three areas mentioned their joint tasking process as strength of the Partnership, being a process to which many agencies contributed. Participants from three other areas thought tasking could have been stronger, with better links to the CDRP.

---

[6] Broadly, tasking is the process whereby key partners are brought together in a group, sometimes called a Tasking and Coordination group, see Home Office, 2008b. The Tasking and Coordination Group has some control over resource allocation and responsibility to ensure that delivery is always relevant to the partnership plan. The exact nature of the tasking process may vary between areas, but the Group can usually hold to account those responsible for taking action, resolve problems, and ensure progress.

2.1.4 Local variation in the strength of partnership working

Behind the overall positive attitude towards partnership working, there were, of course, differences between CDRPs with some participants reporting that cooperation between agencies was not that strong within their Partnership (although it is possible that perceptions of the strength of partnership working were dependent upon who was in attendance). Of the CDRPs represented at the workshops some were from areas which had a Unitary Authority and some from areas where there was a District Authority, and the structures of local government had an important effect upon partnership working. Generally, CDRPs in Unitary Authorities reported that they found partnership working easier. Another important factor was whether local policing areas or districts were coterminous with CDRP areas; quite expectedly, areas which shared geographical boundaries generally found it easier to coordinate partnership working.

2.1.5 The central role of the police in CDRPs

The police were well represented at each of the six workshops, reflecting the fact that tackling violence is a core element of policing to which the police are making a strong commitment. The size and influence of the police was used to benefit several Partnerships; for example, the police were said to be the only agency which had the ability to spend money at short notice (thus preventing unspent funds being returned to the centre). The provision of analysts and analysis by the police was important to many Partnerships (see Chapter 4).

2.1.6 Factors which facilitate partnership

Neighbourhood policing and Neighbourhood Management[7] were thought to have focused and facilitated partnership working. These initiatives are staffed by personnel who had a remit to work in partnership with other agencies, and the approach to problem solving under these approaches is inherently multi-agency – looking for solutions to local problems of crime and anti social behaviour which go beyond the police and criminal justice system. Co-location of staff from different agencies in the same building or office was also mentioned as an enabler of strong partnership working.

2.1.7 The impact of politics on partnership

The impact of politics and elected members was mentioned as both a facilitator and barrier to partnership. Politics had positive influence in areas where council members had lent much support to crime and disorder, raising its profile and ensuring it was well funded. It had a negative influence in areas were politics 'interfered' with local working, for instance, when elected members pursued local policies or plans which were popular but which practitioners thought were not the most effective approaches to responding to violence, or where lack of overall political control led to inertia in decision making.

---

[7] Neighbourhood Management is the name given to programmes which encourage stakeholders to work with service providers to help improve the quality of services delivered in deprived neighbourhoods. Stakeholders include residents, local authorities, the police, health services, development trusts and housing associations.

2.2   Key issues and barriers relating to partnership working

2.2.1   Limited involvement of health agencies at the correct level

There was no agency which had completely 'opted out' of local partnership working, but practitioners attending the workshops called for more involvement from some agencies.

Health agencies were most frequently mentioned by workshop participants as not being involved in partnership working generally, and in relation to violent crime specifically. This coincides with findings reported by the NAO in 2004[8] and 2008[9] that many Primary Care Trusts did not appear to view violent crime as a public health issue and were less likely to be involved in work to tackle violent crime than the police or local authorities.

Participants from eight Partnerships specifically mentioned the lack of health involvement as a weakness of their Partnership, or as a barrier to tackling violent crime, largely because this meant that health information relating to violence was not shared (see Chapter 3), as explained in the Home Office Action Plan for Tacking Violence:

'*Sharing information about violent offences can help in understanding the nature of violence in an area, as well as for the purposes of strategic planning and the deployment of resources in order to respond … Less than half of violent crimes committed are actually reported to the police, yet the majority of victims of serious violence will go to hospital to seek treatment for their injuries*'[10]

That is not to say that involvement by health representatives was completely absent from all local Partnerships; several areas mentioned links with health agencies through representatives of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), such as Public Health practitioners, and PCTs were responsible for or involved in the operation of the DAAT in more than one area. However, even when there was some involvement from health agencies, this was often not at the right level; CDRPs often had links at the strategic level, with representatives from PCTs attending Partnership meetings, but lacked the links at a more tactical or even operational level, for example, with accident and emergency departments, ambulance trusts or general practitioners.

Partnership at this more tactical level is crucial in relation to data sharing (discussed below) because, for example, even if a representative from the PCT attended meetings, it was accident and emergency departments or ambulance trusts who were the gate keepers for data relevant to violent crime. Buy-in and involvement by these agencies is important to actually implementing measures which facilitate cooperative working and information sharing.

2.2.2   Reasons behind limited involvement by heath agencies

Health agencies were not well represented at the workshops, so we did not get to hear health's point of view on their cooperation in relation to violent crime. The view of practitioners present at the workshops regarding the reasons for the limited involvement of health agencies was that:

---

[8] National Audit Office, 2004.

[9] National Audit Office, 2008.

[10] HM Government, 2008.

