

UKDPC

UK DRUG POLICY COMMISSION

Refocusing Drug-Related Law Enforcement to Address Harms

Full review report

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The UKDPC brings together senior figures from policing, public policy and the media along with leading experts from the drug treatment and medical research fields. For more information about UKDPC Commissioners and publications please see Annex E

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Summary

“Although entrenched markets may be difficult to disable, they can be guided by enforcement action so that they do the least possible damage.”

World Drug Report, UN Office for Drugs and Crime (2009).

“Harm reduction, rather than quantities of drugs seized or individuals convicted, is a more useful way of prioritising activities to improve the lives of citizens in the UK.”

Extending Our Reach: A comprehensive approach to tackling serious organised crime, HM Government (2009).

OVERVIEW

This report describes the findings of a project conducted by the UK Drug Policy Commission that seeks to consider how an explicit refocusing of drug law enforcement on the reduction of drug-related harms could deliver a real impact on the drug-related harms experienced by individuals and communities. More specifically, it seeks to:

- identify and promote, to enforcement agencies, policymakers, politicians and the general public, the contribution that drug-related enforcement activity (including drug law enforcement) can make to reducing drug harms, and
- develop a framework for considering different enforcement activities from a harm-reduction perspective. This could provide a basis for analysing and developing policy and practice, performance measurement, cost-benefit analysis and evaluation at both local and national levels.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the project, the approach taken and the concept of taking a harm-focused approach to drug-related enforcement activity. The project aimed to develop a framework for addressing drug harms that fits within current enforcement practice; Chapter 2 provides a summary of the most relevant components of the current policy and practice context.

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the published international evidence on the impacts of different types of enforcement activity on harms, and also provides a range of UK case studies identified in the course of the project (more details of which can be found in Appendix B). This chapter will be of interest to people considering options for tackling drug problems.

Chapter 4 describes a framework which can be used to implement a harm-focused approach at all stages of enforcement activity. It includes a number of tools developed as part of the consultation process that could assist the application of this framework.

This chapter will be of particular interest to enforcement agencies and community safety partnerships tasked with developing drug strategies and operations.

Chapter 5 highlights the key findings and draws out the implications for policy and practice, and hence will be of particular interest to those with a policymaking or strategic role.

INTRODUCTION

Although drug laws reinforced by a level of enforcement appear to have restricted supply and demand of illicit drugs, 'more' enforcement generally does not lead to 'less' supply (established drug markets are too resilient) and does not necessarily reduce drug problems, and it can even add to the problems experienced by communities.

However, this is not to say that enforcement has no impact on illicit drug markets. The characteristics of markets change in response to action taken by authorities. If we accept that some drug markets cause more harm than others, this provides a largely untapped opportunity for enforcement agencies to target those that are most harmful and 'guide' or shape even the most resilient drug markets into less 'noxious' forms. This could provide real benefits for the UK and its communities, even if the amount of drugs sold and used remained the same.

In this project we sought to build on existing knowledge and expertise, rather than undertake new research, and hence we adopted a consultative approach in which we sought to involve as wide and diverse a group as possible.

The project has had several components:

- A series of essays was commissioned to introduce the concept of a harm-reduction approach to enforcement and to stimulate debate about the issues.
- Desk research was undertaken; first, published and grey literature was reviewed to identify what is known about the impact of enforcement on drug-related harms in their widest sense, in order to develop a framework for further work. Second, we reviewed relevant enforcement guidance to identify how our proposed harm-reduction framework could fit within current practice and initiatives.
- Consultative work was carried out to draw on the vast expertise within enforcement agencies and drug partnerships and to promote uptake of the framework and approach generated by the project. This consultation had several functions: to promote discussion, to identify how different stakeholder groups view and prioritise drug harms and the role of enforcement, to identify the extent to which current enforcement practice addresses drug harms, and to identify unpublished evaluations and case studies of relevant practice.

CURRENT POLICY AND PRACTICE CONTEXT

The concept of using enforcement to reduce harms is already embedded to some extent within policy and practice. Both internationally and within the UK, there are some good examples of enforcement practice where the harm-causing characteristics of drug markets are considered and responses to address them are deployed. A

problem-oriented approach to policing lends itself well to the development of approaches aimed at tackling drug harms.

The focus on neighbourhood policing, and the shift to performance measures that focus on community confidence in policing and people's perceptions of the extent of drug problems in their local area, are also supportive of this approach. Local partnerships will also be key players in delivering any programme aimed at reducing the harms caused by drug markets.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DRUG HARMS – REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE

Within the literature the evidence relating to the impact of enforcement on drug-related harms is limited as many enforcement operations do not specifically target these harms, focusing instead on the number of arrests and seizures. In general, the picture obtained from the limited evidence available is complex. Some harms have been shown to have been increased by some activities and decreased by others. For example, one study which involved the community in crime prevention training found a decrease in vandalism, but several others which involved police crackdowns reported increases. Also, it should be noted that a considerable number of studies have shown no impact one way or another on the harms that were sought to be reduced.

In general, the evidence relating to higher level enforcement activities is limited, but what there is fails to provide support for seizures or crop eradication strategies.

A number of studies have focused on open street drug markets, which are often a priority for communities. In general, these suggest that high intensity enforcement operations targeting drug 'hot spots', such as crackdowns and high-visibility policing, may have an initial impact, but this is not sustained and markets tend to return or are displaced. Partnership approaches using civil penalties, such as nuisance abatement orders, were found to be effective against drug dealing, and often in reducing crime and disorder more generally. The evidence highlights the need for clarity about the harms or problems that are being targeted, as different approaches have been found to be more effective against different types of harms.

Another approach is to target specific individuals or groups. This includes 'specific deterrence', an example of which is the Boston Gun Project. By giving rival gang members a direct, explicit warning that further violence would bring a swift and heavy response, a dramatic reduction in violent incidents was achieved. Other targeted interventions include arrest referral and diversion schemes, for which the evidence is generally fairly positive; it suggests that such schemes can lead to reductions in crime and also to improved health outcomes for individual drug users. In contrast, the two evaluations of undercover operations included in the reviews we identified showed no impact on drug use, drug offences, supply or demand for drugs or on violent or property crime.

The evidence review also highlighted the considerable potential for a range of public health and social harms to be generated by drug market enforcement activities, particularly at the street level. An example is the health harms that are associated with injecting drug users rushing their injection to reduce the period at which they are at

risk. There is also evidence of increased violence following market disruption caused by enforcement activities.

Within this report we have included a number of case studies covering a range of enforcement activities within the UK and have looked at what is known about their impact on harms. These studies cover three broad approaches that could be used to deliver a net reduction in harms:

- targeting individuals or groups identified as being particularly 'noxious' or harmful – for example, diverting problematic drug-using offenders into treatment; proactive engagement with offenders, as in the Prolific and other Priority Offender programme; prioritising individuals or organised crime groups on the basis of the harms they cause; and more effective use of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002;
- targeting areas where drug problems are particularly damaging – for example, multi-agency, multi-component strategies involving the community;
- targeting behaviours – for example, the use of civil powers (such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) to reduce drug nuisance.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR HARM-FOCUSED DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE UK

A focus on drug harms requires a more explicit consideration and broader understanding of drug harms at all stages of the enforcement process. This report provides a number of tools to assist with the following enforcement issues:

1. Defining the problem – both in terms of the harms caused and the characteristics of drug markets that lead to these harms.
2. Prioritising areas for action – consultation with members of the community to understand their concerns and perceptions of how drug markets affect their lives.
3. Considering possible responses and their likely impact – to ensure that even when displacement and the potentially harmful unintended consequences of enforcement are taken into account, there is likely to be a clear 'net reduction' in harm to communities.
4. Identifying measures of success and impact – these should go beyond simple numbers of arrests and seizures or levels of drug price and purity, to demonstrate real gains on reducing drug problems.
5. Implementing an operation – taking steps to mitigate any likely increases in harms caused by enforcement interventions, while maximising the potential for reductions in harm.
6. Evaluating to understand the impact of operations on 'real world' harms – much more effort and resources are required to demonstrate a sustainable improvement for the relevant communities.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Our consultations have revealed a widespread view among enforcement personnel and agencies that they have a role to play in reducing drug harms. We have highlighted the clear potential that exists for a more harm-focused approach to drug law enforcement, which could provide a range of benefits including:

- improved partnership-working, by providing a common language and framework for identifying priority objectives;
- provide impetus for new ways of responding to the problem which could lead to innovative and more effective responses;
- the development of better measures of impact, helping to develop a clearer understanding of what works and which interventions are most cost-effective;
- enhanced communication with communities, providing them with a clearer understanding of the impact of enforcement on the things that matter most to them; and
- above all, a **real impact** on the harms experienced by individuals, communities and society associated with drug use and, particularly, drug markets.

The framework we have developed builds on current trends in enforcement practice. We have sought to develop a flexible framework for planning and evaluating drug enforcement activities at all levels, which takes account of the broad nature of the different drug problems and the wide range of potential enforcement activities. It can be applied within other approaches that agencies are already using, such as problem-oriented or neighbourhood policing.

In developing the framework we have been hampered by the paucity of evidence on the impact of enforcement on drug harms. Although many operations identify drug harms in the problem definition and planning stages, this is rarely carried through into any assessment of impact. It is therefore essential that new harm-focused measures are developed and used in the evaluation of drug-related enforcement activity. Given the level of investment in drug enforcement activity it is essential that a culture of evaluation is developed. All drug enforcement operations should be assessed in terms of their impact on drug harms, not only to demonstrate positive impact on communities, but also to allow for continuous improvements and ensure value for money.

1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

A key aim of drug-related law enforcement activity has been to reduce the supply of illicit drugs. Enforcement agencies seize drugs and arrest those involved in production and supply in order to make drugs more difficult and expensive to obtain and therefore to reduce use. Evidence suggest that, initially at least, drug laws reinforced by a level of enforcement can achieve this – restricting supply and creating higher prices for drugs – as is evidenced by the very high street prices of drugs compared with their cost at the place of origin (Wilson & Stevens, 2008).

