

Chapter 1 Prevention

NATIONAL TARGET

PSA 4: Reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs (as measured by the Drug Harm Index encompassing measures of the availability of Class A drugs and drug-related crime) including substantially increasing the number of drug misusing offenders entering treatment through the Criminal Justice System.

Preventing crime

If we are to continue reducing crime, we have to focus on preventing the occurrence of crime. The Drug and Alcohol Action Team/Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (DAAT/CDRP) consider that this is the biggest challenge that we face and one that everyone who lives, works in and visits our borough can contribute to.

Our Crime and Disorder Audit 2004 highlighted six key areas that cause crime. Each one of these is significant either through its impact on an area or in setting trends that allow criminality to flourish.

This chapter looks at the key areas from the point of view of how the community safety agenda can positively contribute and benefit from focusing on prevention and as a result reduce crime and the fear of crime in our borough.

It is essential that the Community Safety Strategy is not seen in isolation from other key strategies for the borough. Lambeth's Community Strategy sets out a longer-term vision for addressing deprivation, the image of the borough and improving choice and opportunity. The council's Children and Young People's Strategy will give a more detailed focus on a long-term vision for improving children's services. Lambeth's Housing and Homelessness Strategies look at housing provision in the borough over the next three years.

Deprivation

What do we mean by deprivation?

The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2004 is made up of seven different categories: Income deprivation, Employment deprivation, Health deprivation and disability, Education, skills and training deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living environment deprivation and Crime. The level of deprivation for an area is measured on the number of types of deprivation that are experienced by the individuals living in that area.

It is important to point out that communities who live in deprived areas are not all causing crime. Our audit research does indicate that high levels of crime are recorded in areas where our housing is poor, educational attainment is below average, young people do not have access to employment opportunities and families and individuals suffer from poor health. It is the combination of these effects that can result in social exclusion and a lack of self-esteem and self worth, which may set some people on a road to criminality.

What did the audit tell us?

Deprivation:

- 47% of the borough of Lambeth is included within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England in relation to the Crime and Disorder rank.
- Out of the Crime and Disorder rank by Super Output Areas (SOA)⁷ compared to the rest of England, 50 of Lambeth's 177 SOAs are within the top 5% most deprived in England.
- Coldharbour ward contains the two most deprived SOAs in Lambeth. These two SOAs are in the top 5% of the most deprived areas in England.
- 108 of the 177 SOAs in Lambeth are in the top 25% most deprived in England.

Young People:

- Lambeth is a young borough in terms of population as 45% of residents are aged between 20-39.
- 20% of 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training.
- In 2003, 41.7% of pupils obtained 5+ GCSEs at A-C grades, compared to the national average of 52.9%.

- Approximately 25% of Lambeth's residents suffer from poor numeracy and literacy. Although this is the national average, Lambeth sits higher than average in the categories of 'Lower' or 'Very Low level' of numeracy and literacy compared to the national average.
- Teenage conception rates are the highest in England.
- Infant mortality rates for Lambeth are 7.5 per 1000, compared to the national average of 6 per 1000.

Employment:

- 20% of households have a gross income of less than £10,000 per annum. However 20% have a gross income of over £50,000 per annum.
- 4,500 people are registered as long-term unemployed.
- In the age range of 16-24 years, 22.7% of Black Caribbean people, 12.7% of Black African and 7.3% of White British are unemployed.
- In the age range of 25-74 years, 14.5% of Black Caribbean people, 14.4% of Black African and 5.2% of White British are unemployed.

Our Lambeth Community Safety Strategy 2005-8 will also look at the impact of:

- Those people, often with high needs of support due to their lifestyles, who pass through our borough and their impact on crime and community safety.
- How our borough will change over the next three to five years through housing requirements and regeneration.

⁷ Area smaller than a ward, that contains 1500 residents.

Lack of choice and opportunities

What do we mean by lack of choice and opportunity?

National and local research and our audit and consultation clearly demonstrated that where communities had limited access to good housing and health care combined with poor environments, their aspirations, choices and future opportunities were far more likely to be limited. Further, their chances of being at risk or involved in crime were far higher, as were the chances of being a victim of crime.

What did the audit tell us?

Our audit identified a number of key issues, which we need to address if we are to improve safety and feelings of being safe within our borough. These are:

- Limited or poor access to services.
- Poor environment / health / housing (refer to Deprivation section p12).
- Deprivation / unemployment / low wages (refer to Deprivation section p12).