- strategic-level executives in the health service did not see violent crime as something on which the resources of the health service should be focused;

- even if there were commitment at a strategic level (PCT level) this was not replicated at lower levels in the organisation (see more on sharing health data in section 3.2.5);

- limited time, resources and personnel might effect health's involvement in partnership working.

2.2.3 The vital role of schools

Schools were also mentioned as having a vital role in work to reduce violent crime, even though they are not statutory partners in CDRPs. Practitioners at the workshops wanted increased involvement by schools, for example, in delivering violence prevention programmes and giving information to young people about personal safety or the dangers of alcohol. Practitioners reported that partnerships had to be negotiated with individual schools and head teachers, rather than at a county-wide level, which was time consuming. Representatives from schools were not invited to the workshops, but it would be useful to hear the viewd of head teachers and Local Education Authorities about their involvement in CDRPs generally, and specifically in work to reduce violent crime[11].

2.2.4 A need for more involvement from the probation service

The need for greater involvement by the probation service was specifically mentioned in two workshops, and only in one CDRP did practitioners say that probation was a strong partner with a prominent role. In 2004 the NAO found that probation services were identified as less active than other key statutory partner agencies, due to resource constraints and competing priorities[12]. There were no probation representatives present at the workshops to contribute to the discussion.

2.2.5 The role of fire and rescue services was seen to be more ambiguous

The role of the fire service was discussed during the workshops. Fire services were involved in many aspects of partnership working, but their role in tackling violent crime was considered to be not as clear cut or direct as that of the health service or probation services. Their input to violent crime was indirect, for example, they could gather community intelligence and were involved with licensed premises through ensuring compliance with fire regulations[13].

2.2.6 Reliance on individuals

Concern that Partnerships often rested upon the commitment and work of a few individuals, and concerns about the churn of staff, were mentioned by participants from five CDRPs, and this was perceived as a threat to partnership working

---

[11] It is perhaps relevant to note that the NAO found that The Home Office had not effectively promoted Safer Schools Partnerships, see National Audit Office 2008.

[12] National Audit Office, 2004.

[13] For an example of how far the fire service can be involved in the Crime and Disorder Agenda, see the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Fire Response Group.

2.2.7 Re-organisation: opportunity or threat?

The re-organisation[14] which PCTs and several local councils were undergoing both posed threats and created opportunities for future partnership working – having a significant potential to streamline structures and processes which made partnership working easier, but also creating uncertainty in the short term with the risk that the changes being implemented made no difference or even impeded future partnership working.

2.3 Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to partnership working

2.3.1 Need to 'sell' the benefits of partnership working

In light of the need to increase the involvement of health and other agencies in local partnership working, the idea of 'selling' the benefits of working in partnership was specifically mentioned in five of the workshops.

The premise behind 'selling' partnership is that agencies are not cooperating as much as they might because the benefit to their workload and priorities of doing so are not clear or visible to them, or because they have not recognised the extent to which an issue being dealt with by local partnerships impacts upon them. In relation to health, for example, workshop participants pointed out that accident and emergency admissions might be reduced if departments shared information about where injuries resulting from violence were sustained, since this information could be used by the police to target patrols which might reduce the incidents of violence in that location and thus the number of injuries requiring hospital treatment. This is a simplistic example, but in their report the NAO suggested that 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', indicating that the benefit of tacking violent crime could be better understood by relevant agencies.

2.3.2 Making partnership part of job descriptions and processes

There seemed to be agreement that one way to respond to concerns that partnerships rested upon the commitment of a few individuals was to have partnership working as part of job descriptions, and incorporated in official statements of each agency's processes. It might also be specified in contracts where services are commissioned.

---

[14] Ambulance trusts, strategic health authorities (SHAs) and Primary care trusts (PCTs) were reorganised as part of the Government's drive to create a patient led NHS. The number of Strategic Health Authorities in England was reduced from 28 down to 10 on 1 July 2006. The number of PCTs in England was reduced from 303 to 152 on 1 October 2006.

CHAPTER 3   **Data sharing**

Sharing information between agencies was highlighted as a problem in the NAO report *Reducing the risk of violent crime*, and information sharing between police and health was identified as a particular priority for action in the Home Office Violent Crime Action Plan[15].

The Government would like local agencies to share both personalised and depersonalised information in order to tackle violent crime[16]. Depersonalised information relates to, for example, police recorded crime, incidents of anti social behaviour recorded by local authorities, records on various categories of hospital admissions and records on ambulance call outs to crime and disorder incidents. This kind of information is used to build up a picture of the number of violent incidents, their geographical location, the time they tend to occur, and so on. The sharing of depersonalised, aggregate information is now governed by the Police and Justice Act 2006, which introduced a duty upon 'responsible authorities'[17] and probation committees to share certain categories of depersonalised information for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder[18]. However, even before the 2006 act, data sharing was authorised under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Personalised information relates to people who are at risk of being a victim of violence and to individuals who are identified as being at risk of committing serious violence. This kind of information could be used to allow accurate risk assessments to be completed, preventative measures to be put in place to manage risk and to ensure that victims have access to care and support. The Police and Justice Act 2006 specifically excludes any personal data from the *duty* to disclose, but agencies can share this information under s.