However, a number of research and evidence reviews (e.g. Mazerolle et al, 2005) including our own (McSweeney et al, 2008); have documented that beyond this initial gain, enforcement activities find it difficult to make a significant and sustained impact on street-level drug availability in well-established markets, such as most of those in the UK. These markets are resilient and adapt to enforcement efforts – for instance, the gap left by arrested dealers or traffickers will usually soon be filled – so there is a high risk that communities will not feel any ‘real’ benefit. International comparisons suggest that more enforcement is not associated with lower availability or use (Reuter et al, 2009) and that complete eradication of drug markets has not proved possible.

There are also many examples where enforcement activities have had negative consequences (MacCoun & Reuter, 2001, Reuter et al, 2009). The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has identified a wide range of unintended consequences of drug controls:

- a huge criminal black market, with associated violence and other crime;
- policy displacement (the opportunity costs of high expenditure on enforcement);
- geographical displacement, such as the development of new producer countries or distribution routes;
- substance displacement, with new drugs being developed all the time;
- the stigmatisation of people suffering from addiction, which may impede access to treatment and rehabilitation. (UNODC, 2008)

Since 2002, the UK drug strategy’s primary aim has been to reduce the harm that drugs cause to society, including communities, individuals and their families (Home Office Drugs Strategy Directorate, 2002), and the most recent strategy contains an explicit goal of ‘preventing harm to communities by reducing the supply of drugs’ (HM Government, 2008a). While the reduction of drug availability has remained the goal of supply-side activity, this is explicitly linked to harm reduction, and the national performance measure is based on community perceptions of drug nuisance. This indicates that harm reduction is recognised as an appropriate goal for enforcement.

Similarly, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) specifically aims to reduce the harm from the illegal drugs trade within the UK.

The growing acceptance of the need for a greater focus on the harms associated with drug markets, both internationally and nationally, is clearly demonstrated in the following extracts:

“Although entrenched markets may be difficult to disable, they can be guided by enforcement action so that they do the least possible damage.”

World Drug Report, UNODC (2009).

“Harm reduction, rather than quantities of drugs seized or individuals convicted, is a more useful way of prioritising activities to improve the lives of citizens in the UK.”

Extending Our Reach: A comprehensive approach to tackling serious organised crime, HM Government (2009).

Despite this recognition that enforcement can make an impact on a wide range of ‘real world’ harms – to individuals, neighbourhoods and the wider community – there has been little discussion of the potential of this approach, what it might mean for enforcement agencies and how success might be readily measured. Yet it seems likely that law enforcement can deliver real and sustainable impacts by adopting tactics that seek not just to contain drug markets but also to reduce the damage and harms caused by those that remain.

THE CONCEPT OF ENFORCEMENT TO REDUCE DRUG-RELATED HARMS

To introduce the concept of an enforcement approach focusing on harm and to stimulate debate on the issues, we commissioned a seminal essay from US academics Jonathan Caulkins and Peter Reuter, and four responses from UK experts (all available to download without charge at www.ukdpc.org.uk/resources/Safer_Communities_Jan09_Special_Issue.pdf).

Toward a Harm-Reduction Approach to Enforcement (Caulkins & Reuter, 2009) considered the idea that harm reduction could potentially be given a much broader application than in its traditional focus on harms to drug users, and that there could be considerable benefits from applying it to the considerable harms generated by the production, distribution and control of drugs. The essay provides a detailed and thought-provoking account of the opportunities available for enforcement, focusing on reducing market-related harms, drawing on mainly international examples, such as the Boston Gun Project (see Chapter 3). It suggests that, since ‘not all dealers are equally destructive’, one aim for enforcement could be to reshape the drug market, by making the most ‘noxious’ forms of selling uncompetitive relative to less harmful practices.

Caulkins and Reuter describe how the resilience and adaptability of drug markets and their ‘push-down/pop-up’ character (where markets are displaced), which is the bane of efforts to eradicate drug markets, actually opens up the possibility for efforts to mould or shape the market. They suggest that such an approach is more likely to

succeed as “for enforcement to suppress a particularly noxious part of the market, it is not necessary to make that submarket or that selling practice uneconomical; it is only necessary to make it uncompetitive relative to other, less noxious forms of selling”.

The responses of four UK experts to the essay can be summarised as follows:

- David Bolt (2009) addresses the issues from the perspective of the national agency, SOCA. As he points out, “The concept of harm reduction now sits at the heart of the UK’s strategy for tackling serious organised crime (the UK Control Strategy)”, although he highlights the complexity of the problems and the incompleteness of our understanding of the current picture. He endorses Caulkins and Reuter’s proposition that a focus on harms will allow enforcement agencies to think creatively about drug problems, but raises concerns that, while ‘manipulating a drugs market might be a pragmatic approach, it “smacks of defeatism” and may prove hard to sell to governments and the public unless the benefits are clearly felt on the ground.
- Leo Boland and Steve Kavanagh (2009) consider the implications of a harm-reduction approach to enforcement at a neighbourhood level. They question the assumption that crime is predominantly a police problem and do not accept that the police play the lead role in helping to contain the harmful side effects of drug abuse or addiction, emphasising a partnership approach. They highlight the way in which harm reduction fits well with a local authority approach that understands the needs of residents.
- John Grieve (2009) considers implications for UK police forces within a framework created by Goldstein, which places drug-related crime into three categories: psychopharmacological, economic–compulsive and systemic. He suggests that “Caulkins and Reuter’s work can be applied from the US to the different environments within the UK”, and that the approach could be incorporated within the tasking and co-ordination process for the National Intelligence Model (see Chapter 2), with implications for policy, planning and operations, intelligence, training and tactics.
- Tristram Hicks (2009) considers the harms caused by the economics of the drugs market and how these can be tackled – to alter the fundamental nature of the trade – using the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. He suggests that to use the Act within a harm-reduction frame, “police would need to target wealthy drug barons because the aggregation of money is directly related to harm” and that “Police could, for example, target criminals who have a criminal lifestyle above those who do not”. He suggests that such an explicit targeting of harms could further enhance the effectiveness of current practice.

The argument in favour of an approach that seeks to reduce the harm caused by drug markets can be summarised as follows:

1. It should not be assumed that arrests and drug seizures will automatically have a positive impact on communities. Where markets are established, they are adaptable and resilient – enforcement action therefore struggles to have a sustainable impact on availability, and may also have unintended negative consequences.

2. Not all drug markets are equally harmful. For example, open drug markets may be more harmful than closed ones, and some dealers may be more violent than others.
3. The very adaptability of drug markets that frustrates efforts to eradicate supply provides enforcement with the potential to shape the market, for example by causing an open market to become closed or to move to a non-residential area. Such changes can have a real impact on harms experienced by the host community, even if the quantity of drugs used and sold remains the same. The confidence of the community that local harms are being addressed can be enhanced.

However, this approach quickly leads to many questions:

- How should success in terms of reducing harms be measured?
- How should harm(s) be prioritised? Should we give greater weight to a small harm that affects a large group of people or to a large harm that affects only a small group?
- Is it ever justifiable to intervene in a way that increases harms for one group in order to decrease harms for another?
- Is it ever justifiable not to act on information about criminal activity?
- Can the ends (safer, more confident communities) ever justify the means (more flexibility in delivering justice)?
- How can potential unintended consequences of interventions be identified and minimised?

This review cannot answer all of these questions for enforcement agencies – the answers will depend on many factors specific to context – but it does aim to provide a framework that can be used to consider them more explicitly.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS REVIEW

The aims of this review are as follows:

1. To identify and promote the contribution that drug-related enforcement activity (including drug law enforcement) can make to reducing drug harms.
2. To develop a framework for considering different enforcement activities from a 'real impact' perspective focusing on harms. This could provide a basis for analysing and developing policy and practice, performance measurement, cost-benefit analysis and evaluation at both local and national levels.

In the UK, the move towards a greater focus on reducing drug harms through enforcement activity has been piecemeal and the extent to which it has been embraced varies considerably across regions and agencies. There is no specific guidance for enforcement agencies on how to adopt such an approach or measure success. In Australia, *A Framework for Measuring the Performance of Drug Law Enforcement* (Homel & Willis, 2007) has been developed through a collaborative process. This identified measures across four outcome areas, including improved public health and improved public amenity alongside the more traditional outcomes areas of

reduced drug-related crime, drug crime and organised crime. Our review took a similar consultative approach to explore the extent to which current drug-related enforcement activity addresses total drug harms.

We have sought to develop a generic framework that can be applied to all enforcement activity within the UK, including border control and national programmes targeting serious organised crime groups. However, this review has not considered activities outside UK borders, which are considerable. Additionally, most of the evaluation literature on enforcement relates to local policing and this has led to a disproportionate focus on local policing examples.

METHODS

We have sought to build on existing knowledge and expertise, rather than undertake new research, and this has led us to adopt a consultative approach with as wide and diverse a group as possible.

The review comprised several components:

- a series of essays to introduce the concept (discussed above);
- a review of relevant enforcement strategies and guidance to identify how our proposed harm-reduction framework could fit within current practice and initiatives (see Chapter 2);
- a review of published and grey literature to identify what is known about the impact of enforcement on drug-related harms in their widest sense and the different approaches that are taken by enforcement agencies to addressing them (see Chapter 3 and the list of references at the end of this report);
- consultative work to draw on the vast expertise within enforcement agencies and drug partnerships (see Appendix A for a list of groups and individuals consulted); this has had several functions:
 - to identify how different stakeholder groups view and prioritise drug harms and the role of enforcement in reducing these harms;
 - to identify the extent to which current enforcement practice addresses drug harms, either implicitly or explicitly, and any barriers to extending the approach;
 - to identify unpublished evaluations and relevant case studies (for summaries of the case studies see Appendix B); and
 - to identify potential approaches to assessing impact of enforcement activity.
- an opinion poll completed by over 400 UK enforcement agency personnel (see Appendix D).

