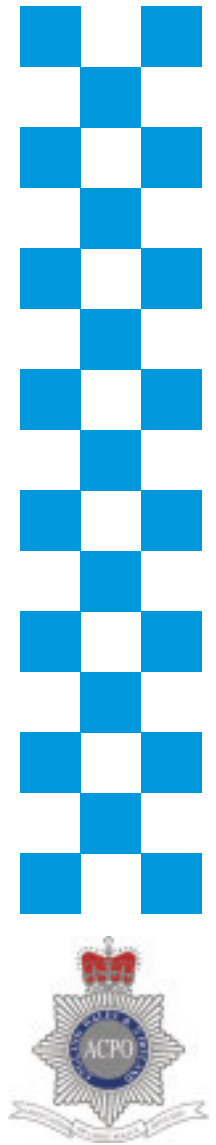


ASSOCIATION OF  
CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS

**Excellence  
in Policing  
AWARDS  
2010**



**Winning and Commended  
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Presented to the 9th ACPO Excellence in Policing Conference  
September 2010



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## THE EXCELLENCE IN POLICING AWARDS, 2010

This year's award winners again represent excellent examples of innovation and improvement in aspects of policing.

For us at Alexander, our work is driven by a strong wish to help change policing and other public services for the better, so we're delighted again to support the Awards.

Today's improvement challenge is considerable. It will require exactly the sort of examples of innovation and improvement that the award winners demonstrate, but it will require much more too. Police forces have been set the seemingly impossible task of improving performance, reducing costs and ensuring that citizens are at the heart of everything we do, shaping the decisions we take. To do this we will need to be courageous enough to test our own sense of what is possible and think beyond efficiency to real transformation.



**Mike Astbury,**  
Operations Director,  
Alexander – EIP Awards Sponsors

## FOREWORD

This has been an eventful year in policing terms, with a new government seeking to refocus public services on local communities and local people, and the removal of central targets on confidence and the policing pledge. In times of change, events such as the ACPO Excellence in Policing Conference, which for the third time includes the EIP Awards, become even more important. They encourage forces and partners across the country to consider how we undertake policing, how we could improve services to make them more effective, more efficient and most of all more responsive to the needs of the public. The Awards provide the opportunity to share and recognise innovative and effective practice.

Whilst there have been significant changes, some things remain the same - the dedication of individuals and teams, the desire to improve the society we are all part of, and the quest for excellence in policing. I am delighted to be involved with the EIP awards and conference, and I look forward to even more entries next year demonstrating how innovative and exceptional UK policing is.



**Richard Crompton,**  
Chief Constable,  
Head of ACPO,  
Citizen Focus Business Area



**Steve Finnigan, CBE, QPM**  
Chief Constable,  
Head of ACPO,  
Performance Management Business Area

# Operation Constellation

## Durham Constabulary and Partners

### INTRODUCTION:

Operation Constellation was undertaken to reduce the national threat and risk posed by violent extreme right wing organisations. Under this operation Durham Constabulary aimed to dismantle a white supremacist organisation known as the Aryan Strike Force and thereby reduce the national threat and support local communities.

This organisation had a known worldwide membership of 300 who espoused hatred for black ethnic minority (BEM) groups and Jewish people. The organisation communicated their intentions via the internet and possessed material in the form of manuals, which could be of use to terrorists.

They were prepared to use violence as a means of reinforcing their extremist ideology and to that end manufactured pipe bombs and the deadly poison Ricin. The management of this investigation involved innovative methods and working practices to secure evidence as Ricin had never previously been recovered on the UK mainland. The methodology is now nationally recognised as good practice.

### WHAT WE DID:

Durham Constabulary undertook a programme of training and awareness for its key staff supported by the North East Counter Terrorist Unit (NECTU). This training ensured the Force had the expertise to provide an enhanced service delivery to the communities of County Durham.

Special Branch assets provided a trained covert internet intelligence development capability to collate accurate intelligence. The information proved to be vital in the decision to initiate arrests and maintain public safety.

Acclaimed as national good practice, a robust forensic strategy was developed to tackle a crime scene that had never been witnessed before in the UK. The strategy effectively mitigated the threat and risk, from explosive devices and poisons ensuring the safety of all those involved in the operation.

The development of an effective 'consequence management and intervention methodology' ensured communities within County Durham, specifically Burnhopefield, were able to go about their daily lives with the confidence that they would be safe from acts of terrorism.

