

Institution: University of Leeds

Unit of Assessment: 20 Law

Title of case study: 1. Improving the Delivery of Community Safety and the Policing of Anti-Social Behaviour

1. Summary of the impact

Improvements in the organisation and delivery of community safety by police and local authority-led partnerships have resulted from inter-related research studies conducted by a team at the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies. Research findings have significantly influenced national policy and professional policing and community safety practices. The research led to improvements in how important new reforms to policing powers and personnel have been implemented and in community safety delivered through partnerships. It also increased understanding of the benefits and limitations of policing partnerships, powers designed to tackle anti-social behaviour and the role of police community support officers in fostering safer communities.

2. Underpinning research

The last decade has witnessed far-reaching changes to the organisation and delivery of community safety. Local councils and police have acquired legal responsibility for community safety, whilst the size of the private security industry and its contribution to policing have both increased significantly. The Police Reform Act 2002 introduced police community support officers (PCSOs), second-tier police employees with limited powers and training. There has also been an increase in an assortment of public, private and municipal policing actors, including neighbourhood and street wardens. These 'plural' forms of policing raise fundamental policy and practice questions concerning the organisation, delivery and governance of policing partnerships. Moreover, there has been a rapid expansion of police powers and the introduction of civil sanctions designed to tackle low-level anti-social behaviour. Specifically, the dispersal order, introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, provides police with powers to disperse groups in designated areas.

A series of linked externally-funded research studies conducted between 2003 and 2012 has explored the impact, effectiveness and best use of the new personnel and powers, as well as how plural policing partnerships can enhance community safety. The research was led by Professor **Adam Crawford** (Professor at Leeds since 2000 where he has been employed since 1993) and **Stuart Lister** (Research Officer, Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer at Leeds since 2001). The studies, funded by the Nuffield Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, embedded engagement with research users from the outset. They were overseen and informed by advisory boards comprising key national practitioners and policy-makers. User engagement was enhanced by an ESRC research seminar series 'Governing Through Anti-Social Behaviour' (see below) in collaboration with the National Community Safety Network, the professional association of community safety practitioners.

The research identified the frequently disparate nature of relations between different agencies providing policing, highlighting a lack of coordination and the need to harness and regulate their diverse efforts through partnerships [1-3]. Accordingly, it recommended the introduction of institutional means for the police to engage better with the 'extended policing family', for example, by setting up force-wide strategic units. It highlighted the benefits of pursuing 'problem-solving' approaches to tackling neighbourhood disorder, which mobilise the expertise and resources of local communities and partner agencies [4-5]. It also demonstrated the positive contribution to and limitations of PCSOs in regard to crime prevention and public reassurance [1]. It recommended greater public awareness and standardisation of PCSOs' powers and uniforms to address the significant problem of public confusion and uncertainty over what PCSOs can actually do.

A key recommendation of the study of dispersal orders was 'to amend the existing law such that dispersal powers apply only to the *behaviour* of groups rather than merely their *presence*' as this 'would align the law more closely with current police practice, remove considerable public confusion over the scope of the powers and reduce current perceptions that whole groups of young

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people are targeted by dispersal orders regardless of their actual behaviour' [4: 75]. It also presented evidence to support the practice of dispersal powers being used as a trigger for wider, long-term strategic planning through multi-agency partnerships and community engagement about the causes of local social problems.

3. References to the research

[1] Crawford, A., Lister, S., Blackburn, S. and Burnett, J., *Plural Policing: The Mixed Economy of Visible Patrols in England and Wales*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2005. Available on request from the University.

[2] Crawford, A. and Lister, S., 'Additional Security Patrols in Residential Areas: Notes from the Marketplace', *Policing & Society*, 16(2), 164-88, 2006. Submitted to RAE 2008 and available on request from the University.

[3] Crawford, A., 'Plural Policing in the UK: Policing Beyond the Police', in Newburn, T. (ed.) *Handbook of Policing* (2nd edn.), pp. 147-181, Cullompton: Willan Publishing, 2008. Available on request from the University.

[4] Crawford, A. and Lister, S., *The Use and Impact of Dispersal Orders: Sticking Plasters and Wake-Up Calls*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2007. Available from the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2133-dispersal-orders.pdf) website at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2133-dispersal-orders.pdf> and on request.