---

[15] HM Government, 2008.

[16] HM Government, 2008.

[17] Responsible authorities are specified under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Act 1998. They include police, police authority, local authority (including district, county, London borough, parish council, community council, and county borough council), registered social landlord, local probation board, local health board (in Wales), primary care trust, strategic health authority, fire and rescue authority.

[18] Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007 is the statutory instrument sets out the relevant data sets which agencies have a duty to share. It can be found as an appendix to Home Office, 2008b.

115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, if it is for the purpose of preventing crime and disorder[19].

3.1 Description of the current landscape

3.1.1 Some information is being shared

It is important to highlight that a great deal of information is being shared between agencies locally. Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)[20], Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)[21], the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Scheme (PPO)[22], and work to deal with anti-social behaviour, were all mentioned by practitioners in several areas as involving and facilitating good sharing of personalised information (although one area reported that health services were not sharing information under MARACs). Problems in relation to the sharing of depersonalised information were more commonly mentioned at the workshops.

3.1.2 There are significant gaps where information is not shared

In line with the NAO's findings there were complaints in all six workshops that not enough information was pooled or shared between agencies.

3.2 Key issues and barriers relating to data sharing

3.2.1 Clarity about what should be shared

Practitioners called for greater clarity from the Home Office about what information should be shared and it was suggested that the Home Office could publish, nationally, a list of information which should be shared by partner agencies. There is, however, already guidance as to what information should be shared in the Crime and Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007, and this is set out in an appendix to 'Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working', published by the Home Office in 2008[23], as well as in an appendix to the NAO report.

---

[19] Although disclosures of personal information must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, see Home Office 2008b.

[20] MAPPA support the assessment and management of the most serious sexual and violent offenders.

[21] MARACs are commonly used in relation to Domestic Violence. Local agencies meet to discuss the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in their area, with the aim of reducing the risk of serious harm or homicide to the victim. The MARAC will help ensure that high risk victims are supported and better protected from further abuse by a coordinated effort from all agencies and organisations. The Government aims to extend their use to cover vulnerable victims of other kinds of violence.

[22] An initiative launched by the Government to reduce reoffending by the most persistent offenders. The PPO Scheme often involves representatives from criminal justice agencies, health and other service providers taking a case management approach. The Scheme has dual aims: to catch and convict prolific offenders for all the offences the commit, but also offering offenders a route out of crime through access to drug treatment and other social welfare services.

[23] Home Office, 2008b.

3.2.2 Problems of collection

Many of the issues around data sharing related to the fact that relevant data were not collected or recorded by individual agencies in the first place. Some of the types of data which Partnerships would have liked to have received from accident and emergency departments were an example of this (see section 3.2.5). Problems of collection are often linked to problems around IT systems, which are not designed to capture the required data.

3.2.3 Problems of collation

Even where information exists within different agencies, it might be very difficult to collate this. This can stem from IT issues, if data cannot be easily extracted in a desired form, or it can be related to a lack of resources and personnel available to collate the data in a meaningful way.

3.2.4 Problems of IT

IT problems are partly linked to or cause the above issues. Existing IT systems often do not include fields which require or allow relevant information to be recorded, or do not allow information to be extracted easily or shared electronically with partner agencies.

3.2.5 Health data

Confirming findings of the NAO report[24], all CDRPs identified problems in obtaining data from health services. Under the Police and Justice Act 2007 PCTs are required to share information about admissions which are related to an assault, admissions for the effects of alcohol or in which alcohol is a factor, and admissions which are a result of domestic abuse. They are also required to share records of ambulance callouts to crime and disorder incidents. In addition to this, the Home Office would like to encourage the sharing of personal information about at-risk individuals.

3.2.6 Some ongoing data sharing and negotiations over access to data

As mentioned above, in many areas *some* data from health providers was shared, in MARACs and under the work of the DAAT, for example. Several practitioners talked about ongoing negotiations with accident and emergency departments or ambulance services over gaining access to data.

3.2.7 Reasons why health data is not shared

The problems of collation, collection and IT, mentioned above, provided some reasons why health data was not shared. Other problems related to the complexity of the health system; getting agreement at the PCT level to information sharing did not guarantee information would be shared, since this had to be negotiated with individual accident and emergency departments and ambulance trusts.

Other practitioners felt that there was a lack of commitment to partnership working in parts of the health service, and a reluctance to share information; either because they did not see violent crime as part of their work, because of concerns about patient confidentiality, or not wanting to be perceived as working with the police.

---

[24] National Audit Office, 2008.

3.2.8 Other barriers to information sharing

Also mentioned were:

- using patient confidentiality as a reason not to share information in circumstances where the law allows information to be shared in the interests of reducing crime;

- reliance on individuals rather than systems for information sharing;

- the need to improve staff training in data sharing;

- uncertainty about legality of sharing photographs of *suspected* offenders.