- Poor educational attainment / exclusion from school / limited training opportunities.
- Lack of positive role models (media, peers, local community, family) / poor self-esteem.
- Negative peer pressure and influences increasing the chances of getting involved in anti social and criminal behaviour.
- Attractiveness of crime to earn money and respect.
- Lack of appropriate facilities and activities for young people.
- Fear of crime / vulnerability.
- Victims and witnesses of crime (felt much more vulnerable particularly if they have been a repeat victim of crime).
- Rehabilitation / support to 'break the cycle' of offending.

Image and reputation

What do we mean by image and reputation?

The image and reputation of Lambeth is a key crime generator for the borough. Whilst image might seem a less important priority than other factors like deprivation, the drugs market or violent crime, its significance is supported by the audit's findings, not only in terms of crime data but also from our extensive consultation. This has a huge impact upon the quality of life for those who live and work here and leads to major concerns about crime for local people.

There is no doubt that the last three years have seen real, positive progress on changing the face of Lambeth. This is supported by the fact that 83% of respondents from our face-to-face questionnaire felt safer or as safe as they did 12 months ago. Lambeth has one of the most vibrant communities who, in the majority, want to contribute to improving the quality of life in the borough.

As a community who live and work in our borough we need to promote the positives, challenge those who continue to portray a historically negative image and be proud of our culture, history and achievements.

The DAAT/CDRP recognises the importance of communications in delivering the priorities identified in the audit. Below is a broad overview of what we can do to actively promote the borough and also how we will encourage community involvement and participation in making Lambeth a safer place.

'Image and reputation' also refers to people as well as our borough. Our consultation highlighted just how much the media, television, music industry and indeed, some criminal elements, encourage criminality and often intimidate people into, or to stay in, a life of crime. We have a real opportunity to use positive role models both at a local level and those on a national and international stage to promote positive images for our community and, in particular, our young community.

What did the audit tell us?

- We are not doing enough to publicise and celebrate our successes in tackling crime.
- People and particular groups are disproportionately frightened of crime in Lambeth. Challenging and changing the existing image of the borough is central to altering their perceptions.
- It is not only the image of the borough that impacts on crime. Certain groups, especially young people, felt that their personal image and surrounding street culture contributed directly to how safe they feel and how likely they were to be a victim of crime. About one in four young people carries a weapon, and this is often more to do with image than the intention to commit a crime. Positive role models for young people would have a direct and beneficial effect upon their behaviour and vulnerability. Young people also need to be helped to make better life choices, and their opportunities need to be improved.
- Lambeth suffers because of its profile in regional, national and international media and is a centre for drug and crime tourism as a result.
- Campaigns are needed to reach much further than the borough boundaries to combat this.
- We need to promote and raise the profile of the DAAT/CDRP to the public, to continue to build better relationships within the partnership, and to get new partners on board, especially from the community and voluntary sectors.
- We need to improve our communications and information systems both ways so that people know what is happening and agencies know what people want.
- Certain types of priority crime, for instance motor vehicle crime and residential burglary would be radically improved if information and education were better circulated and more accessible, e.g. in poster campaigns carrying simple messages.
- 50% of those arrested and tested for drugs under the Arrest Referral Scheme in Lambeth have travelled from outside the borough to commit crime.

Taking responsibility

What do we mean by taking responsibility?

There was a common thread that emerged to the Community Safety Audit Team as the evidence was reviewed. This centred on 'responsibility and ownership'.

What did the audit tell us?

Our analysis broke this down into three headings:

1. Commercial responsibility

Whether we looked at drugs, alcohol, environment, young people, property crime, motor vehicle crime or anti social activities. We saw evidence that where businesses that operate within the borough failed to recognise the impact that they had on the environment and the community, crime and associated criminal behaviour flourished. There is a clear need for businesses to take a lead role in managing the town centre environments and playing a more active role in taking a stand to reduce crime and the fear of crime. There is a similar need for local business forums that allow smaller businesses to come together to find new ways to support each other to address crime.

2. Personal and community responsibility

A lot of evidence from the surveys and focus groups, indicated that individuals felt their environment had a substantial impact on how unsafe they felt, whether at home, in their home area, in town centres or on public transport.

When asked what could be done to make them feel safer there was an overwhelming emphasis amongst respondents on external and in some cases statutorily provided, services such as more police, CCTV and visible presence, rather than taking personal ownership.

This is borne out by our crime statistics where volume crimes such as:

- Other theft
- Theft from a motor vehicle
- Residential burglary (which increases in the summer months through increased access, e.g. windows being left open)
- Mobile phone theft
- Property theft outside tube and bus stations,

have demonstrated that individual behaviour, personal responsibility and community ownership can have a significant impact on reducing crime levels and the fear of crime in the borough.