[5] Crawford, A., 'Dispersal Powers and the Symbolic Role of Anti-Social Behaviour Legislation', *Modern Law Review*, 71(5), 753-84, 2008. Listed in REF2 and available on request.

Refs [1-3] mapped and analysed the significant developments in the increasingly fragmented and pluralised provision of visible policing in England and Wales. They were informed by externally funded research awards (the first four listed below).

Refs [4-5] analysed the implementation, outcomes and wider implications associated with the use of police dispersal powers and anti-social behaviour powers, more broadly. They were informed by externally funded research awards (the last three listed below).

Refs [1 & 4] are research monographs published by a leading academic publisher and subject to peer-review. Refs [2 & 5] are articles in leading peer-reviewed international policing and law journals (respectively). Ref [3] develops the findings from [1 & 2] for a wider academic and practitioner audience through the leading scholarly handbook in policing.

The core studies were all secured in open peer-reviewed competition and include:

- Nuffield Foundation 'Plural Policing and the Growing Market for a Visible Patrolling Presence' (£134,048) 2003-05.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'The Extended Policing Family: Plural Policing Through a Visible Presence in Residential Areas' (£46,839) 2003-04.
- West Yorkshire Police Authority 'Evaluation of Police Community Support Officers in West Yorkshire' (£25,107) 2003-05.
- Safer Leeds Partnership 'Evaluation of Leeds Neighbourhood and Street Warden Schemes' (£36,460) 2004-05.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'An Evaluation of the Use and Impact of Dispersal Orders' (£57,356) 2006-07.
- Nuffield Foundation 'The impact of anti-social behaviour interventions on young people' (£224,399) 2008-12.
- ESRC funded research seminar series 'Governing Through Anti-Social Behaviour' (Crawford, PI, (£18,351) 2007-09. Organised in collaboration with the National Community Safety Network, it engaged with a wide network of research users to broaden and deepen the impact of the above studies. The series hosted five policy seminars and a final dissemination conference in central London in April 2009 attended by national policy-makers and local professionals from diverse relevant organisations. As well as the publication of a policy findings brochure, broader

academic papers from the series were published in two special issues of peer reviewed international journals. See <http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/research/projects/esrc-asb/>

4. Details of the impact

The research had impact, by influencing and changing policy and professional practice, in three main areas:

(i) The organisation of community safety practices and the coordination of the ‘extended policing family’ across the UK: The research influenced professional practices via: The establishment of ‘Plural Policing’ units in police forces to coordinate and harness the diverse efforts of the ‘extended policing family’; the promotion and emergence of formal partnerships between the police and non-police providers of neighbourhood security; and greater recognition of the contribution of PCSOs to delivering public reassurance, crime prevention and problem-solving [A] [B] [C]. The report of the study commissioned by West Yorkshire Police Authority directly influenced the long-term deployment of PCSOs in West Yorkshire and (by 2009) over 300 copies had been sold to all 43 police forces in England and Wales. The findings enabled police managers to protect PCSOs from budget cuts (notably since the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010) and keep the PCSO role focused on public reassurance, crime prevention and core community safety activities. The Chair of the National Community Safety Network has testified: “This work has been immensely useful in informing the development of community safety in England and Wales and in particular supporting local work to integrate partners into an extended policing family... [it] has helped some forces to secure the continuation of PCSOs and has shaped a number of localised partnerships where co-ordinated tasking of private security providers and local authority enforcement officers has resulted in improved quality of life for communities” [D]. Recently, insights from the research have informed the conclusions of the Independent Commission on the Future of Policing (Chaired by Lord Stevens, 2012-13 [A]).

(ii) The use of police dispersal powers designed to tackle anti-social behaviour and promote community safety: The research significantly improved the quality of the evidence-base on dispersal orders, resulting directly in changes to the policies and practices of police forces and community safety partnerships around the UK. According to the then Chief Executive of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA): “the research directly informed the NPIA’s guidance and policy development. Policy and operational practice was directly affected by the research through links between the researchers and the NPIA team” [E]. In some areas, it led to long-term partnership planning and problem-solving initiatives being triggered alongside the introduction of dispersal powers. Programme Managers at the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) verified that the research had practice-based impact: “Directly affecting JRHT’s behaviour as a social landlord through them taking an approach based on philosophy (rather than uniformed patrols) when confronted with behaviour seen as problematic” [F].