3.3 Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to data sharing

3.3.1 Enablers for sharing personalised information

Practitioners reported that the key to sharing personalised information in successful forums such as MAPPA and MARACs was:

- regular, face-to-face meetings between practitioners, through which relationships and trust developed;

- a clear purpose (statutory in the case of MAPPA);

- a case-management approach where the individuals being discussed were clearly defined and were identified as high 'risk';

- 'selling' the benefits of information sharing. Practitioners reported that the benefits and effects of sharing information were not always obvious or reported back; just as the benefits of partnership needed to be 'sold', so did the benefits of sharing information.

3.3.2 The Licensing Act

The Licensing Act was mentioned by representatives from four Partnerships as facilitating information sharing. This Act, introduced in 2003, enables flexible licensing hours and allows licensing authorities to place conditions on licences to reduce crime and disorder. Echoing the NAO's findings that the Act had provided a lever for CDRPs to address alcohol-related violence[25] the areas which were using the Act had developed strong links between Licensing Authorities, the police, and those from the licensed trade.

3.3.3 Examples of good practice

The Trauma and Injury intelligence group in Merseyside[26] is cited in the Home Office Tackling Violent Crime Action Plan, and the NAO makes reference to the Cardiff Model[27] as good practice for sharing all kinds of data, include health data

---

[25] National Audit Office, 2008.

[26] HM Government, 2008. For information on the TIIG see http://www.nwpho.org.uk/ait/.

[27] National Audit Office, 2008.

The analytical capacity of CDRPs

The Home Office specifies 'intelligence-led businesses processes' as a hallmark of effective partnership, and requires CDRPs to embed an intelligence-led way of doing business. As part of this, the Government encourages Partnerships to employ or use analysts and researchers who can draw together, and make sense of, a wide variety of information[28]. In their 2008 report, the NAO found that CDRPs had insufficient analytical capacity in terms of personnel and resources to analyse violent crime within their local area[29].

4.1 Description of the current landscape

4.1.1 Commitment to an intelligence-led approach and desire to improve analytical capacity

All of the Partnerships involved in the workshops claimed to be taking, or aimed to take, an intelligence-led approach, under which information is gathered, analysed and used as the basis of decision making so as to direct resources and tackle problems most effectively. These Partnerships had developed strategic intelligence assessments and problem profiles, and allocated resources on the basis of an understanding of where the problems were. This is in line with recommendations from the Government's review of the Crime and Disorder Act[30].

4.1.2 Analytical capacity varies between CDRPs

Six of the CDRPs represented at the workshops said they had access to some analyst time, or were given access to the products of police analysts, but a few Partnerships had dedicated analysts of their own. Findings from the workshops suggest that there are significant differences in analytical capacity between CDRPs.

4.2 Key issues and barriers relating to analytical capacity

4.2.1 A desire to improve the quality and quantity of analysis

Findings from the workshops affirmed the desire of local practitioners to increase the amount and quality of analysis which their Partnerships are able to carry out. In discussions about information sharing, practitioners were clear that sharing more data will

---

[28] Home Office, 2008b.

[29] National Audit Office, 2008.

[30] Home Office, 2006.

not be productive or useful without the capacity to analyse and make sense of this data. In turn, employing analysts and investing in data analysis was most effective if data from a variety of agencies could feed into the process, and if this data was of a high quality, being accurate and reliable.

4.2.2 Analysis is not a panacea

Developing an analytical capacity did not guarantee that the course of action to deal with violent crime or other problems would become clear. One Partnership's extensive analysis of local data revealed a complex picture, with no clear hot spots or trends upon which to focus enforcement or prevention efforts.

4.2.3 The content of an intelligence led approach?

Several CDRPs reported that they took an intelligence led approach. However, what 'being intelligence-led' meant in practice for each CDRP remains unclear from the workshops.

4.3 Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to analytical capacity

All CDRPs sought to increase their analytical capacity. Some were in the process of employing dedicated CDRP analysts. Practitioners from CDRPs who had dedicated analysts said that this was a strength because it allowed the analysis of information from a particularly multi-agency perspective, geared towards multi-agency action, rather than from within a single agency.

Short of employing an analyst, other CDRPs were, or had plans to, use analysts employed by the police or local authority, or to use the products of other agency's analysts.

CHAPTER 5   **Funding**

The NAO reported that the administration of funding for the reduction of violent crime was burdensome on CDRPs[31], and participants in the workshops strongly agreed with this. Findings from the workshops indicate that funding allocation remains a significant problem for CDRPs.

5.1   Description of the current landscape

5.1.1   Positive comments as to the amount of funding

Practitioners remarked that the problem with funding was not so much its quantity as the process by which it is allocated, and this very closely mirrors findings from the NAO's 2008 report. Regarding the quantity of funding, practitioners for the most part felt that, with more streamlined and strategic allocation, current amounts would be adequate for effective partnership working to reduce violent crime.

5.2   Key issues and barriers relating to allocation of funding

5.2.1   Funding is short term

Funding is often available for only a few months or a year, and findings from the workshops as to the problems caused by this short term allocation of resources are very similar to those in the NAO's report.