The closure of the website and arrest of the principle organisers, one of whom was charged and convicted of a Chemical Weapons Act offence for the first time in this Country, led directly to this organisation being dismantled preventing further episodes of violent extremism.

### WHAT IT INVOLVED:

Durham Constabulary led this investigation and took responsibility for the planning and preparation, which involved a range of partner organisations. From an early stage the Force developed intelligence which informed subsequent action. NECTU provided Durham with £15,000 of new investment to develop this intelligence.

A critical incident command structure oversaw all of the investigative elements. An efficient inter-operability process across a range of different specialist disciplines was developed in relation to the forensic search strategy to safely secure evidence. Partners included NECTU, government scientific research establishments, the military, the CBRN centre at Ryton and the bomb data centre. Each agency underwrote its own contribution; NECTU for example invested £37,000.

Further investment in terms of a strategic co-ordinating group consisting of partner organisations, together with the neighbourhood policing team enabled their collective skills to be used to return the scene at Burnhopefield to a state of normality at the earliest opportunity.

Had this extreme right wing group been allowed to carry out their intentions the cost to the UK in dealing with the aftermath would have been significant.

### WHAT IMPACT IT HAD:

A comprehensive community impact assessment was continually refreshed throughout the police activity to address any community tensions. An effective communications strategy enabled the impact on the community to be kept to a minimum.

The investigation proved to be a catalyst for partner organisations driving positive action to reduce any public health concerns and subsequently initiating offender management processes to reduce any future threat from violent extremism.

Recognised as good practice, the learning from the investigation has been presented to the first National ACPO Counter Terrorist Forensic Conference and National Counter Terrorist Senior Investigators Conference to develop an understanding of how to manage chemical weapons issues. This learning has also been delivered regionally to police forces, partner agencies within Government Office and the national offender management programme.

As a result of the investigation two people were successfully convicted of terrorist-related offences. Each received a substantial custodial sentence.

The key benefit is the dismantling of an internationally recognised terrorist organisation and a positive move by the police to challenge the ideology of an extreme right wing organisation. It has also prompted further arrests across the country, thereby reducing the national threat from violent extremism.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

This operation has provided some extremely valuable learning for UK policing, including:

- the ability to readily access an effective covert internet investigator capability,
- highlighting the importance of the assessment of risk, based on sound judgement, and
- providing a body of knowledge nationally for other investigators.

A great deal of the learning is being shared by a variety of means including:

- modular training for staff within the organisation
- national prevent training (WRAP) planning to use the operation as a case study
- bespoke presentations to partner agencies, including government departments, at national, regional and local level.

The operation has provided a practical example of how to manage the threat from a chemical weapons incident.

The following factors were critical to the success of this operation:

- effective command structures, which were able to provide the leadership and direction required in challenging circumstances
- partnership problem-solving at all levels capable of providing effective solutions
- placing the community at the heart of the strategy for dealing with this issue, which enabled community confidence in the police investigation to be maintained.

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Altogether Better Policing



# Cash in Transit Robberies

## Lancashire Constabulary in association with Applied DNA Sciences

### INTRODUCTION:

In 2008 £19.4m was stolen from one thousand Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) robberies in the UK. In December of that year a Loomis security van was attacked in Lancashire and a security guard was shot.

Applied DNA Science (ADNAS) provide the Cash in Transit industry with a box-specific unique patented DNA code, which places cash staining dye into each CVIT box at the time of commissioning.

It transpired that examinations of recovered, dye stained, stolen notes, were not being undertaken in the UK and no process existed for forensically identifying stolen notes. This was due to cost (£3,000 per item), the location of the laboratory (New York, USA) and an examination process that was incompatible with UK criminal justice system.

This problem has been overcome by developing a cost effective and efficient inter-operable process, in association with ADNAS, to make independent forensic examinations available for police forces throughout the UK.

### WHAT WE DID:

A strategic steering group and working party was formed between Lancashire police and ADNAS to conduct a root and branch review of the problem.

The review delivered a standard operating procedure, developed between the security companies, police and ADNAS, to introduce new processes to overcome the issues of cost, integrity and compatibility of forensic examinations. The new arrangements specifically addressed the location of the laboratory, submission methods, examination processes and compatibility with the UK Criminal Justice system.

