

Minutes of the East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Public Meeting

Hanwood Centre
Tuesday, 28th June, 2016

Political Members

Councillor Carole Howard (Chair)
Councillor Sonia Copeland
Councillor Aileen Graham
Councillor Tommy Sandford

Independent Members

Steven McMillen

Designated Organisations

Alison Methven, NIHE
D/Chief Inspector Gary Reid, PSNI

Chief Inspector David Moore, PSNI
Pauline Smart, EA

Staff Present

Glenn Thomas, Safer City Coordinator
Alyson Crompton, Project Officer
Andrew Charles, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

Apologies

David Geddis (Vice-Chair)
Jane Lappin, PBNI
Dermot Magorrian, YJA

1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The Chair welcomed members of the public and DPCSP Members to the meeting and invited Detective Chief Inspector Gary Reid to provide information on underreporting of crime.

2. Presentation on Under-reporting of Crime by the PSNI

- i. Detective Chief Inspector Gary Reid gave a presentation on the underreporting of crime in Northern Ireland. He advised that statistics relating to the whole of the UK suggested that between 50-60% of crimes were not reported. He also noted that anti-social behaviour was not characterised as a crime under Home Office Guidelines.
- ii. The audience were advised that if large amounts of crime went unrecorded, it impacted on the effectiveness of the PSNI's analysis of crime and the resulting prioritisation of resources. D/Chief Inspector Gary Reid also encouraged people to recorded signal crime such as anti-social behaviour to ensure that it was not allowed to develop into more serious criminal damage.
- iii. A Councillor agreed and provided the example of Council funded alleygates which were allocated to areas following analysis of crime and anti-social behaviour figures.
- iv. In response to a query regarding what crimes were reported at a later stage, D/Chief Inspector Gary Reid advised that often the victims of hate crime and domestic violence suffered in silence.

- v. With regards to Officer training, Mr Reid advised that Officers could not be specifically trained to deal every group and/or issue, however the public could expect Officers to take reports and complaints seriously and to liaise with victims about how they wished to proceed and to keep them updated.
- vi. In response to comments regarding vulnerable people being left at hospitals and the use of medical cards identifying specific health issues, D/Chief Inspector Reid advised that the police could involve disability advocates if necessary and had in the past funded contact cards which were often useful in explaining certain behavioural characteristics to Officers.
- vii. A member of the public questioned whether in measuring their effectiveness, the PSNI would be moving to an Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) approach similar to that being implemented by other statutory bodies.
- viii. D/Chief Inspector advised that the police were working on a qualitative basis and understood that sometimes low levels of certain crimes had a high impact on people. He also advised of the importance of improving community confidence. The Safer City Coordinator advised that the PCSP was beginning to work to the OBA model and so this would have an impact on projects delivered alongside the PSNI.
- ix. Discussion took place regarding the impact that small amounts of funding can have on anti-social behaviour but also the need to tackle the root causes of crime in order to make a long term change.
- x. A member of the public suggested that the Tullycarnett area had become a victim of its own success as following years of positive engagement with the Castlereagh Neighbourhood Officers and low levels of crime, it was now being overlooked within the Belfast area. It was noted that young people had in the past known the names of the local Neighbourhood Officers, however this had now been lost and so confidence in reporting issues was reducing.
- xi. D/Chief Inspector Reid advised that Officer numbers had reduced from 15,000 to 7,000 in recent years, and would likely be lower if it were not for the Northern Ireland context. He added that demand models dictated where these Officers were predominantly placed which underlined the need to report all crime to the PSNI as it demonstrated need, risks and developing issues. He also added that the PSNI were no longer able to respond to calls in the way that they had done in the past.
- xii. It was agreed that groups such as the PCSP were important in allowing the public to engage with the PSNI in order to rebuild confidence.
- xiii. Chief Inspector Moore advised that he was pushing for a form of more localised policing given that Belfast was a higher crime area than the rest of Northern Ireland with a large percentage of the population.
- xiv. The Chair thanked D/Chief Inspector Reid for his presentation and invited Constables Donna McGrady and Michelle Creaney to provide the audience with information on online safety.

3. Presentation on Online Safety by the PSNI

- i. The audience was provided with information on the PSNI's CHAT SHARE THINK Programme which provides young people, parents and teachers with information on the law relating to sharing indecent images, the risks of online relationships, on-line grooming and general internet safety.
- ii. Constable McGrady advised that the age of criminal responsibility was 10 while the age of consent was 16; however young people were considered as children until the age of 18. She advised that as a result, legal issues would arise, despite consent being given, when young people under the age of 18 took part in what is commonly referred to as 'sexting', or when sharing indecent images.
- iii. The group was advised to watch a range of Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre video clips available on their website 'ThinkuKnow', particularly 'Exposed' which deals with the subjects of Sexting and Cyber Bullying.
- iv. Constable Creaney also provided information on the mobile phone App 'Snap Chat' and how it is used by young people to save and pass on indecent photos, the dangers of on-line grooming and what parents should do to protect their children on-line. She also described how behaviour can determine the sexualisation of photos and suggested that considering if photos were suitable for parents or grandparents was a useful way to ask young people to think about what they post on-line.
- v. The Chair thanked the Officers for their presentation and noted that the education of parents was very important.
- vi. The Safer City Coordinator suggested that the DPCSP could look into running a pilot project for parents and guardians alongside the PSNI in order to inform adults of the risks.
- vii. It was also suggested that parents would benefit from further information about drugs and 'legal highs'.
- viii. Chief Inspector Moore reminded the group that these issues were prevalent in East Belfast with an incident linked to online issues and attempted suicide reported earlier in the day. Constable Creaney added that even innocent pictures posted online can be used by offenders for various purposes.
- ix. The Chair once again thanked the speakers for their comments and the audience for attending. She then closed the meeting.