Short term funding makes strategic planning very difficult, and means that funds are not used strategically or tied into local priorities as effectively as they might be. It often leaves little time for careful thought about the best way to spend money. Nonetheless, practitioners remarked that occasional opportunities for short-term funding could be useful, as they allowed for a Partnership to be creative, to try new ideas without making a long-term commitment and could be used to generate further, longer-term funding for a particular piece of work.

However, overall, work or initiatives which are funded in the short term face problems of sustainability, which can lead to poor continuity in service delivery. It is also hard to attract good candidates to posts which are only guaranteed funding for a short period. One Partnership reported that short-term funding was often passed to the police, since they were the agency best able to react and spend money quickly.

---

[31] National Audit Office, 2008.

5.2.2 Funding is available at short notice

Partnerships are given short notice of the availability of funding - the timing of announcements of opportunities to bid leaves little time for bids to be prepared. It can be difficult to make a member of staff available at short notice to prepare a bid, and when they are made available they have to drop other work. As with the short term nature of funding, short notice of funding impedes forward and strategic planning.

5.2.3 Ring-fenced funding

Much funding was ring fenced, specified how much must be spent on capital investment, or came with other conditions attached. More flexibility was needed so that CDRPs could divert resources where they considered most appropriate.

5.2.4 Pressure to bid

Partnerships reported feeling a pressure from the Home Office or Regional Government Offices to bid for all available funding, even when it was for very small amounts of money or allocated for an activity or problem which was not a priority in the area. This issue is compounded by the fact that submitting a bid is time-consuming, so bidding for small amounts of funding, or for unnecessary funding, can be an inefficient use of staff time

5.2.5 Multiple sources of funding

Funding comes from many, uncoordinated sources which means that more time must be spent in bidding and accounting for different funding streams[32].

5.2.6 Mainstreaming

The issue of mainstreaming funding was discussed in the workshops. Practitioners raised questions about the capability of agencies to mainstream all the different projects and work which was set up using short term funding. There was perhaps the need to promote more widely the fact that CDRPs have little money of their own, and that mainstreaming particular activities might not necessarily demand new resources but could constitute a more efficient or coordinated use of existing resources.

5.3 Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to funding

5.3.1 Call for action by the Home Office

Participants thought that the Home Office should allocate funding for longer periods, ensure that areas have greater advanced notice of the opportunities to bid for funding, and consolidate funding opportunities so that Partnerships make fewer bids for larger amounts rather than many bids for smaller amounts. Practitioners suggested that more 'pots' of funding means that each pot contains less money, and they believed it would be more efficient to bid for and administer fewer, larger funding streams (which are not short notice or short term). Partnerships also called on the Home Office to publish a timetable of future funding opportunities a year in advance.

---

[32] Funding streams from the Home Office to CDRPs are set out in the NAO's report (National Audit Office, 2008).

5.3.2 **Funding finder software**

Due to the fact that there are so many funding sources, two Partnerships had invested, or were considering investing in 'funding finder'-type software, which could help them identify available sources of funding.

CHAPTER 6 **Perceptions, managing the media and branding**

An issue which emerged as a key preoccupation of CDRP practitioners during the workshops, but which had not featured in the NAO's 2008 report, relates to public perceptions of violent crime. The gap between perceptions of crime actual levels of crime, evidenced in findings from the British Crime Survey (BCS)[33], is behind current government policy seeking to address fear of crime and fear and violence as problems in their own right. The fear of crime can decrease quality of life and increase anxiety and feelings of vulnerability, causing people to restrict their activities to an extent which is not warranted by their actual risk of victimisation.

6.1 Description of the current landscape

Practitioners were concerned about the gap between perceptions of violent crime and actual levels of crime. The mismatch between fear of crime and actual risk of crime or victimisation is well reported and is a priority for Government policy. Practitioners in all areas were concerned that fear of crime was too high among some sections of the public, and said that work to address this was an important local priority.

6.2 Key issues and barriers relating to improving public perceptions

6.2.1 Making an issue a priority draws public attention

A second concern which practitioners' expressed was that by making an issue a local priority, that issue was disproportionately brought to people's attention. Undertaking actions to target or reduce violent crime could have the unwanted effect of increasing public perceptions that violence was a problem. This effect on perceptions was specifically mentioned in discussions about gangs; admitting that there was a gang problem in an area could generate disproportionate fear of crime

6.2.2 PR and managing the media

The media was seen as a very significant barrier to improving perceptions and community engagement. The media was universally seen as being interested in 'bad news' stories, being unwilling to cover successes, and being indifferent as to its effect on fear of crime. National

---

[33] Kershaw et al, 2008.

newspapers were perceived to be especially 'dangerous' since they had no motivation to build an on-going relationship with local agencies (whereas local papers did, to some extent).

6.3 Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to public perceptions

6.3.1 A need to publicise positive messages

Practitioners spoke about how CDRPs needed to get better at public relations and managing the media in order to reduce fear of crime and improve public understanding about risks of victimisation. This could be achieved by promoting positive messages, publicising good work, and so on. Some practitioners thought that this was an area where good practice guidance from the Home Office would be useful.

