Title: Working Out What to do: Evidence-based crime reduction (Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 11)
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Date published: 2002
Funding body: Home Office
Document available to download at:
http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/crrs11.pdf (accessed July 15th 2010)

SCS topic headings: Personal Safety, Home Safety, Safety in Public Spaces (ASB), Environmental Safety (ASB), Partnership Working

This document is a REVIEW of effective intervention approaches.

Summary of the intervention's aim

The aim of this report is to help police services and local partnerships approach crime prevention and problem-solving in a coherent, informed and structured way, to improve prospects for real achievement. It distils principles for effective, evidence-based practice.

The examples used in the report relate specifically to situational crime prevention, for which there is the strongest research base, though the principles would be relevant also to other approaches to prevention. A case study of domestic burglary is presented.

The document's aim is to illustrate some of the principles of crime reduction through which effective approaches can be developed or modified to suit local circumstances. It is not intended to be an off-the-shelf recipe book for practitioners.

Outcomes

The authors discuss each concept using literature that cites evidence to support statements from both research carried out mainly in the UK and the USA. Thus both general and specific points are made in relation to the themes of crime reduction in the application of six key concepts in working out what to do regarding crime reduction in individual contexts.

1. **Aims:** describes overall problem-solving or crime reduction aspirations e.g. to reduce burglary

2. **Problem-specification:** comprises a more detailed and evidenced statement of an aim e.g. reduce burglary by tackling repeat victimisation, having established that this is a major issue in the project area

3. **Tactics:** describes what will actually be done to tackle the problem

4. **Mechanisms:** refers to the ways in which tactics will bring about change

5. **Context:** comprising the place, time, social organisation etc within which the tactics will activate change mechanisms

6. **Replication:** involves adopting and adapting approaches that have been found effective in one context, such that they will work similarly when implemented in another place.

The authors also take situationally-based tactics as an example of the way in which a more detailed understanding of the mechanisms through which any given tactic might work or may be used effectively.

Following the literature review is a selected practical example about domestic burglary that illustrates the six key concepts (noted above) purpose and importance in intervention planning. The authors discuss the way in which the problem can be more carefully defined, and effective tactics introduced in different contexts. Also considered are alternative approaches, which contrary to expectation, did not work. The reasons for their apparent failure are illustrative of the need to work through the kind of procedure outlined in the previous section and to spell out the mechanism through which the tactic is expected to have an effect.

The document concludes with:
- Prerequisites for implementing effective problem specification and tactics (including strategic planning capacity; data and intelligence; leverage)
- Checklists for effective evidence-based problem solving

Summary of evaluation conclusions

Implementing a strategic approach to crime reduction and problem-solving along the lines described in this paper depend on a strong strategic planning capacity, good data and an ability to analyse it, and willingness and capacity to apply leverage, where necessary, on those best placed to act to reduce crime.

The paper ends with two checklists. The first is for police agencies and partnerships to ensure they are set up to deliver effective evidence-based practice. The second is for those trying to address problems to check that what they are planning makes sense.

How the evaluation gathered information for findings and conclusions
The discussion and conclusions presented in this document are drawn from a literature review of selected articles that focus on research findings from both the UK and USA. The selection of material is broad and diverse from a range of sources. A bibliography of all the material cited is provided for reference use.

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

Date added to the SCS website: July 2010 (RC)