Equally, anti social behaviour was seen as a serious issue for our community. Our face-to-face survey revealed that more people have been victims of anti social behaviour than any other crime (17%). This is also the same over the last 12 months at 11.8%. And yet a lot of the elements of anti social behaviour that were raised are things that we can all take responsibility to prevent, such as:

- Keeping the environment cleaner and tidier including tackling fly-tipping and graffiti
- Maintaining shrubs, trees and bushes
- Reporting faulty street lights
- Not to cycle on the pavement.

There are a number of excellent examples in our borough where communities have taken a stand. The role of partner agencies is to support them and to encourage others, giving them the tools and knowledge to make a difference in their area.

3. Responsibility of public bodies

The public authority, whether it is the Police, the council or health provider has a responsibility to set standards with regards to what they do, when and how they provide their services to ensure this leads to an environment in which people feel safe.

There was strong evidence from the surveys and focus groups that indicated that the communities confidence in the public authorities' ability to tackle crime was low. Despite the significant crime reductions in the borough over the last three years.

Our young people felt that the public authorities should have a greater responsibility to ensure that they had the opportunity to influence and participate in delivering services for young people.

There was a clear indication from our audit that our communities at all levels, ages, gender and ability want to play a part in improving the borough. They need the support and structure from public bodies which enables their participation.

A simple process that helps people know how they can get involved, would go a long way to more active participation in community safety programmes.

Transport

What do we mean by safer transport?

The DAAT/CDRP has a clear vision on improving safety on our public transport and throughout our journeys.

It was clear from the replies to our consultation that all of our communities, including council officers, young or older people, disabled people or those from our LGBT or BME communities, felt that safety around our public transport hubs was as much of an issue as safety whilst travelling on public transport.

Regarding getting safely to and from your destination, whether it is by train, London Underground, bus, car, bicycle or as a pedestrian, the DAAT/CDRP want to address:

- Journey planning / understanding your route and the area in which you live
- Awareness (e.g. signage)
- Environment (e.g. safe routes and lighting)
- Co-ordination between all agencies to make the whole journey safer.

What did the audit tell us?

- There are nine tube stations in the borough, all of which are hotspots for crime.
- We have 13 overground stations, a number of which featured as crime hotspots particularly in Streatham and Norwood.
- The majority of hotspots in the borough were situated around the transport hubs and major arterial routes such as the A23 (South Circular).
- Focus groups constantly referred to fear of crime and personal safety on buses, trains and tubes. The Pensioners' Forum highlighted safety on transport and mobility as key issues for their members.
- Young people felt unsafe on buses and in tube stations.
- 53% of the female face-to-face interviewees felt unsafe using buses after dark.
- Council employees felt fairly safe whilst travelling unless it was after dark.

Drugs and Alcohol

What do we mean by reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol?

Drugs and alcohol and their relationship with crime, have had high-profile attention in recent years. The government, both national and local, and the media have focused a lot of attention on the level of drug dealing and use and how it impacts on crime. Furthermore, Lambeth is an area with particularly significant drug issues, which are given a disproportionate amount of media coverage. Alcohol has also recently been the subject of much debate. The DAAT/CDRP welcomes the raised profile of alcohol-related community safety issues.

What did the audit tell us?

- Residents rated the issue of drugs as the biggest problem in Lambeth – 60% claimed that drug dealing or drug use were fairly or very serious problems in their area.
- In 2003-4, there were 5,653 drug related incidents, compared to 5,472 in 2002-3 (an increase of 3.3%, Count = 181).
- There was a 5.3% increase in the number of crack (excluding cocaine) related offences, from 227 offences in 2002-3 to 239 offences in 2003-4.
- There was a 39.8% decrease in the number of heroin (excluding other opiates) related offences, from 133 offences in 2002-3 to 80 offences in 2003-4.
- Drug misuse-related hospital admissions increased from 264 to 382.
- In total, there were 79 council properties closed as a result of identified drug activity.

There are two areas of the preventative agenda for addressing drugs and alcohol,

1. Preventing people becoming involved in drugs and alcohol misuse:

- Better awareness of the impact of drugs and alcohol on our health, employment, families and our communities.
- Breaking the cycle between those who control the drugs market and those who are its customers and couriers.
- Fast and effective enforcement of those who commit drug-related crime.
- Better management of those areas and premises in areas of our night-time economy by promoting responsibility amongst businesses and individuals.
- Tackling the binge drinking culture.

2. Supporting people who have problematic drug or alcohol dependencies in addressing their dependencies by providing appropriate interventions

- Continue to provide and improve services through better support and outreach for people who are drug and/or alcohol dependant.
- More co-ordinated services in HMP Brixton and better post-prison discharge into community support and integration programmes, particularly for Lambeth residents.