6.3.2 A proactive, strategic approach

Some practitioners described how the communications team or press office function of their CDRPs was growing and improving. One CDRP had their own communications manager, and another wanted to hire one (other CDRPs might have had access to press office resources, although this was not mentioned in the workshops). Whilst most dealings with the media were still reactive, there was the recognition, at least, that partnerships had to be more proactive and strategic in their approach. Participants thought that media management should be included in strategic plans, and there were calls for more joint approaches to the media – rather than through individual agencies. There was a discussion about whether partnerships should invest more in communication, for example, by assigning a small amount of the budget for every programme or initiative to publicity.

6.3.3 Examples of local practice

Some examples of practice to address 'the problems with the media' were discussed.

- One area had arranged to have a page in a weekly local newspaper, for them to populate as they wished (see box 1).

- Some areas had been able to publicise positive messages by putting stories out through voluntary organisations, of whom the media were more supportive.

- Other areas talked of introducing weekly briefings for the media.

- As part of broader work on community engagement, some Partnerships were attempting to use new formats, other than meetings, to communicate with local people, such as holding street meetings and tapping into specialist newsletters or publications, thus communicating directly with people and bypassing the media.

6.3.4 Branding

The idea of a CDRP developing a 'brand', a recognisable identity, logo and 'name', arose in several of the workshops. An example is discussed in box 2. A CDRP brand could be used in dealings with the media to help focus on shared priorities and achievements. A brand indicates the unified action of local agencies, and goes to the heart of 'marketing' a partnership and its work.

We were not able to explore whether strong branding was a symptom or a cause of strong partnership working, but those areas which were deploying their brand said that it had

benefits within agencies – promoting to staff that partnership is part of each agency's remit – and benefits externally – communicating the partnership approach to the public.

Box 1: Bolton's plans for engaging with the media

The Bolton Division of Greater Manchester Police has built a strong relationship with the daily local paper the Bolton Evening News. Journalists have shadowed officers and partners during Operation SIREN - the division's response to the town centre night time economy - attending the partner briefings and speaking to members of the public who have come into contact with the police and partners.

The most recent development in Bolton Division's relationship with the Bolton Evening News is an agreement for a page of the paper to be made available one day a week, for which the police can suggest content and stories. The intention is to populate this page with crime prevention messages, latest reports and good news stories. Although the negotiations with the paper have been led by the police, the use of the page will very much be a partnership activity – including stories from and emphasising the work of the Bolton Be Safe Partnership. The Bolton Division have recently employed a dedicated PR and press officer for the Division, who will be coordinating the Partnership's submissions for the page.

Box 2: Branding of the Southend CDRP

Southend CDRP have developed a logo which appears on a wide range of documents and promotional materials produced by the Partnership and the agencies involved, including the CDRP's newsletter and website. Importantly, and symbolising the Partnership, *only* this logo, not that of individual agencies, is used on most publications and communications. The logo was developed and decided upon by a small focus group of local practitioners, and the Southend Partnership manager advises other CDRPs who want to develop a logo to make it simple, and if possible, to use imagery relevant to the area – the Southend logo shows a Thames Barge.

Learning about good practice

As in many other policy fields, the sharing of good practice in tackling violent crime is actively encouraged by the Home Office, and this was discussed during the workshops. The NAO report[34] sets out mixed findings as to the effectiveness of the Home Office and Government Regions in spreading good practice, with quite different views coming from different areas as to whether the efforts of the Home Office in this respect had been effective or nor.

7.1 Description of the current landscape

7.1.1 Finding out about good practice

Findings from the workshops were mixed. Some practitioners thought that good practice guidance was easy to locate and access (especially about domestic violence and work around the night-time economy); representatives from five Partnerships said that they felt they knew how to find information about good practice, although several of these felt that there was room for further improvement in their sourcing and use of good practice. One area cited problems with learning about good practice[35].

7.2 Key issues and barriers relating to learning about good practice

7.2.1 What is 'good practice'?

In many of the workshops there was discussion about how practice came to be identified or labelled as 'good'.

Practitioners agreed that there was little independent evaluation of local initiatives, and that good practice was commonly that which local practitioners thought was good, or which appealed to common sense. This was referred to in the NAO's report: '*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*[36].

---

[34] National Audit Office, 2008.

[35] For the NAO's findings on this see National Audit Office, 2008. In a recent report, HMIC recommended the development of a problem-solving database for sharing of best practice and learning opportunities in relation to joint problem solving (HMIC, 2008).

[36] National Audit Office, 2008.

7.2.2   Effectiveness and transferability

There was also discussion about the fact that best practice might not be easily transferred from one area to another. When considering whether good practice from one area could be usefully implemented in another it is important to consider context and transferability. The relevant questions are not only whether something 'worked' or not (in the sense that it seemed to improve the problem or issue it was put in place to resolve or improve), but to consider where it worked, for whom, and why.

Implementing best practice also takes time – programmes need time to 'bed-in'. Often the time scales allowed for effects of good practice to show were too short, with results too quickly.