Analysis revealed that ADNAS had never carried out an examination for a UK police force and consequently had never provided a report/statement or given evidence in a UK Court. As part of a partnership agreement with the security companies they agreed to fund initial forensic examinations. ADNAS agreed to set up a satellite laboratory within the UK to receive forensic submissions. This allowed exhibits to be submitted to the laboratory in New York by a quicker and more secure method and ensured a seamless transition between the police and ADNAS. Scientists and technicians from ADNAS were provided with training and instructions taken from the ACPO guidance to expert witnesses on what should be included in examination reports, disclosure reports and evidential statements.

### WHAT IT INVOLVED:

Scanning revealed that the funding for examinations was a key issue and a major contributory factor as to why no forensic submissions had been undertaken. This meant that vital independent forensic evidence was not being followed up.

The integrity of the process and the initial cost of £3,000 per submission were clearly preventing examinations from taking place. A review of the costings and an agreement with the security companies to fund the first 10 items submitted by UK police forces achieved a cost saving of £30,000. The establishment of a UK laboratory ensured that exhibits were screened by ADNAS technicians before being couriered to New York, which ensured the integrity and security of exhibits until they reached the laboratory in the USA. All costs in respect of setting up this satellite office and running costs were met by ADNAS.

Successful delivery of evidence was achieved by ensuring that ADNAS processes, disclosure and evidence complied with the ACPO guidance to expert witnesses. Failure to comply could lead to cracked prosecutions, unsafe convictions, professional embarrassment, a threat to public confidence and the person responsible escaping conviction.

### WHAT IMPACT IT HAD:

The primary objective and success of this partnership was always going to be measured by a reduction in the number of CVIT offences and the successful identification of ADNAS DNA on submitted items, linking them to reported CVIT crimes. A secondary objective was the successful presentation of that evidence at court leading to convictions. After marketing the new protocol within the CVIT industry, ADNAS began to receive cases at the UK laboratory from UK police forces. The Lancashire case was the first submission.

In total the laboratory has now dealt with thirty three different cases from five different police forces and has achieved a 100% success rate in linking submissions to dye stained stolen cash. This has resulted in fifteen individuals being convicted of offences and two more cases still awaiting trial. Notably, the Lancashire investigation into the case where the security guard was shot, resulted in five defendants being convicted and jailed for over 60 years. Another case from London linked a series of 23 robberies, during which £300,000 was stolen. As a direct result of these authentications, the offenders have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from between 18 months to life. The total exceeds 100 years. There has been a 50% reduction in the number of CVIT offences from last year.

The opportunity to aggressively market this success will act as a significant deterrent to others considering such offences. All the agencies concerned in this partnership are committed in continuing this collaboration.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

This partnership and initiative has challenged the traditional way the police do their business and introduced an imaginative way of forensically submitting dye stained notes stolen during the course of a CVIT robbery.

The sequence of examination of dye stained notes is critical. Early in the partnership it was discovered that the traditional response of submitting notes for fingerprint and traditional DNA examinations was rendering the ADNAS DNA tag undetectable. The order of priority was changed and as a result the new procedures are now available to all police forces throughout the UK. This critical learning has been shared with the CVIT industry and Police through CVIT leads, presentations at national conferences and through bulletins issued to regional representatives for onward wider circulation.

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# Operation Northdale

## West Yorkshire Police and Partners

### INTRODUCTION:

A key strategic priority for West Yorkshire Police is to 'Reduce Risk to the Public and Vulnerable Groups', including reducing serious sexual assaults.

Findings from the Police Strategic Intelligence Assessment identified a close relationship between sexual offences and the night time economy and that alcohol is a contributory factor in over half of the recorded offences. Intelligence showed that there has been a historic rise in sexual assaults over the festive period including a number of offences involving vehicles purporting to be private hires.

Operation Northdale was designed to run for two weeks over the festive period in key areas across West Yorkshire to combat this problem.

The aims of Operation Northdale were:

- to reduce sexual offences in town and city centres.
- to deliver a communication strategy and engagement plan aimed at reducing the risk of women becoming victims of sexual assault.
- to strengthen the local partnership response to protecting vulnerable people.

### WHAT WE DID:

Consultation took place with an external marketing company and the Government Marketing Office to create innovative communication and social marketing methods. Social marketing was seen as having the potential to affect behavioural change and, with its roots in public health, it was envisaged that the methodology could attract support from the health sector. Feedback from focus groups held at local Universities informed the design of an initiative that met the needs of young people.