2. Current policy and practice context

KEY PRACTICES AND CHANGES

A number of developments in recent years have changed the delivery landscape for drug-related enforcement and influenced both its strategic direction and tactical delivery. Notably, language about the harms caused by drugs has begun to appear consistently in government policy and strategy in this area. (This has also been reflected in other government strategies, including the Border and Immigration Agency (now UKBA) enforcement strategy, which promises to prioritise those illegal migrants causing the most harm to the UK, such as those involved in drug trafficking (Home Office, 2007).) Some of the key changes and relevant practices include the following:

New agencies

- The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) was established with a harm-reduction remit, bringing together staff from the National Crime Squad, the National Criminal Intelligence Service, HM Revenue and Customs and the Immigration Service and, more recently, has incorporated the Asset Recovery Agency.
- The UK Border Agency (UKBA) has combined the work of the Border and Immigration Agency, UK Visas and the border-related work of HM Revenue and Customs.

Strategic direction

- **New ten-year drug strategy, *Drugs: Protecting families and communities*** (HM Government 2008a): the 'enforcement' strand of the strategy focuses on:
 - targeting those offenders likely to cause most harm, through a multi-agency approach;
 - involving the community through a neighbourhood policing approach;
 - tackling the supply of drugs to the UK through international partnerships; and
 - extending the use of asset recovery powers.
- **Policing Green Paper, *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our communities together*** (HM Government 2008b): a range of proposals draw on the findings of the Flanagan and Casey Reviews (Flanagan, 2008; Casey, 2008). The unifying theme was an emphasis on local accountability for policing and its priorities, underlined by the proposal for a single top-down performance measure for the police service based on improving public confidence in whether local crime and community safety priorities are being addressed.

- The recently refreshed **Serious Organised Crime Strategy *Extending our reach: a comprehensive approach to tackling serious organised crime*** (HM Government, 2009): includes the development of a system for prioritising the most harmful organised crime groups and individuals, as well as a wider use of asset recovery and tax investigation powers and a focus on ensuring that government, law enforcement agencies, businesses and the public work together to reduce the harm caused by organised crime.
- In **Scotland**, the key policy areas (policing, justice, education, health and social services) are all devolved. The Scottish drug strategy, *The Road to Recovery* (Scottish Government, 2008), stresses the harms that drugs cause to individuals and society and identifies the need to “continue to take steps through law enforcement to reduce these harms and protect communities”. The drug strategy produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland (ACPOS) has a harm-reduction strand (primarily supporting partners in ‘traditional’ health harm reduction activities) and a demand-reduction strand (which includes working with partners in promoting recovery for users and also in prevention activities)(ACPOS, 2009).
- **Northern Ireland** also has all relevant powers devolved, but in **Wales** policing and justice have not been devolved. Both these countries have published drug and alcohol strategies (DHSSPSNI, 2006; Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) which recognise the harms caused by both alcohol and drugs to users, their families and/or their carers and the wider community.

Delivery

- **National Intelligence Model (NIM)** – the NIM is a “business model for law enforcement” (ACPO, 2005). It promotes a proactive, intelligence-led and problem-solving approach to policing by providing a framework for analysis of information and intelligence. All forces in England and Wales were required to implement NIM minimum standards from April 2004. The NIM operates at three levels of policing (reflecting policing structures, not necessarily the nature of the problem):
 - Level 1 – local crime and disorder, e.g. crimes affecting a Basic Command Unit (BCU) or small police force area;
 - Level 2 – cross-border issues affecting more than one BCU within a force or in different forces, or regional crime activity;
 - Level 3 – serious and organised crime, usually operating on a national or international scale.

The guidance published to support implementation of the NIM promotes a co-operative approach to policing; for example, by encouraging the inclusion of partnership information and community concerns in the strategic assessment process, and suggesting that partners can be invited to tasking and co-ordination meetings (ACPO, 2006a).

- **Neighbourhood policing** – neighbourhood policing teams have been introduced throughout England and Wales. They are made up of police officers and police community support officers, often together with special constables, local authority wardens, volunteers and partners. Their stated aims are to provide people who live or work in a neighbourhood with:
 - access – to local policing services through a named point of contact;

- influence – over policing priorities in their neighbourhood;
- interventions – joint action with partners and the public;
- answers – sustainable solutions and feedback on what is being done.

The 2006 Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) paper *Practice Advice on Professionalising the Business of Neighbourhood Policing* (ACPO, 2006b) emphasises that “a local approach to policing should be flexible and adapted to local circumstances”.

- **Problem-oriented policing (POP)** – a method of problem solving adopted by police forces and other agencies across the United Kingdom (for example, see www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/fearofcrime0208.htm and Leigh et al, 1998). POP is about identifying and solving underlying community problems, rather than simply responding to individual incidents, and involves the police, communities and local agencies working together to identify and tackle specific problems. Many police forces and other organisations have adopted the approach known as SARA to manage the work in a systematic way. The SARA process has four stages:
 - scanning – where problems are identified using local knowledge and data from a wide range of organisations;
 - analysis – where the data are used to identify the problems caused;
 - response – where solutions to the problem are devised using situation and social approaches described in the previous section; and
 - assessment – looking back to see if the solution worked and what lessons can be learned.
- **Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) and continued emphasis on asset recovery at all levels** – the political drive behind asset recovery (recovering ‘ill-gotten gains’) as a tangible and visible form of justice has been matched by a belief among law enforcement agencies that going after criminals’ assets has a real impact and that POCA has provided them with an effective set of tools. SOCA has a financial strand to each of its investigations and research shows that criminals themselves are most concerned about this kind of action (Matrix Knowledge Group, 2007). A total of £135.7 million of assets was recovered in 2007/08 (Home Office, 2009a).
- **Local partnerships** – throughout the UK there are a number of formal partnerships at the local level, such as Local Strategic Partnerships, community safety partnerships, drug and alcohol action teams and local Criminal Justice Boards, which bring together representatives of the key agencies at the local level that are tasked with addressing the issues of drugs, crime and community safety. Some of these are underpinned by legislation and have been supported in the past through special funding arrangements. With the new emphasis on localism along with the reframing of public service agreements, local partnerships are increasingly important as vehicles to initiate and secure inter-agency support to address public safety and public health concerns. Therefore, they will be key players in any programme to address drug market harms.

Performance assessment and monitoring

The effectiveness of drug-related law enforcement agencies still appears to be largely portrayed by politicians, the media and enforcement agencies themselves in terms of numbers of arrests for drug offences and drug seizures, and although these are no

longer national targets, they may be used as local performance indicators. Other indicators of impact often used by enforcement agencies as performance measures include:

- the disruption of organised criminal networks;
- assets recovered from producers and traffickers;
- money laundering disruption;
- the closure of premises used for the production and/or supply of illegal drugs.

However, these are all measures of activity and output rather than real impact and outcomes. While they may sometimes be associated with an overall reduction in drug use and associated harms, this will not necessarily always be the case. Even drug price and purity measures, used as a proxy for availability, are not necessarily suitable for demonstrating real benefits for communities. For instance, increased price would usually be hailed as a success for enforcement efforts, but it may lead to higher levels of acquisitive crime experienced by a community.

In our survey of over 400 enforcement personnel, most (68%) agreed that the success of drug-related enforcement activity should be judged by its impact on drug harms and an overwhelming majority (85%) thought there is insufficient measurement of enforcement outcomes to know if harms to the community have actually been reduced. Only 2% strongly agreed that current targets for enforcement agencies are a good measure of the impact they have on drug related harms (see Appendix D).

However, the national performance targets (replicated at local level) that accompany the new Drug Strategy are more outcome focused than those used previously. There are four targets that directly relate to drugs under Public Service Agreement (PSA) 25:

- the number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment;
- the percentage of the public perceiving drug use or dealing to be a problem in their area;
- the rate of drug-related offending; and
- the proportion of young people frequently using drugs, alcohol or volatile substances;

and four others under PSA 23 that may also be related to drugs:

- the level of serious acquisitive crimes (burglary, robbery and vehicle crime);
- public confidence in local agencies involved in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB);
- the percentage of people perceiving ASB as a problem (this includes the measure of perceptions of drug use and drug dealing in PSA 25 above); and
- the level of proven reoffending by young and adult offenders.

In addition there is a target to recover £250 million of criminal assets by 2009/10, double the amount recovered in 2006/07. However, this numerical target may not encourage agencies to focus their asset recovery where it might have the most impact on reducing harm – instead encouraging them to go for the ‘easy pickings’.

Taken together, these targets reflect some drug harm outcomes (crime, public confidence/distress) and some intermediate outputs (numbers in treatment, drug use prevalence, asset recovery). However, there will be many different ways in which enforcement might seek to impact on these harms (and also a range of factors outside enforcement activity that might also have an impact), and so it will be very important to have a clear understanding of how the different approaches act to reduce harms and how effective they are.

3. Law enforcement and drug harms – review of the evidence

INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE FROM THE PUBLISHED LITERATURE

In summarising the findings from UK and international literature we have concentrated on the most relevant material from previous reviews of the field, which are listed in Appendix A. The examples selected illustrate the range of interventions available and the variability often shown in impact, which is a common feature in the reviews.

Overall, we found the quality of evaluations of enforcement activity extremely variable and coverage is patchy. On top of this, most focus on activities surrounding arrests and drug seizures so the extent to which wider enforcement activity impacts on wider drug-related harms is unclear. Published evidence of the impact of higher level enforcement activity on harms is even more limited. It must also be borne in mind that much of the evidence comes from the USA so the findings may not be transferable.

Several of the most detailed assessments come from Australia, where thinking and practice on the role of enforcement in reducing harm is more developed than in other countries. However, even here the focus tends to be limited to enforcement agencies supporting more traditional harm-reduction approaches aimed at reducing health harms, such as drug overdoses, in addition to and separate from 'traditional' enforcement.

McSweeney et al. (2008) in their review of the evidence relating to drug markets and distribution networks in the UK reported that:

"Although there is reasonable empirical evidence that drug-law enforcement action can have some localised impacts, any benefits tend to be short-lived and disappear once an intervention is removed or ceases to operate. Recent reviews indicate that geographically targeted problem-oriented policing interventions aimed at drug hotspots and involving partnerships between the police and wider community groups appear to be more effective at reducing problems related to the drug market (such as street-level dealing, crime and other forms of anti-social behaviour) than conventional law enforcement-only approaches."