7.3   Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to good practice

The following were discussed in the workshops as sources of information about good practice which the practitioners had drawn upon:

- learning from a CDRP's Most Similar Areas;

- the Tackling Violent Crime Programme[37];

- attending conferences;

- holding regular meetings with neighbouring areas.

---

[37] A targeted programme, launched in 2004, focussed on Partnerships in England and Wales with the highest rates of violence.

Progress against the Home Office Action Plan for Tackling Violence

During the workshops we asked about CDRPs' progress against the actions assigned to them in the Home Office Action Plan for Tackling Violence[38]. In their 2008 report the NAO found violence was a priority for about 20% of the Partnerships they surveyed, but that for many CDRPs tacking anti-social behaviour was as important a priority as tacking violence (although specific work to tackle domestic violence and alcohol was more common).

8.1 Description of the current landscape

8.1.1 The Tackling Violent Crime Programme

During the workshops those CDRPs which had been part of the Tackling Violent Crime Programme (TVCP)[39] seemed to be at a more advanced stage of development in relation to these actions, and there was a difference between CDRPs covering big cities or urban areas, which had extensive activities, and those which covered smaller conurbations or rural areas

8.1.2 Work to reduce and respond to violent crime

It is clear from the workshops that a vast amount of work is going on locally to tackle violent crime. Box 3 gives just one example of the many different activities discussed in the workshops. Four Partnerships, in which there were substantial night-time economies, mentioned that they were using powers under the Licensing Act to address violence (and it is possible that other CDRPs were making use of these powers, but did not raise it during workshops). Practitioners felt, however, that current efforts focused on tackling the effects and 'down stream' consequences of violence, rather than addressing the causes and drivers of violence.

8.1.3 Documentation of work to tackle violent crime

Three types of document were mentioned during the workshops.

- **Strategic assessments:** CDRPs are required by statute to produce a Strategic Assessment, which presents and interprets the findings of analysis of local patterns and

---

[38] HM Government, 2008.

[39] This programme aims to work intensively with practitioners in a small number of local areas with high volumes of more serious violent crime. For more information see http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/tvcp/tvcp01.htm and (National Audit Office, 2008).

trends of crime and disorder. These assessments provide the information base for setting priorities within the partnership[40].

- **Violence problem profiles**: The Home Office Action Plan for Tackling Violence recommends that all CDRPs develop a problem profile for violence, which provides a clear picture of the levels of violence within the area

- **Local violence action plan**: The Home Office also requires CDRPs to draw up a local action plan which should build on the problem profile, indentify the priorities for action and the activities to address these.

The CDRPs participating in the workshops all had strategic assessments. Additionally, indications were that all but one of the CDRPs participating in the workshops had a violent crime action plan. We did not collect information on the number of participating CDRPs which had a problem profile. Time constraints within the workshops meant that we were not able to explore the relationship between these documents or the quality of the assessments, profiles or plans. Creation of violent crime action plans and problem profiles was a multi-agency process, to some extent, in all the areas, in that many agencies were involved in drafting these documents.

8.2   Key issues and barriers relating to the Home Office Action Plan

8.2.1   What is a gang?
None of the CDRPs involved in the workshops reported that they had a gang problem. Discussion about gangs focused largely on the definition of a gang and the link with public perceptions (see section 0). There was no clear definition of a gang which Partnerships could apply. All areas reported some problems with groups of youths 'hanging about', but did not feel that that there was more organised pattern of activities which could be called a 'gang'. However, practitioners reported that the emergence of gang problems in their areas would be detected by the police and through existing partnership and data sharing arrangements.

8.2.2   Local vs. national
As might be expected, there were some tensions between national and local control of targets, priorities and agendas. Some practitioners felt that the Home Office 'moved the goal posts' too much, a comment prompted by the recent decision to revise the rules relating to which offences should be recorded as violent crime[41]. In another area practitioners mentioned that planning could be difficult when they did not know what was coming from the Home Office – in terms of new funding or priorities. The idea of too many initiatives – referred to by one practitioner as 'initiative-itus' - was mentioned several times.

---

[40] For information on CDRP Strategic Assessments, see Home Office, 2007.

[41] Clarification in crime counting rules was issued in April 2008 stating that where there is *clear* evidence of intent to commit GBH (Grievous Bodily Harm) then a GBH with intent offence should be recorded irrespective of the degree of injury sustained. This had the effect of some offences now being classified as GBH with intent which would, in some forces, have been previously classified in the much larger groupings of other violence against the person with and without injury (Home Office, 2008a).

8.3 **Suggested actions to respond to barriers relating to the Home Office Action Plan**

8.3.1   A vast amount of work is ongoing

Box 3 gives just one example of the many different activities discussed in the workshops.

Box 3: Southend's Night Time Economy group

Southend's Night Time Economy Group consists of representatives from the licensing trade, the Borough Council, Police, Taxi Associations and local voluntary groups. The group has been responsible for the introduction of several initiatives in the area to reduce violent crime and the harm it causes.

Help Points have been set up in pubs and clubs in the town centre and on the sea front, identified by a 'Help Point' sign. People can seek assistance from staff at these points and can express any concerns they have about their safety. Also in cooperation with the licensed trade, Southend has introduced a 'Behave or Be Banned' Scheme, under which licensed premises will ban individuals who cause trouble or violence.   Cooperation with Southend Council's CCTV control room supports this work, promptly identifying problems where the police may be needed.

