

Community safety partnerships

Briefing from the LGA for prospective police and crime commissioners



The concept that local multi-agency partnership working was vital in preventing and reducing crime developed in the 1980s. Following a number of initiatives to create such partnerships on a voluntary basis they were given a statutory basis in 1998. The Crime and Disorder Act imposed a duty on certain key public sector organisations (initially just councils and the police) to work together to make places safer, a requirement that has since been strengthened by subsequent legislation.

The Act created Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), one for each local government area, which brought together the police and local authority, and subsequently fire and rescue services, the police authority, health, and probation to formulate strategies for the reduction of crime. This led to increased data sharing across agencies, better joint working, and ultimately a significant impact on crime and disorder within areas. Recognising that “policing is too important to be left to the police alone”, as Ronnie Flanagan put it, CDRPs contributed enormously to the reduction in reported crime in England and Wales from 1995 onwards.

Particular successes of CDRPs (or, as they have always been known in Wales and since 2010 in England, CSPs - Community Safety Partnerships) include effective multi-agency responses to anti-social behaviour, the powerful Integrated Offender Management programmes that have had such influence on acquisitive crime figures, and a vastly improved response to domestic abuse over the past 15 years.

Following the 2010 election, the coalition government reviewed CSPs and found that they were effective in reducing crime and putting communities first. They freed up some of the statutory obligations on their processes and structures, and the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 gave a clear legal basis to the relationship between CSPs and incoming Police and Crime Commissioners.

There are five key relationships enshrined in the legislation. Firstly, the PCC and CSP must have regard to each other’s priorities within their plans. This should encourage joint working on mutual priorities, and ensure that the PCC priorities are tackled at the local level, and the CSP priorities are reflected and resourced. Secondly the PCC has a power of accountability over CSPs; they can call in representatives of CSPs in the force area to a meeting to discuss strategies to reduce crime; thirdly, they can request a written report from a CSP. PCCs can approve mergers between CSPs (many have already merged), but cannot dictate mergers; and finally PCCs can make grants to CSPs for the reduction of crime and disorder (but are under no obligation to do so!).

Briefing

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In practice, a PCC will need to work closely with CSPs in order to deliver their priorities. Although PCCs will have their own funding, CSPs will continue to align mainstream resources from their statutory partners; by aligning this with those resources available to a PCC, a far greater impact on crime and disorder should be possible than if either went it alone.

CSPs oversee a range of innovative work to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. In Hull issues with prolific offenders led to the creation of the Minerva Project, a social enterprise established by the CSP to tackle resettlement issues around non-statutory offenders. The current performance figures for the project show that it has had 715 clients actively engage with it; from this only 102 have re-offended within the target period of 12 weeks. This gives a re-offending rate of 14.69 per cent. The project now employs 25 ex offenders full time within the Social Enterprise. On a cost benefit analysis Hull calculate they have saved the public purse £31,087,939.

All formally declared PCC candidates will receive a copy of the LGA's forthcoming guide to working with CSPs prior to the PCC election. You can find further information on CSPs via the [LGA Community Safety webpages](#) or the [Home Office site on CSPs](#).

If you require any further information or have any questions concerning this briefing please contact:

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