However, they also point out that:

"law enforcement efforts can have a significant negative impact on the nature and extent of harms associated with drugs by (unintentionally) increasing threats to public health and public safety, and by altering both the behaviour of individual drug users and the stability and operation of

drug markets (e.g. by displacing dealers and related activity elsewhere or increasing the incidence of violence as displaced dealers clash with established ones)“.

Mazerolle, Rombouts and Soole (2007) included **international/national interventions**, such as **interdiction and drug seizures**, in their systematic review of the evidence of effectiveness of enforcement activities. They identified five studies that evaluated the impact of drug seizures. Three of these found that seizures of heroin had no apparent effect on price, purity or street-level availability, or on harms (including drug-use patterns, drug-related deaths or overdoses), treatment enrolment or rates of crime and arrest. However, one study reported a reduction in heroin overdose deaths. Another study is quoted as suggesting that seizures are cost-effective, returning \$5.20 in associated benefits to the community for each \$1.00 spent, but what these benefits are is not explained in the review. Overall, Mazerolle and co-authors reached the conclusion that there is little evidence on which to base an overall assessment, but the evidence that does exist fails to provide support for the seizures or crop eradication strategies.

A number of studies have focused on **open street drug markets**, which are often a priority for communities. *Drug Law Enforcement: The evidence* (Mazerolle et al., 2005) summarises the evaluations of a range of interventions. One of these, a police crackdown on street corners suffering high levels of drug activity in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, resulted in a significant reduction in drug crimes (approximately 143.7 fewer crimes per month). However, another large-scale enforcement operation, which aimed to disrupt an open street-level market in Vancouver, Canada, was shown to have no significant impact on levels of drug use, or on frequency of use or price; it did, however, result in a significant shift in the locations where drugs were used and an (approaching significant) reduction in the number of injecting drug users injecting in public places. However, in these and similar high-intensity operations, the improvements were rarely sustained.

This publication also reported on some interventions in the USA in which the police worked with council departments targeting landlords (in Illinois) and the owners of a motel (in Oakland) who were neglecting their properties and allowing them to be used for drug dealing. The threat of **civil penalties** was used to encourage the owners to manage their properties more effectively, and this successfully led to reductions in crime and service calls about nuisance. Similarly, a partnership crime prevention programme in Minneapolis successfully reduced crime, vandalism and the fear of crime in the target area. Welsh (2007), in a review of evidence-based crime prevention initiatives, identifies three types of place-based approaches that have been shown to be effective:

1. nuisance abatement programmes, such as those just described using civil penalties;
2. closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance cameras; and
3. improved street lighting.

The review by Mazerolle et al. (2007b) also found strong evidence in support of the use of drug nuisance abatement, civil remedies and third-party 'policing'. Typically, the

use of such measures was found to deal effectively with the drug dealing problem and was often associated with reductions in violence, property and disorder offences, leading to improved quality of life for residents and business owners in the neighbourhood. It also seemed that in most cases displacement was not a major problem.

Scott (2003) suggests that **crackdowns** can be effective, at least in the short term and if used alongside other approaches. He describes a successful crackdown in San Diego which used an array of approaches to turn an area that had become an established drug market into an area where those involved in drug markets did not want to be, and which helped businesses to convince residents that the area was a convenient and safe place to shop. However, he also draws attention to the danger of displacement, problems with sustainability, the potential for a negative impact on police-community relations, the potential for abuse, the knock-on costs for the rest of the criminal justice system, the expense and the associated opportunity costs for other enforcement activity.

Harocopos and Hough (2005) summarise the pros and cons of a wide range of enforcement approaches for tackling open-air drug markets, ranging from high-visibility and intensive enforcement, through warning off buyers, to the encouragement of community action and the use of civil powers. They highlight the points to consider in adopting these different strategies and conclude that it is important to tailor the approach to the individual area following an analysis of its particular drug problem.

In a similar report on **drug dealing** in privately owned **apartment complexes**, Sampson (2001) describes the factors that contribute to the development of these sorts of markets, such as location near an area with many drug users, absentee or ineffective landlords and limited natural surveillance of the property. The report then suggests a wide range of response strategies to these types of market and provides a summary of the evidence of effectiveness of those that have been evaluated. It notes that the impacts of crackdowns and arrests of dealers and users are limited and short term. In contrast, it suggests there is evidence for the effectiveness of:

- improving what is described as 'place guardianship', for example through providing information and training to landlords to encourage them to screen tenants;
- making physical changes to the property;
- sending notification to, or holding meetings with, landlords about drug dealing;
- applying civil remedies, such as nuisance abatement proceedings; and
- evicting drug dealers.

The report also stresses the importance of looking out for, and dealing with, displacement.

A systematic review of evaluations of interventions addressing street-level dealing (Mazerolle et al., 2007a) illustrates the complexity of the picture and the need for clarity about the harms or problems that are being targeted. On the basis of the diversity of the approaches involved and the level of geographic focus, the report divided the approaches evaluated into four types:

1. the standard model, involving mainly law enforcement with no specific geographical focus (such as rapid response and patrols);
2. community-wide partnerships that involve a range of agencies and approaches across a wide geographic area;
3. hotspot policing interventions that targeted geographical areas known to be drug hotspots, such as crackdowns and raids, but which did not follow the principles of problem-oriented policing; and
4. problem-oriented policing and intervention partnerships that were geographically focused.

The authors concluded that, with respect to reducing drug-related calls for service and drug incidents, problem-oriented policing approaches are more effective than community-wide approaches, but both are more effective than law enforcement approaches that target drug hotspots. Nevertheless, the latter are an improvement on the standard model of geographically unfocused law enforcement activities, such as preventive patrols. However, while community-wide approaches reduce disorder more than enforcement-only activities targeting hotspots, hotspot approaches have a bigger impact on vehicle crime and violence against the person. Overall, the authors conclude that "rather than simply increasing police presence or intervention (e.g. arrests) at drug hotspots, street-level drug law enforcement should (1) focus on forging productive partnerships with third parties, (2) target drug hotspots rather than spreading intervention efforts across neighborhoods, and (3) make efforts to alter the underlying criminogenic conditions that exist in places with street-level drug market problems".

There are a range of interventions that target specific individuals or groups. This category of intervention includes **arrest referral and diversion schemes** aimed at getting drug-using offenders into treatment services, as well as specific intelligence-driven approaches aimed at identifying and targeting individuals involved in drug trafficking and supply. Mazerolle et al. (2007b) found that evaluations of arrest referral programmes showed reductions in drug use post-arrest. They also considered seven evaluations of drug diversion programmes in Australia, most of which involved cautioning with or without mandatory education sessions. Of these seven studies, three showed drug use reductions, two showed reductions in self-reported offending and three showed improved police-community relations, while people in receipt of Cannabis Expiation Notices in South Australia were better off on a range of social outcomes (employment, accommodation, relationships and reduced contact with the criminal justice system). In contrast, the two evaluations of undercover operations that the authors found showed no impact on drug use, drug offences, supply or demand for drugs or on violent or property crime.

Caulkins and Reuter (2009) describe another approach to targeting individuals or groups which they describe as '**specific deterrence**'. An example of this is the Boston Gun Project's Operation Ceasefire (Braga et al., 2001), which took a problem-oriented approach to tackling violent crime. This involved deterring the violent behaviour (especially gun violence) of chronic gang offenders by targeting gangs engaged in violence and delivering an explicit message (at meetings with the gang members) that their violence would not be tolerated. This was backed up by 'pulling every lever'

legally available (i.e. applying appropriate sanctions from a varied menu of possible law enforcement actions) when violence did occur. Concurrently, the Streetworkers (a coalition of Boston social service workers), probation and parole officers and, later, churches and other community groups offered gang members services and other types of assistance. The evaluation of this project found that Operation Ceasefire was associated with a 63% decrease in youth homicides per month, a 32% decrease in shots-fired calls for service per month, a 25% decrease in gun assaults per month and a 44% decrease in the number of youth gun assaults per month in the highest risk district. An attempt to replicate this approach in East Los Angeles (Tita et al., 2003) also achieved some success, but it failed to embed the approach as a dynamic response to the problem; the evaluators concluded that this was due to a lack of ownership of the project by local agencies and the lack of clear leadership by any one agency. This illustrates the importance of the situational and organisational context to the success of enforcement activities.

Kerr et al. (2005) reviewed the evidence concerning the **negative public health and social impacts** of drug market enforcement activity. They highlight a number of harms relating to injecting drug users, such as those associated with users rushing their injecting to reduce the period at which they are at risk of arrest, or injecting in unsuitable places, again to avoid arrest. Health harms can also arise when those transporting drugs conceal them inside their bodies to avoid detection. Enforcement activity has also been shown to lead to disruption in service use if undertaken in the vicinity of needle exchanges or treatment agencies. If the law makes possession of syringes and paraphernalia illegal, this increases the likelihood of an increase in risky injection practices when there is a high level of police activity. Studies have also shown that fear of arrest can increase overdose deaths as injecting drug users are reluctant to summon help.

The potential for physical harm associated with restraint and other methods of incapacitation at the time of arrest has also been documented (Kerr et al., 2005) along with the impacts of involuntary detoxification while in custody. There is also extensive evidence of increased violence following market disruption caused by enforcement activities.

Table 3.1 summarises the published evidence that we have identified showing the impact that enforcement activity has had on different harms. It can be seen that the picture is complex. Some harms have been shown to have been increased by some activities and decreased by others. For example, one study that involved the community in crime prevention training found a decrease in vandalism, but several others involving police crackdowns reported increases. Also, it should be noted that a considerable number of studies have shown no impact one way or another on the harms it was hypothesised would be reduced. It is also the case that in many studies the impact on harms is not specifically addressed and that proxy measures of process, such as numbers entering treatment, are reported. These are included in Table 3.1 under the heading 'other impacts'. Some of these other impacts are likely to be linked to a decrease in harms and some to an increase, while for others the likely impact on harms is unknown or equivocal.