(iii) National policy and public debate concerning the nature and availability of specific anti-social behaviour powers: The research highlighted considerable public uncertainty over the role of PCSOs and also the powers available to them, findings that generated much media coverage (i.e. *The Daily Mail* and *Economist*) and political concern about the uneven powers, training and uniforms of PCSOs. Sir Ian Blair, the architect of PCSOs, confirmed: “evaluation has proved they [PCSOs] are successful... as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the service... But this is not totally true of other studies, such as that carried out last year by Adam Crawford and Stuart Lister at the University of Leeds. The study, research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, found that there was public confusion over the roles of [P]CSOs and what could be expected of them when it comes to tackling crime” (Interview, [Police Federation Magazine](#), p.13). Consequently, in 2008 the NPIA undertook a wide-ranging review of the role which led the Government to standardise a menu of powers for PCSOs. Subsequently, work has been on-going to standardise supervision, training and uniforms. The ex-NPIA Chief Executive wrote in testimony: “The research was very significant in Ministerial policy development and led directly to the NPIA’s work to develop a standard set of powers, supervision, training and uniform for PCSOs” [E].

The research influenced responses to the Coalition Government’s consultation and review of anti-social behaviour powers and informed the publication of the subsequent White Paper (2012). It was heavily cited in the submission by the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Anti-

Social Behaviour to the Government's consultation [G] [H]. The Secretary to the Independent Commission acknowledged: "the influence of Crawford and Lister's research on the Government's proposed reform of dispersal powers is clear. Their research has also, as evidenced by its contribution to the Commission's work, played an important part in critical public debate" [H]. Specifically, the White Paper accepted the findings regarding the anomaly of 'presence' as a ground for dispersal and proposed that: "The new power would also be dependent on actual behaviour, rather than an individual's presence in a particular area". This is reflected in the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill published in December 2012 [I]. The Metropolitan Police Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator for Camden and adviser to the government on the current legislation, stated: "For me the most important factor to note when faced with academic findings/research is whether it changes or influences one's own views/beliefs; in relation to Adam and Stuart's work the answer is yes" [J].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] Lord Stevens' [Independent Police Commission into the Future of Policing in England and Wales](#) (2012-13) which draws heavily on Crawford's written submission and includes a chapter written by Crawford, A. on 'The Police, Policing and the Future of the "Extended Policing Family"', in J. Brown (ed.) *The Future of Policing*, Routledge, 2013, pp. 173-190, in relation to [i].

[B] The Scottish Government cited the research [Ref 3] as evidence in its reviews of policing and anti-social behaviour. *Community Policing: A Review of the Evidence*, Scottish Government (2009): <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/292465/0090209.pdf> in relation to [i].

[C] The research informed the recommendations of the Scottish *Justice Committee*, specifically the importance it gave to partnership structures and meaningful public engagement in the delivery of community safety. *Justice Committee 18th Report 2008 (Session 3) Report on Inquiry into Community Policing*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Parliament, pp. 74-80:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/PreviousCommittees/19419.aspx>

Crawford was invited to give oral witness to the Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament's inquiry into Community Policing on 20 May 2008 – see:

<http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/justice/reports-08/jur08-18.htm> in relation to [i].

[D] Letter from the Chair of the National Community Safety Network, dated 26 February 2013, in relation to [i] and [ii].

[E] Letter from the then Chief Executive of the National Policing Improvement Agency (until 2010) dated 7 June 2012, in relation to [i] and [iii].

[F] Letters from the Director of Housing and Community Services at Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) dated 17 January 2013 and the Programme Manager (Policy and Practice) at Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) dated 23 November 2012, in relation to [ii].

[G] The research was heavily cited in the response of the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour to the Home Office Consultation Paper *More Effective Responses to Anti-Social Behaviour* (submitted in 2011): <http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/youthcrimecommission/index1bcd.html> in relation to [ii] and [iii]:

[H] Letter from the Secretary to the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour dated 12 November 2012, in relation to [ii] and [iii].

[I] The research was referenced in *Home Affairs Committee: Written Evidence Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill* which contains the written evidence accepted by the Home Affairs Committee for the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill (p.100):

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/home-affairs/130110%20ASB%20written%20evidence.pdf> in relation to [ii] and [iii].

[J] Letter from the Metropolitan Police Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator for the London Borough of Camden dated 13 February 2013, in relation to [ii] and [iii].

All letters are available on request from the University of Leeds.