Scottish Community Safety Network

Title: Guidance for Local Partnerships on Alcohol-Related Crime and Disorder Data (Home Office Development and Practice Report 6)
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SCS topic headings: Partnership Working, Safety in Public Spaces (ASB), Offending Management, Evaluation and Monitoring

This is a guidance document of effective intervention approaches towards developing internal auditing processes.

Summary of the intervention's aim
This report provides guidance to local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) on how best to gather and utilise data on alcohol-related crime and disorder. It specifically focuses on the collection and analysis of alcohol-related crime and disorder data within the context of conducting audits under the terms of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act.

This guidance should be viewed within the then context of the Government's ongoing work on alcohol misuse, especially the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy by the Cabinet Office's Strategy Unit, working closely with key government departments, and the Licensing Bill.

NB. The document summarises the full Home Office Online Report 08/03 *'Alcohol-related crime and disorder data: guidance for local partnerships'* by John Tierney and Professor Dick Hobbs (with the assistance of Martin Elvins, Deena Kara and Katie Roberts; 2003). Document available to download at: http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/rdsolr0803.pdf (accessed July 13th 2010.)

Outcomes

This document presents background information and guidance about the following topics:

- The purpose of an audit
- The importance of routine [organisational] profiling
- Strategic priorities such as implementing strategies and setting outcome measures
- Highlighting the small number of statutory offences defined as alcohol-related
- Key data sources for local partnerships- these are listed by public provider data sources, Local authority data sources and other data sources.

- It also presents recommendations for auditing CDRPs to use two complementary approaches to the collection and analysis of data:
  - A direct approach which is based on establishing a link between alcohol consumption on the part of a specific offender and a specific offence.
  - An indirect approach which does not require linking specific offences to specific offenders but relates to incidents which may be connected with alcohol consumption through their location, timing or context of occurrence.

- CDRPs are recommended to access local research into the substantial UK wide and international research available that examines the links between alcohol consumption and various types of crime and disorder using the direct and indirect approaches. Table 1 summarises the utility of a number of sources of data likely to be available at the local level for monitoring and auditing alcohol-related crime and disorder, and indicates whether the information provided is relevant to the direct or indirect approach.

- A useful explanation is provided regarding the importance of local context and intervention implementation. The context in which incidents occur is of central importance for making the link between alcohol misuse and crime and disorder within the indirect approach. Context is important to understanding how or why patterns of alcohol-related crime and disorder- as determined in the direct approach highlighted above- change over time. CDRPs might therefore seek to understand the backdrop to trends in alcohol-related crime and disorder by examining sources of contextual data.

Data sharing

- CDRPs should encourage the 'mainstreaming' of data. This is the collection and analysis of data as part of routine working practices by participant organisations.

- Some partnership members, such as licensees, may collect relevant data but, being non-public organisations, are under no obligation to share this with CDRPs. CDRPs will need to build relations with such members to create a culture in which information can be shared without inviting criticism on those organisations. Development of protocols may facilitate this.

- Many CDRPs have local, generic data-sharing protocols in place, although these vary in detail and there are some problems regarding the extent of data sharing. A primary concern relates to confidentiality of patient records within health services. To overcome this when sharing information personal data should be anonymised thereby removing the potential for the identification of individuals. Any additional concerns may be allayed by the aggregation of data; a Partnership should not require any greater level of detail than this for the purposes of monitoring, data auditing or routine profiling.

Summary of evaluation conclusions

In conclusion, CDRPs are expected to play a role in developing strategies that will minimise the crime and disorder risks, including those posed by alcohol consumption. This guidance document presents the following summary points that support the move to address and meet such a role:

- Progress for understanding local alcohol-related crime and disorder problems can only be based on what data are available, and CDRPs are only expected to work to a realistic, rather than scientific, standard of proof
- Developments in the night-time economy are of key importance for understanding one context in which crime and disorder often occur
- Auditing crime and disorder is complex and there are problems associated with all data sources. However, these problems are not intractable.

CDRPs should:
- Build a picture of local crime and disorder problems through a properly conducted audit is the basis for development of appropriate strategies
- expect to take the views of the community into consideration via processes of consultation
- utilise a range of relevant and useful alcohol-related crime and disorder data that is [potentially] available
- inform partner agencies and others precisely what is required of them and encourage organisations to collect and analyse data that are, in most cases, readily available.

How the evaluation gathered information for findings and conclusions

This guidance is based on the findings from research carried out at four UK locations that varied in their geographical urban and rural proximity as well as a mix of social demographic local populations.

Information was gathered through interviews with primary statutory providers and other relevant bodies and organisations. Interviews and more informal discussions to find out how agencies came into contact with alcohol and crime and disorder issues and in what ways, if at all, it impacted on their work. The precise number of

interviews undertaken is not mentioned nor is the organisational positions of the interviewees. We also do not know the range of questions the researchers asked.

Data was gathered in other ways too. The researchers attended, as observers, meetings of various local groups and organisations and also observed operational policing and recording techniques and CCTV system operation. Periodically, formal meetings were held with key personnel from community safety/crime reduction partnerships. People working in the retail trade, leisure industry and the night-time economy were also interviewed. Recording methods, the formats in which data were kept, and any software available for data analysis were also examined.

Although we cannot ascertain the background to the process of accessing this data, we can assume that the combination of the final data obtained could have been used to present a robust set of findings and conclusions.

NB. A list of websites and references are also included at the end of the document.

Further details about the SCS evaluation of this report are available on request.
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