It is difficult to conclude that one approach should be adopted over another as the evidence is weak and outcomes depend on many factors relating to context. Overall, approaches that consider wider community impact and involve partnerships and communities seem to do well. However, one inescapable conclusion appears to come through from much of the appraisal of efforts aimed at tackling supply and drug markets. As Reuter et al. (2009) conclude in a recent RAND Corporation report, *Assessing Changes in Global Drug Problems, 1998–2007*: “Enforcement against local markets failed in most nations to prevent continued availability at lower price”.

Table 3.1: Summary of the impacts that drug-related law enforcement activity has been reported to have on drug-related harms

| Harms increased | Harms decreased |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Overdose deaths | Overdose deaths |
| Criminal justice costs | Property crime |
| Fear of crime | Fear of crime |
| Risks from unsafe injecting practices | Reoffending |
| Vandalism | Vandalism |
| Impact of imprisonment | Drug use |
| Police-community tensions | Impact on local businesses |
| Involuntary detoxification | Loss of access to public areas |
| Physical harms | Lack of confidence in police |
| Violent crime | Violent crime |
| Discrimination against ethnic groups | Perceived level of drug problems |
| | Initiation of drug use |
| | Damage to property/property values |
| | Loss of rental income |
| | Poor quality of life |
| Other impacts (proxy measures for impact on harms) | |
| Increased treatment uptake | |
| Displacement of injecting/usage | |
| Reduction in service calls | |
| Displacement of drug market elsewhere or indoors | |
| Reduction in injecting in public places | |
| Decreased willingness to inject at safe injecting sites | |
| Decreased use of treatment services and needle exchange | |
| Reduction in visible dealing | |
| Increased use of safe injecting facilities | |
| Reduction of enforcement activity against other crime types | |

CURRENT UK INTERVENTIONS: NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The range of different types of activity undertaken by UK enforcement agencies is very wide. It includes, for example, seizures at ports and airports, hotspot policing, closure of premises, asset recovery, participation in arrest referral and other schemes to divert drug-using offenders into treatment, in addition to prevention activities, such as drug

education. It also includes civil actions, such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and eviction orders, which may be taken by local councils, housing associations and other organisations.

Official figures place the annual cost of 'public order and safety' related to drugs at £245 million (England only, 2007/08) (Eaton et al, 2008) although this does not take account of most of the day-to-day enforcement activity relating to drugs that is not 'badged' as such. One estimate based on the proportion of arrests for drug offences (from the UKDPC report *An Analysis of UK Drug Policy* (Reuter and Stevens, 2007)) put UK police costs in 2004/05 at just under £1 billion. If the costs of the courts, prison, probation etc. are added, the total is closer to £2 billion. In addition to this, there are costs associated with enforcement agencies, such as the UKBA and SOCA. The latter's annual budget has been around £440 million and it aims to spend just over 40% of its operational effort on drugs.

There are a number of national programmes in the UK that are aimed at or will have an impact on drug-related harms. These are:

- the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP), which seeks to address the problem of drug-related acquisitive offending by encouraging drug-using offenders into treatment,
- the Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) programme, which targets the small proportion of offenders who are considered to be responsible for the majority of crimes in an area; and
- the Street Level Up Approach (SLUA), which seeks to take a multi-agency, intelligence-based approach to tackling street-level harms alongside drug distribution networks.

The context in which these programmes are implemented varies, as does the way in which they are implemented and the extent to which they have been evaluated. However, a reduction in drug-related acquisitive crime is a key outcome for all programmes. The DIP and PPO programmes are now being brought together within the Integrated Offender Management initiative; this is now being piloted but its impact has yet to be evaluated.

The **Drug Interventions Programme** is focused on getting drug-using offenders into treatment. In custody suites in high-crime areas in England and Wales, individuals arrested for certain 'trigger offences' associated with drug use are tested on arrest or charge for heroin or cocaine use. If they test positive they then have to undertake a mandatory assessment of their drug use, which may then lead to referral for treatment. Although the DIP has not been fully evaluated, the report by Skodbo et al. (2008) indicates that for most of those offenders referred for treatment there is a decline in acquisitive offending after referral. In lower crime areas, more-traditional arrest referral programmes without drug testing are used to identify drug-using offenders and divert them into treatment. The most recent process evaluation of the DIP has made suggestions to improve overall outcomes (Ville & Company, 2009).

Local areas can choose to prioritise different offender groups for the **Priority and other Prolific Offender** programme in their area, according to the main crime problems in their locality. However, in many cases PPOs will be drug-using acquisitive offenders and so there is overlap between the DIP and PPO schemes. An impact assessment of the programme showed that the cohort of PPOs demonstrated a marked decrease in offending following the programme compared with an equivalent period prior to entry (Dawson & Cuppleditch, 2007). However, there was no satisfactory control group so it was not possible to say how much of the change was due to the PPO scheme itself.

In a 2003 article in *Police*, Stephen Otter (2003) described the **Street Level Up Approach** as being “about connecting and coordinating law enforcement agencies to address the harm that drugs cause at street level as opposed to them working separately against different levels of criminality”. He described a three-stage process based on a problem-solving approach. In the first phase, intelligence, “the problematic drugs market is identified and a baseline assessment completed ... The intelligence picture is developed as far as possible from the street level up the supply chain, with any intelligence gaps identified. This activity is crucial in ensuring partner agencies have a ... clear and shared understanding of the nature of the problem”. In the second phase, intervention, enforcement action is taken against those identified as being active in the market. In the third phase, maintenance, partner agencies ensure that the area remains an inhospitable place for drug dealers. An example of such an action would be for the council to ensure that properties vacated by crack house closures are quickly filled with families to prevent them being taken over again by dealers. There has, however, been no published evaluation of the approach.

EVIDENCE FROM OUR CONSULTATIONS: UK CASE STUDIES

The consultation process undertaken as part of the project identified a number of case studies within the UK that provided some information about the impact of a range of different types of enforcement interventions which sought to address different drug market problems. The interventions included are illustrative of the range of activities being undertaken, but list is not exhaustive, and would benefit from being built upon in the future. The evidence of the impacts the case study interventions were reported to have had on drug harms is summarised in Table 3.2 and is discussed below. However, it should be borne in mind that most have not been formally evaluated. Further information about the case studies is contained in Appendix B.

There are many ways of categorising enforcement activity. For the purposes of this project we have grouped the case studies into three broad enforcement strategies, which have all been used to reduce the harms associated with drug markets through market regulation similar to those used in the essay by Caulkins and Reuter (2009):

- (a) targeting specific **individuals or groups** identified as being particularly ‘noxious’ or harmful;
- (b) targeting **areas** where drug problems are particularly damaging; and
- (c) targeting particularly harmful **behaviours**, such as use of violence or the use of young children or other vulnerable people as lookouts or couriers.

In addition, in reporting on case studies we also identify a fourth group of interventions in which:

- (d) traditional **enforcement approaches** have been **modified** in some way to reduce harms.

INTERVENTIONS TARGETING SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

We found several examples of operations that targeted specific individuals or groups who were having a particularly corrosive effect on their community. While prioritising criminals based on the seriousness or frequency of their crimes is standard practice, some enforcement agencies have used a broader view of harm.

In West Yorkshire, ***Operation Grassland*** targeted one conspicuous family of dealers. The harms identified with these particular individuals, who flaunted their wealth and dealt increasingly blatantly – acting as if they were untouchable – were loss of public confidence in the police and their potential as negative role models. In addition to covert operations and an overt arrest phase, particular effort was made to ensure that the activity was community focused. For instance, neighbourhood policing officers were involved in making all of the arrests and there was a strong communications component to the operation. Tactics included posting leaflets to residents in particular neighbourhoods, engaging with the local media and organising symbolic publicity stunts, such as crushing cars seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Operation Grassland resulted in a large number of arrests and seizures of drugs and assets and there was substantial positive media coverage. Following the operation, public confidence in the police appeared to be increased; supportive comments were received from members of the community (e.g. on blogs), and there was a 14% increase in the number of reports to Crimestoppers at the end of 2008 compared with before the operation, although this has slowly tailed off. The dealers who had been displaying conspicuous wealth were removed from the area. There were also early indications of an overall significant reduction in acquisitive crime, which has been sustained.

Operation Macarise targeted a family involved in drug dealing in Liverpool and who were increasingly using violence and intimidation, including the use of firearms and improvised explosive devices. Using a dedicated financial investigator, evidence of their illegal income was painstakingly uncovered and links made between different members of the family. This led to successful prosecutions resulting in substantial prison terms for several family members and the seizure of their assets. The operation is believed to have led to improved community confidence, but its impact on harms has not been measured.

Operation Abruption targeted a money laundering network, in which subjects based in Iran were providing money laundering services for a number of drug trafficking groups in the UK. The operation resulted in convictions and sentences for members of the group, and there were indications that the perception of them as being 'untouchable' was undermined and trust in them damaged. However, there was no evaluation of the operation's impact on any wider harms.