On the High Street, the Group have overseen the introduction of mobile public toilets and an 'SOS bus', where people can receive minor medical attention or drop in if they are feeling vulnerable.

To publicise this work and boost perceptions that Southend is a safe place, the CDRP hosted a 'Night Time Extravaganza' in December, encouraging people to come into the city centre.

8.3.2   Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment

Some areas taking part in the workshops had produced a *single* problem profile for the area, rather than separate profiles for the police and the CDRP. One CDRP involved in the workshops had developed a Joint Strategic Assessment (see box 4) for the police and the Partnership. This was considered by practitioners to represent a significant achievement for partnership working. When all agencies work from a single document which details the nature of crime and other problems in an area, coordinated action is more likely. A unified exposition and understanding of problems means that priorities for action can be aligned between areas.

Box 4: Safer Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment

A Joint Strategic Assessment was commissioned by Safer Leeds following the 2006 review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002. The Joint Strategic Assessment is the basis upon which all partner agencies can consider their contribution to reducing crime, disorder and the fear crime, and to addressing the harms caused by drugs and alcohol. The assessment draws data from a number of local agencies:

- Education Leeds
- Leeds City Council
- Leeds Hospital Trusts – accident and emergency
- Leeds Primary Care Trust
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- West Yorkshire Police
- West Yorkshire Policing Authority
- West Yorkshire Probation Service
- Youth Offending Service

The Partnership has now drawn up its second Joint Strategic Assessment to inform priorities for 2009-10. A project review was set up to look at the gaps in intelligence and analytical capacity which were revealed by the first Joint Strategic Assessment, produced in 2007. The second Assessment incorporates the lessons learned from this review.

Building on the multi-agency approach in the Joint Strategic Assessment the Partnership has produced a Leeds Strategic Plan for 2008-11. This is an integrated single plan for the city, incorporating the Council's Corporate Plan, the Local Area Agreement and Regeneration Plan.

Conclusions

Many of the findings from the 12 regional workshops on which this report is based mirror those of the NAO's 2008 report into tackling violent crime. Practitioners in some areas continue to face problems in engaging health agencies in this area of work and reported a lack of data sharing by health agencies (although many acknowledge that the lack of sharing is often due to problems of the collation and collection of data). Current arrangements for the allocation of resources to CDRPs by the Home Office were also seen as unsatisfactory by those working in CDRPs. Our findings replicate and thus reinforce the NAO's recommendations that resolving these barriers to local multi-agency working is an important priority for the Home Office, and where appropriate, regional government offices.

However, despite these problems we heard about many examples of local work through which those CDRPs involved in the workshops were seeking to respond to and prevent violence. We have detailed some examples in this report. The sense was that addressing violent crime was a priority for all the CDRPs who attended the workshops, which is slightly different to the NAO's finding that violence crime was a priority for a minority of CDRPs. Findings from the workshops, perhaps, indicate that the impetus from central Government to tackle violent crime has fed down to, and is being acted on at, the local level.

One theme which featured heavily in the workshops but which is not mentioned in the NAO's work is that of managing the media and addressing public perceptions. Practitioners in all areas were concerned about the gap between the actual levels of crime and violence and the disproportionate perceptions of those problems amongst some sections of the community. Practitioners thought that the media exerted considerable influence on perceptions by preferring bad new stories to those which showed reductions in crime or successful initiatives. Workshop attendees were of the opinion that CDRPs needed to become more strategic and proactive in their dealings with the media: actively promoting positive stories, countering bad ones, and including a plan for publicity and media coverage in all initiatives and local projects. The desire to create Partnerships press offices and hire public relations staff is perhaps an indicator of the ongoing development and maturity of CDRPs 10 years after their inception, which is reflected in the fact that CDRPs are taking on a vital role in the delivery of central Government's agenda for addressing violent crime.

Reference List

HM Government (2008). *Saving Lives Reducing Harm Protecting the Public An Action Plan for Tackling Violence 2008-11* London: Home Office.

HMIC (2008). *A thematic report on Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing.* London: HMIC (Available at http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/Inspections/neigh_police_dep/prog-inspec-phase2?view=Binary).

Home Office (2006). *Review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.* London: Home Office (Available at http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships60.doc). .

Home Office (2007). *Developing a Strategic Assessment* Available at http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/Developing%20a%20Strategic%20Assessment.pdf.

Home Office (2008a). *Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to June 2008* (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 14/08): Available at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb1408.pdf.

Home Office (2008b). *Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working*: Available at http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/guidance_for_effective_partnerships.pdf.

Kershaw, C., Nicholas, S., & Walker, A. (2008). Crime in England and Wales 2007/08 Findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime: Available at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0708.pdf.

National Audit Office (2004). *Reducing Crime: the Home Office working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.* London: National Audit Office.

National Audit Office (2008). *The Home Office Reducing the risk of violent crime*. London: National Audit Office.