



Title: Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime

Author: Casey, L.

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Document available to download at: http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/resource_centre/document_library/engaging_communities_in_fighting_crime or http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/18_06_08_caseyreport.pdf (accessed July 2011)

SCS topic headings: Personal Safety; Safety in Public Spaces; Partnership Working; Community Engagement; Evaluation and Monitoring

This document is a REVIEW of community engagement contexts and suggested effective approaches.

Summary of the document's aim

This ministerial commissioned review considers what approaches could be considered and undertaken to improve the ways that crime-fighting agencies and the public work together to reduce crime. The review's research data is used extensively to present experiences of the general public across a range of across a range of community safety and judicial contexts.

Outcomes

The significant outcome from this review are the findings derived from qualitative data through extensive consultations with the general public.

Quantitative responses ascertained through the research are used throughout the report to present statistical claims regarding community and crime topics. These serve to provide a 'snapshot' of public interest and opinion at the time of the review about crime reduction strategies, police roles and responsibilities, the Criminal Justice System, service approaches and standards, and community involvement in crime and public/personal safety. These outcomes could be utilised alongside similar findings in comparative studies to map change over time.

In addition to the main report, Appendix 2 contains the report 'Explaining Public Perceptions of Crime and Criminal Justice'. This paper, in support of the Crime and Communities Review, is an exploration of the evidence relating to factors that have an impact on public perceptions of crime, as well as their consequences.

Summary of evaluation conclusions

Key findings and summarised outcomes from the review's research data are presented in statistical format. These include:

- 55% of the public say crime is the most important issue facing Britain today.
- When asked what is the most important issue facing Britain on crime, the top answer from the public (29%) is that sentences are too lenient.
- Only 33% of the public are confident that the Criminal Justice System meets the needs of victims, but 79% agree it respects the rights of offenders.
- 73% of the public say that hearing about someone being a victim of crime in their local area affects their feelings of safety and makes them cautious, angry and sad.
- 90% of the public agree that community punishments for crime should involve some form of payback to the community.
- When asked who they would trust as a source for national statistics on crime, the top answer from the public (48%) was an independent watchdog.

How the evaluation gathered information for findings and conclusions

The review's Appendix 1 details the data collection and analysis methods undertaken. This was a large scale research project accessing 14,478 respondents through a variety of engagement methods. These are listed below alongside the number of respondents consulted in each task (see also p.87).

- Surveys with representative samples of the general public (10,969)
- An online and postal public 'Have Your Say' questionnaire (1,502)
- 'Have Your Say' discussion events with community activists (606)
- A postal survey of community activists (400)

- An online survey of Criminal Justice Service staff (944)
- Qualitative group discussions with members of the public (57)

‘Have Your Say’ questionnaire

A public ‘Have Your Say’ questionnaire was produced, available in hard copy and online on the Cabinet Office website and other websites. Copies were also made available at discussion events with community activists run by the review team.

The questionnaire was also publicised to audiences such as older people, younger people, criminal justice staff, local government, the third sector, community safety staff, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, business groups etc. through a variety of routes including direct mailing, websites and features in newsletters.

162 responses indicated that their responses related to their paid employment, and were analysed separately. A detailed analysis of 1,502 responses to a public ‘Have Your Say’ questionnaire conducted is available separately.

General public surveys

The general public were also surveyed face-to-face by placing questions on a series of omnibus surveys conducted by the market and social research agencies Gfk NOP, Ipsos MORI, and TNS Global.

Questions were asked on six surveys, which each time obtained the views of a representative sample of c.1,800 members of the public aged 16+. The results of the surveys informed various aspects of the review.

In addition to surveys with members of the public in England and Wales, at the outset of the review, the review team conducted a postal survey of community activists who, in various ways, had been involved with addressing crime and anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, an online survey was disseminated via internal communications to those working for Criminal Justice System agencies including the police, Crown Prosecution Service, Youth Offending Teams, probation, and courts service.

Ipsos MORI were commissioned via the Government’s Central Office of Information (COI) to conduct qualitative research with members of the public. Eight discussion groups were held with the general public in Manchester, Cardiff, Leicester and London. Participants were recruited from a mix of inner city and suburban locations and deprived and more affluent areas, and comprised a mix of ages, parental and working statuses, and ethnic groups reflective of the general

population. The results were fully analysed and a summary report was produced.

Further details about the SCS evaluation of this report are available on request. Please contact info@scsn.org.uk

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