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Table 3.2: Summary of published and anecdotal evidence from UK case studies of the impact of enforcement on drug harms

| Operation / Project name | Problem addressed | Description of activity | Impact on harms | Other consequences |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <i>Interventions targeting specific individuals/groups</i> | | | | |
| Operation Grassland, West Yorkshire | High heroin / crack cocaine area; conspicuous OCG family; decreasing community confidence; negative role models. | Covert operations including test purchasing, deployment of undercover operatives; overt crackdown and asset recovery with specific targeting of notorious OCG; CDRP mobilisation, work with DIP and treatment; media strategy. | Reported decreased crime; removal of negative role models; improved public confidence in police – shown by comments and reports to Crimestoppers. | Two suspects able to flee country. |
| Operation Macarise, Liverpool | Highly influential OCG involved in Class 'A' drug distribution. Increasing violence and intimidation. | Covert surveillance (including intelligence-gathering, test-purchasing, undercover operatives) and overt operations; Extensive financial investigation integrated with intelligence gathering. | Removal of several members of the OCG from the area following successful prosecution; possible reduction in drug users in area and improved community confidence. | Provided additional enforcement opportunities. May have increased negative image of area. |
| Operation Abruption | Money laundering network, providing services for number of drug trafficking groups in the UK. | Collation of evidence to mount successful prosecution against principal subject and associates and build knowledge of infrastructure and methodologies. | Disrupted operation of money laundering network, with indications of damage to credibility and confidence in criminal fraternity. | Spin-off operations taken on by law enforcement partners disrupted suppliers. |
| Operation Kaross | The money laundering and drug trafficking activities of an organised crime group. | Range of non-traditional methods, including co-ordinated activity by SOCA, West Midlands Police, UKBA, Home Office, Trading Standards, Fire Service and Health & Safety Executive, focused on home and business addresses of main subject. | Short term: disruption of activities of organised crime group Medium-long term: yet to be evaluated. | Not known. |
| Persistent Offender Project – Glasgow. | High deprivation; high level of persistent offenders; ineffective drug treatment. | Establishment of partnership work with health/social services to target drug/alcohol offending, ASB, community safety, drug related deaths; fear of crime; training/employment opportunities through POP team out-reach and intervention work. | Reduction in drug/alcohol use and offending by those on the programme, reduction in drug related deaths in Glasgow to which programme may have contributed. | Improved partnership-working. |

| Operation / Project name | Problem addressed | Description of activity | Impact on harms | Other consequences |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <i>Area-based interventions</i> | | | | |
| Derbyshire Drug Market Project | High heroin area; acquisitive crime; financial costs of drug enforcement; health risks. | Intelligence-led enforcement (mapping, target hardening, test-purchasing); treatment referral for users; drug awareness/education; promotion of intelligence sharing. | Heroin supply reduction; demand reduction; improved treatment alternatives. | Failure to meet targets; increased public scepticism; no sustainability. |
| Operation Reduction, Brighton | High crime / high crack area; large number of drug-related deaths; high levels of calls concerning drug nuisance. | Cycles of intelligence-gathering (test-purchasing) followed by arrest phase; outreach to low-level user-dealers offering accelerated access to treatment followed by intensive case management. | Decreased crime, particularly acquisitive crime; Decreased calls concerning drug nuisance; No overall impact on drug-related deaths. | New dealer group offering high quality heroin led to increase in drug-related deaths (short-term problem dealt with by targeted enforcement). |
| Operation Iceberg, Kent | Acquisitive crime linked to heroin / crack cocaine use; organised crime link with cocaine supply / cannabis production; national transport hub. | Disruption of criminal activity through drug enforcement and asset recovery operations; arrest referral, outreach, and follow-up; offender risk assessment and outreach. | Decreased recorded crime; reported decrease drug supply and shift towards more closed markets; improved arrest referral services; decreased recidivism; improved community confidence. | Evidence of displacement to neighbouring areas. Concern over negative media coverage. |
| Operation Nemesis, Stoke on Trent | High crime, acquisitive crime; high crack cocaine / heroin area; regional hub; increased OCG violence; severe deprivation; negative role models. | Undercover operatives deployed within community; massive CDRP mobilisation; improved CPS co-ordination; enhanced drug treatment services; high community engagement; activation of local community; media blitz. | Decreased overall crime and acquisitive crime in the area; improved drug treatment services – better retention and decreased waiting times; improved community confidence – positive feedback from community and 77% increase in drug-related Crimestoppers calls. | Disproportionate allocation of police resources; limited displacement. |
| Operation Greenbay, Coventry | High crime, acquisitive crime; semi-open Class 'A' markets in 5 areas, gap seen in proactive drugs enforcement. | Covert surveillance (CHIS tasking, test-purchasing, street-level up approach); community reassurance; mobilisation of partners, deployment of ANPR technology. | Decreased acquisitive crime (1 area), increased public confidence, evidence of some market disruption. | No crime reduction indicated in 4 areas, not sustained in 1 (no scope to do so). |
| Operation | Concern about the number | Enforcement activity (arrests, seizures of | Reported to have prevented spread | |

| Operation / Project name | Problem addressed | Description of activity | Impact on harms | Other consequences |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Tarian, South Wales | of drug related deaths, particularly amongst young people and signs that South Wales was being targeted by organised crime groups. | assets etc); drug education and advice; supporting families and communities; and treatment | of gun crime; possible small reduction in drug-related deaths. | |
| <i>Interventions targeting specific behaviours</i> | | | | |
| Project Kitley | Increased use of pharmaceutical cutting agents to maintain dealers profits; potential for significant health risks for users. | Identification of those involved in UK procurement, distribution and use of cutting agents; joint work between SOCA, police, UKBA and HMRC leading to seizures & arrests; awareness raising activities. | Reduced availability of some preferred cutting agents, removal of hazardous chemicals but impact on health unknown. | Not known. |
| MPS "controlled deliveries" interventions | Significant Class 'A' distribution networks; high OCG violence; increasing abuse of fast-parcel industry for import and distribution of drugs; negative role models and glamorisation of drugs. | Intelligence sharing with SOCA, HMRC, UKBA and fast-parcel industry; covert surveillance of targets, deployment of undercover operatives, financial investigation, advanced packaging sensor technology | Short term decrease in availability of Class 'A' drugs; possible increased community confidence; reductions in costs of prosecutions. | Identification of international links |
| Operation Mazurka (Northern Ireland) | Proliferation of cannabis factories; emergence of previously unknown OCGs; abuse of utility services, associated safety hazards. | Covert, targeted surveillance; forensic investigation of cannabis factories; use of HOLMES account to co-ordinate information gathering and processing; partnership work with UKBA, DIY suppliers, electricity suppliers, community groups. | Commercial cannabis farming in N Ireland and associated risks almost eradicated; loss of revenue for electricity companies reduced; criminal prosecution costs minimised. | Development of partnerships and organisational capabilities. |

The ***Persistent Offender Project*** in Glasgow, which started in 2006, was a pilot project that targeted persistent offenders whose offending was linked to drug or alcohol addiction. Through intensive management to initiate and maintain offenders' engagement with treatment and other services, the aims were to reduce their offending and anti-social behaviour, promote community safety and well-being, reduce drug-related deaths and reduce fear of crime. The evaluation of the pilot (Smith, 2008) showed an aggregate 29% drop in reconvictions (a key aim of the project) and a reduction in imprisonment for the cohort engaged in the programme compared with the period prior to engagement. There was also a reduction in drug-related deaths in the Glasgow City area in 2007, to which the project may have contributed. No data was available on the other harms that were being targeted, but it was assumed that the reduction in crimes by the cohort would have improved community safety.

The literature review indicated that **the use of civil powers** can also be effective, for example when enforcement agencies work with local authorities or housing associations against individuals who use social housing for drug dealing and so create nuisance for those in the neighbourhood. In 2008, two tenants of Knowsley Housing Trust were removed from their home using legislation under the Housing Act 1988. This was based on evidence that one had been dealing drugs in the immediate vicinity 'on an industrial scale'; the dealing impacted on the residents in the area and so the council had an obligation to protect those residents. Through local media, the Housing Trust used this result to send a strong message to other tenants that it will not accept criminal behaviour. However, the impact on harms has not been measured, although it is hypothesised that it may have resulted in reductions in fear of crime and nuisance and may have increased confidence in the police.

Operation Karross used a range of non-traditional methods to disrupt the activity of an organised crime group, with co-ordinated visits from SOCA, West Midlands Police, UKBA, Home Office, Trading Standards, Fire Service and Health & Safety Executive on the home and business addresses of the main subject. West Midlands Police informed the local community of the operation after it had commenced by distributing leaflets explaining that warrants had been executed in relation to drug distribution and informing senior members of the community. An evaluation had not been completed at the time of writing but there were indications that the activity had disrupted the ability of the group to operate.

AREA-BASED INTERVENTIONS

A large number of interventions in current local policing operations focus on places that are known to have a particular problem with drugs (e.g. dealing hotspots). These increasingly focus on inter-agency partnerships, using a mix of traditional approaches against dealers with the addition of one or more elements aimed at getting drug users and/or user-dealers into treatment, cleaning up the area and restoring confidence in the police.

An early example of one such operation, which was subject to independent evaluation (Parker & Egginton, 2004), was the ***Derbyshire Drug Market Project*** carried out between 2001 and 2004. This was a multi-component project that addressed a range

of social harms that were generated by local problem users and community acceptance of drug markets, such as drug-related (acquisitive) crime and the economic costs to the public purse. A range of enforcement activities, such as intelligence-led mapping, target hardening and test purchasing by undercover police officers, and co-ordinated operations were combined with treatment provision, community support to build resilience, drug awareness/prevention workshops in schools, a communication strategy to enhance intelligence sharing and the building up of a picture of the drug markets in the county. Over 200 arrests, mostly for offences relating to supply or possession of crack or heroin, were made in six communities, with almost all convictions leading to imprisonment. However, it was not possible to create a drugs 'drought' or to seriously disrupt dependent users' access to heroin and crack. The number of offenders entering treatment was below target: overall only 73 problem drug users entered treatment against a target of 300. One important unintended consequence was that the treatment-enforcement partnership highlighted in the media 'scared' local problem users. Not only did the local mainstream drugs service not receive any new referrals, but also many users already engaged in treatment failed to keep routine appointments. It did prove possible to close down open heroin/crack markets in two town centres. However, where there was no follow-up enforcement action, initial displacement effects were not always sustained and initial public support turned to scepticism (but basic policing responses at first signs of re-emergence might have sustained the impact). The mass arrests in each operation did not affect local recorded crime rates; no crime categories were significantly reduced as a consequence of the operations. However, there was no adverse effect in terms of number of overdose incidents.