The engagement plan took advantage of the West Yorkshire Police Support Volunteer Programme to engage with people 'on the ground.' This required careful planning and risk management and resulted in the Force redesigning protocols in conjunction with Legal Services. A training package was developed and delivered to enhance volunteers' communication and conflict management skills. Investment in this area resulted in unanimous support from all the volunteers for working with the police on future initiatives.

A different approach was taken to bidding for financial and partnership support. The project team organised a launch event and invited representatives from the Regional Government Office, strategic stakeholders, members of the business community and representatives from the third sector. This enabled joint planning for a regional response and a better understanding of partner organisations' capacity and capability.

### WHAT IT INVOLVED:

The project team developed a large scale engagement plan in five main towns and cities over the Christmas period in 2008 and 2009 using 140 volunteers to meet and greet revellers at key interface points. Social marketing techniques were employed and safety advice dispensed with a view to changing behaviour and attitudes. Anti drink spiking devices and other items branded with a safety message were handed out. One hundred volunteers from the Bradford and Halifax Street Angels (a voluntary faith group) worked closely with the police to deliver the operation. Improved engagement with private hire companies empowered drivers to promote safety and report unofficial vehicles to the licensing authority.

A communication plan was designed to reach the relevant age group and people most at risk. Technology was utilised to reach an audience much larger than would be possible by traditional marketing methods. The use of Bluetooth messaging meant that approximately 2,500 people received a safety message on their mobile phones as they entered West Yorkshire's towns and cities. Universities and colleges were identified as key areas and a hard hitting DVD was played in student union bars and, with the support of the health service, in local health centres.

### WHAT IMPACT IT HAD:

Comparisons of the pilot project in 2008, the 2009 initiative and the previous partnership activity over the two week Christmas period provided the measure for success. Over two years, the force recorded a 71% reduction in serious sexual offences in the target areas. This equates to 27 fewer offences of rape, attempted rape and sexual assault.

Significant efficiency savings have been made. The cost of public order police resourcing has been reduced by £20,000. Reduced investigation costs amount to a time saving of 4,833 police hours (£140,000) and total savings to the Criminal Justice System, statutory and wider support services equates to £513,000.

Feedback from the volunteer agencies played an important part in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the project, which has now become a blueprint for future volunteer initiatives. A marked and measurable improvement in partnership collaboration has helped to establish an effective governance model, where strategic stakeholders have taken shared ownership of future delivery. Rather than being purely police driven, the initiative will be delivered in future through a partnership steering group via the Local Government Office. The initiative is now included in the Regional Alcohol Strategy and the West Yorkshire Policing Plan. The Department of Health has recognised this initiative as a blueprint to integrate social marketing and health promotion. As a result the National Social Marketing Centre has applied for further funding to support a Yorkshire and Humber initiative.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

A substantial amount of organisational learning was gained from the large scale of the engagement activity and the mobilisation of volunteers. This has included a change in approach to the way the Force manages risk, and adapting methods to incorporate social marketing in engagement plans.

A valuable evaluation process took place with the volunteers. Feedback highlighted areas that would positively impact on future costs and ensure deployment of resources during the most productive periods of engagement.

Some chosen channels of communication were more successful than others. Bluetooth messaging was considered a cost effective and auditable channel that reached a large scale audience.

Community information was collated by volunteers and unanticipated intelligence, including the prevalence of drink spiking in some areas, was used to inform local control strategies.

The identification of points of contact in each of the five districts has been recognised as a key factor in successful local service delivery and the mobilisation of volunteers.

Operation Northdale has paved the way to designing improved services between statutory agencies and the third sector to meet the needs of customers and protect and reassure night time economy communities.

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# Citizen Focus Cultural Self-Assessment

## Gloucestershire Constabulary

### INTRODUCTION:

Following the publication of the Citizen Focus hallmarks, the National Policing Improvement Agency developed a self-assessment tool for police forces. This involved an assessment (usually at force level) against the four hallmarks. However, the 'enablers' associated with these hallmarks (people, process, partnership, leadership and communication) were not included. Having recently been awarded Investors in Excellence status, Gloucestershire Constabulary identified that the national assessment model did not meet their needs, and developed a tool that blended the citizen focus hallmarks (and the performance management hallmarks) with the enablers. The purpose was to get 'under the skin' of the issues at a more local level, thus enabling a better understanding of what needed to be done to improve quality of service.