A more recent example, which was also the subject of an independent evaluation and which showed more positive results, is **Operation Reduction** in Brighton. The police have two main roles in what has become an on-going operation. First, they conduct continuous cycles of covert, proactive intelligence-gathering operations with arrest phases at eight-week intervals. A different group of officers, working alongside treatment providers, conduct outreach work, offering individuals identified in the covert operations – who are essentially users funding their drug habit through drug sales – a fast-track route into treatment. This proactive approach to getting users into treatment is in contrast to the Derbyshire Drug Market Project, where it was hoped that the results of police action would encourage users to seek help themselves. Intervening prior to arrest yields a saving in criminal justice costs, while the covert operations also aim to reduce such costs by ensuring that the evidence gathered against those dealers who are proceeded against is sufficiently strong to encourage guilty pleas. Local Support Team officers are also involved in the operation, providing high-visibility policing in identified hotspots and support in the arrest phase.

The independent evaluation of the operation (Brown et al, 2008) found it was very positively perceived by stakeholders and that partnership working was enhanced. Reductions in offending, particularly acquisitive crime, were found in analyses at both area and individual levels. There were, not surprisingly, increases in the number of drug offences, but there was no change in the level of anti-social behaviour (although the number of calls about drug nuisance decreased) and no consistent impact on drug deaths. It was estimated that for every £1 spent on the operation, £3 was saved on crime costs. The possibility of negative consequences was recognised, but there was

no evidence of displacement to neighbouring BCUs, nor was there any drop in the number of individuals accessing other treatment services. The possibility of the void created within the market being filled by more harmful dealers appeared to occur, with a group supplying high-purity heroin entering the market and causing a spike in drug-related deaths. However, quick action led to the break-up of this group and deaths dropped back again. The operation has now been mainstreamed and a number of the user-dealers who were enrolled in the project and successfully overcame their drug problems have been taken on as peer mentors.

A similar operation, **Operation Iceberg**, has been undertaken in north Kent. There has been no published evaluation, but overall crime – which had already decreased by 10% in 2006, prior to Operation Iceberg, compared with 2005 – continued to fall: by 25% in 2007 and 33% in 2008 against 2005 levels. Heroin and crack cocaine are reported to be in 'short supply' and the market is now more underground (e.g. dealing is undertaken from vehicles and cocaine is delivered direct to the door). There have been large numbers of arrests, drug seizures and asset recoveries. In the first year, arrest referrals increased by 76% (overall 151 referrals) and the quality of referral also improved. In 2008, altogether 36 chaotic addicted offenders were being managed. Of these, 27 were engaged with treatment and six had begun employment or training, and the majority had reduced or stopped reoffending. However, some unintended or negative consequences have been identified:

- Much of the heroin trade (and associated crime) has been displaced to neighbouring areas. North Kent police have been working with neighbouring forces to help to manage this.
- The initial media profile of the campaign raised fears that north Kent had a major drug problem. The strategy was therefore changed to using low-key communications targeted at the neighbourhoods directly affected by the operations.

Operation Nemesis in Stoke-on-Trent is another example of this type of partnership operation. In addition to covert operations and enforcement, this operation included a very strong partnership and community involvement element, which included massive Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) mobilisation with joint training sessions, which greatly enhanced joint working. There was also improved Crown Prosecution Service co-ordination, and drug-treatment services were expanded. Although the operation has not been evaluated, there is evidence of a decrease in acquisitive crime and improvements in community confidence in the police. Availability of drug-treatment services has increased, and the effort put into involving all partners has resulted in the programme being mainstreamed.

Operation Greenbay in Coventry is an example of the Street Level Up Approach. In addition to intelligence gathering and an arrest phase, intelligence on higher level criminals was passed to national agencies, while a reassurance strategy was adopted at the local level. This involved a considerable media and marketing strand and consultation with partners. In addition to considerable numbers of arrests, seizures and asset recoveries, one loaded firearm was seized. An impact assessment showed a significant reduction in acquisitive crime in one area, and public surveys provided

positive feedback for visible justice/respite. Intelligence sources indicated that the arrest phase had a disruptive effect on suppliers. However, there is no evidence that this has been sustained.

Tarian is the all-Wales Regional Task Force set up to combat the threat of Class A drugs and organised crime groups as well as to tackle drug abuse, crime and the wealth accumulated through criminal activity. The establishment of Tarian was prompted by concern about the number of drug-related deaths, particularly among young people, and signs that South Wales was being targeted by organised crime groups. In addition to enforcement, Tarian has strands involving drug education and advice, supporting families and communities providing routes to drug treatment. Tarian has delivered arrests, seizures and recovery of assets, and has been credited with stopping the spread of gun crime into the cities of Wales. A small decrease in numbers of deaths from drugs in Wales was seen, but the overall impact is unclear.

INTERVENTIONS TARGETING SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS

Approaches that focus on behaviours of traffickers and dealers have the potential to address particularly harmful characteristics of drug markets. For example, in some SOCA operations, officers have targeted the enabling environment to try to reduce the harms caused by drug trafficking in particular locations or in particular circumstances, such as by co-ordinating multi-agency efforts to undermine the businesses and infrastructures supporting organised crime groups in West Yorkshire.

Project KITLEY took a new approach to tackling the UK drugs market, by focusing on the cutting agents used to bulk up cocaine. This led to the seizure of 15 tonnes of cutting agent – equivalent to a minimum of 30 tonnes of 'cocaine' on the streets, had it been used – and arrest of individuals believed to be involved in the supply of cutting agents. Whilst this activity is believed to have contributed to the reduction in availability of some of the preferred cutting agents for cocaine last year, the long term impact remains to be seen including due to the potential for the substitution of even more harmful cutting agents.

A **Metropolitan Police Service team** has developed a mode of operation against Class A drug distribution networks that make use of parcel deliveries through the fast-parcel industry. It is able to respond rapidly to intelligence received and use a range of techniques, including advanced packaging sensor technology, to gather evidence leading to successful interceptions and prosecutions. The team has developed strong partnerships with other enforcement agencies and the fast-parcel industry which have been important in its success. A number of crime groups have been broken up and it is assumed that the team's success in disrupting supplies will result in a reduction in community harms, although no measurement of such impacts has been undertaken.

In Northern Ireland, **Operation Mazurka** was developed in response to a burgeoning problem of cannabis farming. This was leading to safety hazards and substantial diversion of electricity. When cannabis farms are identified, a thorough and systematic approach is taken to forensic investigations. This maximises the intelligence gained, leading to the identification and prosecution of the organised crime groups involved in

the business. The organised crime groups involved were of Chinese origin, but they were from outside the province, meaning there was potential for tensions to develop between them and the long-term resident Chinese community. This was recognised and avoided by liaising with community leaders. The operations have not been evaluated and the impacts on community harms have not been measured. However, the approach was a winner in the 2009 Tackling Drugs Supply Awards and is also being adopted in the Irish Republic and elsewhere.

Court-based behaviour restriction orders such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) for young people, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPOs) may also have the potential to curtail behaviours that are particularly harmful, or to displace drug market operations to less harmful places. However, the effectiveness of court-based orders is unclear. For instance, some ASBOs ban known drug dealers from using mobile phones. If this is an effective way of stopping an individual from dealing then it is quite likely that other dealers without such restrictions will simply take their place. The alternative is that dealers may continue to deal but without using mobile phones, which risks increasing harms caused by visible street dealing. SCPOs allow wide-ranging restrictions to be placed on people involved in serious organised crime. In one example, in addition to being sentenced to eleven and six years' imprisonment respectively for drugs trafficking and money laundering offences, two members of an organised crime group were prohibited from ownership of a number of listed chemicals with the capacity to be used as cutting agents. One subject was also ordered to grant access to premises under his control to SOCA officers at any reasonable time to ensure compliance with this order.

Other SCPO terms in this case included:

- prohibition of possession of more than £1,000 in cash without informing SOCA;
- limiting the number of bank accounts held to one deposit account and one savings account;
- restrictions on applications for a loan or mortgage without informing SOCA;
- prohibition of the ownership of more than one mobile phone; and
- restrictions on travel overseas without permission.

Each SCPO will last for five years from the date on which the subject is released from prison. Breach of the terms would leave the subject liable to a further five years' imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE HARMS

Some enforcement operations have recognised the potential for interventions to create or increase harms and have sought to mitigate this.

Operation Nimrod in Lancashire has developed from being a pure enforcement intervention into one which incorporates a range of other activities that make it more effective at reducing harms. For example, it now incorporates referrals of drug-using offenders to treatment through the DIP. Police community support officers are also now involved in following up after the arrest phases to undertake reassurance activities

with neighbours of those arrested. There has also been recognition of the need to safeguard children and other vulnerable people who may be affected by drug dealing or enforcement activities. For example, vulnerable families might be visited to ensure they have access to the support and interventions that will improve parenting skills and so break the cycle of drug misuse. In addition, intelligence about vulnerable children and adults identified at the time of arrests is disseminated to other appropriate agencies.

Similarly, SOCA's Vulnerable Persons Team ensured that the process of gathering intelligence and interviewing any vulnerable or intimidated victims or witness – including children, persons with a mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability – took an approach that was focused on the needs of the witness while also following the Achieving Best Evidence Guidelines. These describe good practice in interviewing witnesses, including victims, to enable them to give the best possible evidence in criminal proceedings.

SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

The case studies described above show that there has been for some time now an increasing development of partnership approaches between enforcement agencies at different levels and between enforcement agencies and other partners at the local level, in particular with treatment agencies. There is, nevertheless, extensive local variation in the extent to which this occurs.

The evidence cited above also indicates that, although sustained impacts on the availability of drugs in an area may be difficult to achieve, there is considerable potential for reducing the harms associated with the production and supply of drugs through enforcement activity. Increasingly, reduction in these harms is being made an explicit target of enforcement operations. This is, however, often limited to considering the reduction in acquisitive crime that can be achieved through diverting offenders into drug treatment. As a result, operations may not maximise their potential benefit and may have unintended consequences.

As is clearly illustrated in the above case studies, even when harms are made the target of enforcement operations this is often not carried through systematically into the planning, conduct and assessment of the impact of the operations. Evaluations of the impacts of operations are also rare, so it is not possible to identify those operations that are the most successful in reducing harms or provide best value for money. Given the level of investment in drug enforcement, there is clearly an urgent need for more frequent, high-quality evaluations to inform targeting of resources.