### WHAT WE DID:

The process of internal consultation and engagement has become much more widespread than it had been previously as a consequence of staff seeing the benefit of sharing their views. Through several comprehensive discussions in each division or department a series of actions were identified. These were largely focused on internal relationships (within and across teams and departments) and self-perceptions of service delivery. These actions have been included in the plans for each division and department, and the overarching issues have formed the basis of a cultural baseline document, which in turn is informing activity to achieve transformational change.

This means that there is a much greater emphasis on organisational values. In fact, the issues that have emerged have been mapped against the constabulary's stated organisational values to give a sense of the extent to which employees are 'living and breathing them'. This in turn is helping the organisation to have a conversation with its staff about the behavioural attributes they associate with each organisational value.

### WHAT IT INVOLVED:

The development of the tool involved finding a way to bring together the citizen focus hallmarks and enablers in such a way that it provides a structure for a discussion and identification of improvement activity. In the end, the format explores the relationship between the hallmarks and enablers. For example, consider what 'leadership' looks like in terms of understanding people, understanding services and service design and delivery, what does 'communication' look like... Those within the discussion are asked to rate where they believe they are at on a scale of 1-10. The outputs are then recorded on a matrix which is then used as the starting point for the discussion.

Performance management was also deemed to be crucial, so the performance management hallmarks were also included, e.g. 'consider leadership etc. in the context of people and relationships, structures and processes, and data and analysis.'

The process was refined in conjunction with the facilitators who were nominated to carry it out. This was achieved by involving them in a discussion group and debriefing both the process and their experience of the facilitation. A guidance document for facilitators was developed based on their stated needs.

The development of the tool was supported by a company who specialise in 'quality' assessments (European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), Investors in Excellence (IIE), etc.) to ensure that it stood up to scrutiny and the output could be used as a basis for and included in a more formal assessment such as EFQM. This support cost £8,500.

### WHAT IMPACT IT HAD:

The measures used to assess the impact of the process were: (short term) improvements in staff feeling engaged; (medium term) improvements in the percentage of staff saying that the organisation understands and is tackling the issues that matter to them; (long term) increases in user satisfaction and public confidence.

The Force's staff survey is being used to assess the short and medium term impact. The next survey will be run in February 2011, but in the meantime qualitative assessments of the impact have indicated improvements. Follow-up conversations with those involved in the original discussions, and those facilitating them have enabled a 'story-board' of the change to be created. The constabulary's 'policing survey' with the public and user satisfaction survey data has also shown statistically significant improvements in public confidence and user satisfaction within the last nine months. Whilst it is not possible to claim 'cause and effect', improved relationships and feelings of staff within the organisation are highly likely to impact on relationships with the public.

The output from the self-assessment, the staff survey and the Constabulary's 'People First' workshops (attended by all staff) have been used to create a 'cultural baseline', which names the behaviour, relationship and communication issues that need further attention. This is being used to develop a set of cultural ideals.

The National Policing Improvement Agency is promoting the tool as part of a suite of products to enable police forces to become more citizen focused.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

The self-assessment tool has been incredibly helpful in enabling people across the organisation to have a conversation that they wouldn't normally have had. In this way, the tool has been important, but bringing people together to share their experiences and thoughts has itself signalled a change in working practices and led to an invaluable insight into the cultural practices across the organisation.

The skill of the facilitators as well as their understanding of the citizen focus hallmarks has been crucial, as has the flexibility of the process. For example, whilst some facilitators held group discussions to go through the entire matrix, others brought together six groups and focused on only one enabler at a time.

Whilst this tool was originally called a 'citizen focus self-assessment', it developed into a tool to surface the cultural issues that ultimately impact upon service delivery. This means that there has to be real commitment to working with what emerges despite the fact that some of the issues make for uncomfortable reading. With this commitment the potential is enormous.

The tool must be supplemented with work around customer insight, hence its use as part of a suite of products from the NPIA; there must be some reality check of the beliefs and views expressed within a particular area of an organisation.

Before being used more widely, the wording within the matrix is being re-worked to make it more user-friendly.

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# Sub21 - Reducing Underage Street Drinking

## Northumbria Police and Partners

### INTRODUCTION:

A survey conducted for the North Tyneside Children and Young People's Strategy (Carrick, 2005) found that about two-thirds of young people drink alcohol and more than half drink at least once a week. Among 10 to 17-year-olds, girls regularly drink more alcohol than boys (73.3% vs. 54.4%), a finding that contrasts with the rest of the UK.

As a consequence, North Tyneside has some of the highest rates of hospital admissions for under 18s due to alcohol-related causes and the teenage pregnancy rate is significantly higher than the rest of England (Ong, 2007). Alcohol-related crime and disorder, as well as residents' fear of crime, is also on the rise in North Tyneside, a significant proportion of which is associated with under-17-year-olds.

The key behavioural challenge was to reduce street drinking in under 18s.

### WHAT WE DID:

By adopting a social marketing approach to understand the motivations and exchange for the intended behaviour change, Northumbria Police have worked closely and in partnership with the PCT and Council to deliver this project. By sharing resources and skills with partners it has been possible to implement the project effectively and efficiently whilst delivering real change, not only for the young people involved but for the whole community.

Multiple stages of research including interviews, workshops, audits, feasibility study and consultations were carried out during the scoping and development stages to ensure that interventions were tailored to the target audiences. Customer orientation was an iterative process, with regular consultation throughout the project.

Primary research identified three main drivers for underage street drinking; a lack of attractive, affordable activities for young people in the area, combined with easy availability and the low cost of alcohol. The three pilot areas of Wallsend, Howdon and Battle Hill chosen for the project, had particular problems with anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related incidents.

### WHAT IT INVOLVED:

By consulting with young people, retailers, residents and key partners, a two pronged approach was developed to support off-licence proprietors and help them tackle illegal and proxy purchasing of alcohol (i.e. where alcohol is purchased legally, but then passed on to a minor), alongside a programme of youth-led activities and events to provide an alternative to street drinking under the campaign brand, 'Sub21'.

Retailers were asked to place a voluntary ban on selling alcohol to under 21s during peak times when young people are most likely to buy alcohol illegally or through proxy purchase, alongside a package of support measures including a dedicated 24-hour crime and licensing line, training sessions, Off-Watch membership and regular police visits.

In addition, a rolling programme of out-of-hours activities designed by and for local young people including graffiti, skateboarding, street dance, cookery, bodyfit, bike workshops and nail art took place across a 10 week period on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights in local community centres close to their homes.

### WHAT IMPACT IT HAD:

By running the two strands in tandem, restricting supply of alcohol to young people and creating diversionary activities, the project has achieved an overall reduction in street drinking in under 18s and a 30% decrease in anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related incidents.

Additionally the project has achieved the following outcomes:

- reached over 3,000 young people, with over 400 of those taking part in activities on a regular basis, and recruited over 25 local retailers to take part in the project
- decrease in young people reporting buying alcohol from shops
- high awareness of 'Sub21' amongst young people
- a third of young people surveyed attended 'Sub21' activities
- 50% of young people surveyed reported 'more to do around here now' and a sizable proportion reported making new friends through 'Sub21' activities
- reduced binge drinking reported by young people, especially amongst females
- decrease in proportion who reported drinking on the street and other outdoor sites, particularly among females
- 2009 Learning Exchange Award Winner, Hosted by ContinYou and supported by the Department for Education; shortlisted for Mentor UK CHAMP Awards 2010 – winner to be announced in November

To continue the project from the end of the pilot phase to March 2010, the partnership successfully bid to the Pfizer UK Foundation in 2009 and were awarded £42,750. As the project's popularity and positive results have grown, it has attracted further funding within the region.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

The success of 'Sub21' has been the result of a strong partnership approach by Northumbria Police, NHS North of Tyne, North Tyneside Council, schools, youth groups and off-licences. More than 35 partners across the public, voluntary and private sector came together to support the development and delivery of Sub21 and are working together to deal with a wide range of social issues including not only alcohol misuse but also public health, youth activity, licensing, crime and disorder, community policing and anti-social behaviour, whilst simultaneously supporting community cohesion. The 'Sub21' project provides a unique and innovative approach which could be adopted and replicated by other providers in the UK.

Being unable to engage the main four supermarkets to support the scheme, presented problems in gaining interest and uptake from local retailers. However, by creating a strong support mechanism, encouraging retailers to act as ambassadors and close partnership working, over 25 local retailers implemented the scheme.

The project has demonstrated that by getting the product right, all else will fall into place – it's about offering people something they want, like and can easily use. Behaviour change does not come from posters – it comes from people. There is no better promotion than word-of-mouth from your target audience.

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# Pocket Comms

## West Midlands Police

### INTRODUCTION:

The West Midlands region is one of the most diverse areas in the UK, with over 60 different languages spoken and a variety of communities and cultures. The cosmopolitan make up of the area has often produced barriers to communication. These are not always issues of language and include methods of presentation for disabled people, which can be very different. PocketComms has been produced to provide:

- a means of communication to help overcome language and disability issues
- as an aid memoire for religious observations and customs
- timely interventions that help to identify the correct language line first time
- improved customer service, demonstrating commitment to effective communication with diverse communities
- a means of enhancing trust & confidence in the police.

The graphic format of PocketComms is similar to 'easy read' format.

### WHAT WE DID:

This project was originally undertaken by the West Midlands Diversity & Community Cohesion Unit and the Neighbourhood Policing Unit. Using the combined knowledge and experiences of both Units communication barriers were identified and work commenced on producing a customised version of PocketComms to suit our needs.

PocketComms has already worked with hearing impaired communities and this research was used to advantage. PocketComms has also benefited from feedback and suggestions from other forces as the project progressed to produce a police version.

A business case was put forward to finance the cost of the development and produce a draft version for trialling by various operational personnel within the force. Once feedback was received the product was refined and a final version produced. The force invested in 2,500 units which have been issued across the force to operational Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), custody blocks and front offices in police stations.

Local Policing Units (LPUs) were given an original allocation and invited to purchase additional units as required. Demand has exceeded supply. In the current year new police recruits and PCSOs have also been issued with a personal copy to enable them to familiarise themselves with PocketComms prior to joining their LPU and to enhance their communication abilities at the start of their career. A guidance leaflet has now been produced, which will be shared with other forces.

### WHAT IT INVOLVED:

This type of communication tool had not previously been used by West Midlands Police and was very much a new concept. Senior management 'buy in' was necessary to progress and develop the product to fruition. The original product had to be developed to suit police requirements but PocketComms were willing and capable partners with a wealth of knowledge and research that they were able and willing to share. As the project progressed PocketComms approached other police forces for suggestions and provided feedback. A working group was formed to incorporate citizen-focus professionals, operational police officers and PCSOs. The aim of the group was to scope a draft version for local trials, drawing on the knowledge and experiences of local communities.

Once the trial was completed a final version was produced. The cost for the production and development was £3,700. The final product is priced at £10.99, which includes a pouch that incorporates the relevant force crest. The price varies if purchased in bulk and the VAT element can be reclaimed. West Midlands Police has now purchased and distributed over 2,500 packs to staff and has provided a finished copy for each force in the country as well as other public sector establishments.

### WHAT IMPACT IT HAD:

PocketComms enhances communication by identifying the right language first time, thereby providing timely interventions and reduced costs. It has proved to be a useful communication tool when working with other agencies. It has been used with the deaf community locally and they have been provided with some copies to work with so that they can familiarise themselves with its uses. PCSOs have used it when visiting schools, encouraging children to make up a story using PocketComms as a basis for positive interaction.

Feedback from colleagues has been very positive, indicating that it is perceived as imaginative and very useful. It has been used as an evidence gathering tool, an example being an incident where a firearm was used and a witness could not describe the weapon but on being shown PocketComms was able to distinguish what the gun looked like.

Although other forces and organisations can have their own crest on the pack, every unit sold incorporates a page with the West Midlands Police and PocketComms logos. Units have been purchased by Kent, Hertfordshire, Cumbria, Durham, Surrey, Lower Saxony Germany, Hong Kong, Netherlands, The Crown Prosecution Service, Disability GP, Merseyside, Lincoln, British Transport Police, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire.

The development of PocketComms has sent a clear message that the effort to bridge a communication gap was made by the Police Service. There cannot be a shift in the confidence agenda without tangible demonstrations of commitment - and this is a very tangible approach to improving accessibility to the caring public services.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

- The interest generated by the PocketComms tool has been excellent and other agencies are developing their own version now that the idea has been sown by having a copy of the police product. A multi-agency approach may have produced a tool that suited all our needs and highlighted additional barriers experienced by partner organisations.
- Feedback from staff has been very positive and they have found more innovative ways to use PocketComms, such as 'Achieving Best Evidence' with children. With hindsight, it may have been beneficial to ask staff what they thought it would be used for rather than make assumptions.
- You can never do enough marketing and there is scope for more to be done.

The following factors were critical to the success of the project:

- Command group buy in and endorsement.
- Making sure the product is available to the right people, especially front line operational staff, front offices and custody blocks.
- Marketing the product internally, to other police forces and to the public.

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