4 A new framework for harm-focused drug law enforcement in the UK

In this chapter we draw on the evidence obtained from the literature and our consultations to develop a framework for delivering drug-related enforcement that maximises reduction in overall harms. This is not an alternative to current enforcement practice, but rather a way of focusing existing practice to target harms more clearly, which should both increase the benefits and facilitate evaluation.

TAKING A BROADER VIEW OF DRUG HARMS

The focus of the international harm-reduction movement has mainly been on the individual user and the harm caused by drug use (e.g. the spread of viral infection from injecting). Prevention and treatment programmes also aim to reduce harms through reductions in the amount of drug use. Law enforcement has a role to play in these areas; for example, through programmes for encouraging drug-using offenders to enter treatment, or protocols limiting policing activity around drug services that might discourage attendance.

However, as Caulkins and Reuter (2009) argue, extending the concept of harm reduction to include the harms caused by drug markets could lead to more effective and innovative approaches which allow enforcement agencies greater scope to impact on total drug-related harms.

Overall drug harms can be reduced by:

- reducing the number of uses of drugs (demand reduction);
- reducing the harm per unit used (traditional harm reduction);
- reducing the number of units of drug sold (supply reduction);
- reducing the harm per unit of drug sold (the focus of this project).

If we accept that not all markets are equally harmful (even those of similar size or dealing with similar drugs) then there is an opportunity for law enforcement to focus on changing the *characteristics* of drug markets that are causing the most problems for communities. Our survey of enforcement personnel showed that 80% agreed that there is an opportunity for enforcement agencies to shape those drug markets that persist in the UK to make them less harmful.

For example, some markets cause more 'collateral damage', such as violence, corruption and prostitution, and some, more visible, markets cause greater fear of

crime and corrode confidence in authorities and the law. Harocopos and Hough (2005) describe the many community harms associated with open-air markets, such as crime and disorder, noise and drug litter, which lead to diminished sense of public safety, confidence in authorities and quality of life. They also describe the characteristics of these markets which are associated with these problems, for example their visibility, their location or the times they operate. If these harmful characteristics of drug markets are addressed (so they are less visible, less known, off the streets, etc.), the impact on communities can be reduced, even if the amount of drugs supplied or used does not change. In our survey of enforcement personnel, 64% agreed it was possible to reduce the harms caused by a market even if there is no reduction in the amount of drugs sold or used.

In addition to the different sources of drug harms (from use, production or supply) there are also different levels at which harms are felt. For instance, drug-related harms may be felt at the following levels:

- Individual level – for example, through health harms associated with injecting drug use and risk of overdose, or from the need to buy drugs, which often leads to involvement in criminal activity and involvement with enforcement agencies, leading to a range of negative consequences, such as acquiring a criminal record or spending time in prison.
- Neighbourhood level – for example, discarded needles posing health risks or the psychological stress felt by families of users, as well as many harms associated with the crime and disorder related to drug markets which can affect residents and businesses in the local area.
- National level – for example, through loss of productivity from drug use by employees, the impact of fraud and corruption associated with organised criminals involved in drug trafficking and the costs of the criminal justice and health systems' responses to these drug harms.
- International level – where, in addition to fraud and corruption, there are often significant environmental impacts, such as deforestation, and in some cases destabilisation of national government.

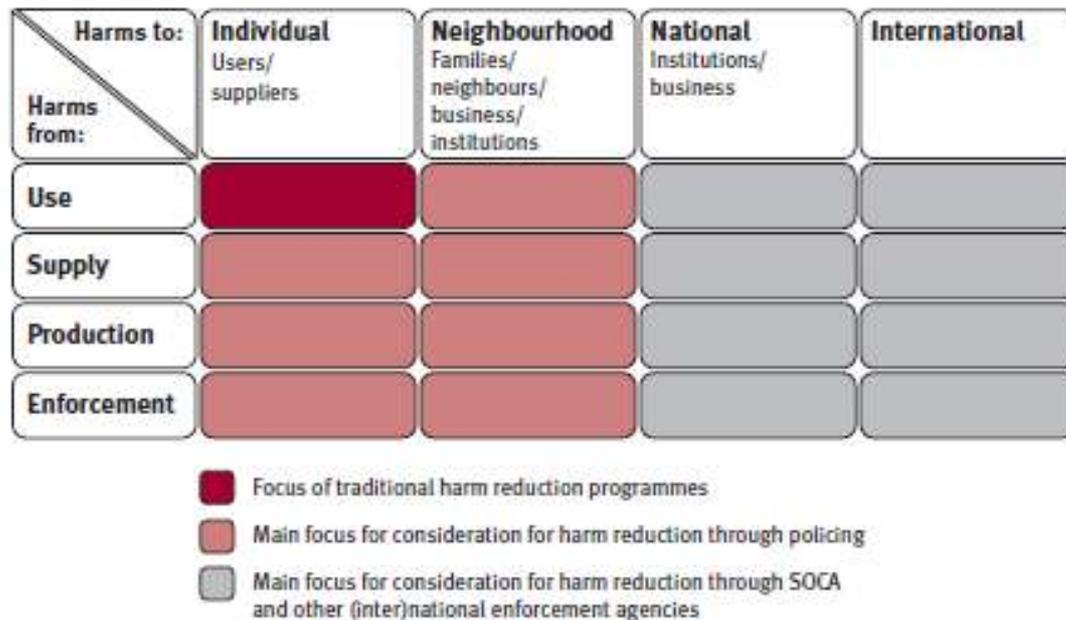
There may also be harms from drug enforcement itself that could be mitigated. For example, the arrest of a drug user may have a negative impact on their family, or a highly publicised operation may have a negative impact on the perception of an area not previously associated with a drug problem.

When this much broader view of drug harms is taken it is clear that there is a major opportunity for enforcement agencies to have a wider impact on harms, and to extent their activities beyond the traditional role of supporting health agencies. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below. Local enforcement agencies can play a central role in reducing harms to users and the local community from harms associated with drug markets. National enforcement agencies will be key to tackling harms to institutions and businesses at the regional and national level as well as against organised crime gangs operating at national and international levels.

Local enforcement agencies would be expected to play a central role in reducing harms to individuals and to the wider community caused by drug markets. National enforcement agencies would play a key role in tackling harms to communities, institutions and businesses from organised crime gangs. Adopting a broader view of harms should therefore allow more meaningful partnerships at local and national levels as 'reducing harm' will have relevance to the objectives of all agencies involved (see Figure 4.1). With such a framework, each partnership and organisation within it can identify the main harms that it needs to address.

This focus on identifying the wider community harms as well as those associated with drug use fits well with a number of trends in policing, such as reassurance policing and neighbourhood policing approaches, and measuring public perceptions and confidence. However, a move away from directly attacking drug supply to an approach that prioritises the drug markets or dealers deemed most harmful also implies that agencies 'tolerate' the others. In a world of finite resources, this already happens implicitly, but of course there is the danger that if such choices are made explicit this may be misrepresented as being 'soft on crime'. However, it also provides the potential for public involvement in priority setting, and for improving public perceptions of enforcement by making an impact on the main harms experienced by communities.

Figure 4.1: Framework for considering total drug-harm reduction



DEFINING AN OVERALL DRUG-HARM MATRIX

Given that a broader understanding of harm is desirable among enforcement agencies, we sought to develop a drug-harm matrix that would aid this. In considering different categorisations of harms related to drug use, we drew on the list of harms identified by Caulkins and Reuter (2009). Various taxonomies of harms have been published previously (see for example MacCoun and Reuter, 2001). We built on these in our consultations and our harm matrix is shown in Table 4.1.

It is unlikely that any such matrix will be completely comprehensive. However, the matrix was found to be helpful in the workshops we held to stimulate consideration of a much broader range of harms when discussing drug problems. The fact that the matrix is so broad also meant that it resonated with all groups with whom we held discussions. As a result provides a common language which can be used to help build partnerships and allow different agencies to see how they can contribute within the same schema.

Of course, no single agency can hope to impact on all of these harms and not all the harms will be of relevance in every area. It is therefore necessary for partnerships to identify those harms that they feel are most important in their area of activity and that they can have an impact on.

There is work underway in a range of enforcement agencies which in one way or another are considering harms. The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) has been reviewing those harms associated with organised crime that should be the focus of its activity and has developed a harm framework for use in operational planning and impact assessment (SOCA, 2009a, Appendix B). The framework is intended to be applicable to all organised crime, not just that which is drug related. The aim is that at the planning stage of each new operation, the harms that the activity seeks to impact on are identified, and that progress is reported against these during the course of the activity. However, identifying direct measures may be difficult, given that the action is often at the national or international level. The intention is to develop suitable 'harm-focused' proxy indicators, as discussed in the section on measurement below.

Risks and harms are also taken into account in a number of initiatives which seek to prioritise organised crime groups according to the threat they pose. ACPO, the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are all developing or have developed such tools. For example, SCDEA has recently published the report *Preliminary Findings on the Scale and Extent of Serious Organised Crime in Scotland* (Scottish Serious Organised Crime Group Mapping Project, 2009) which seeks to describe the scale and impact of serious organised crime in Scotland and prioritises criminal groups on the basis of the threat they pose. As yet the method by which these ratings are made and the types of harm considered in the process are not in the public domain, but they are likely to use an approach similar to the Sleipnir method described by Tusikov and Fahlman (2008). This rates groups on a range of attributes, which include harms such as use of violence and corruption, as well as organisational capabilities. However, although it is to be hoped that targeting those groups identified as being of greater threat will reduce drug harms, this cannot be assumed to be the case; the use of a framework, such as that developed by SOCA, to try and identify and measure actual impact is also necessary.

Table 4.1: Summary matrix of examples of drug-related harms at different levels

| Individual (user or dealer) | Family and peers | Local community | National | International |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| HEALTH HARMS | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical/diseases Mental health Overdose/death Risks from cutting agents Risk of accidents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor child welfare Mental/emotional stress More likely to use drugs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disease transmission Normalisation of drug use and easy access to drugs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disease transmission Normalisation of drug use and easy access to drugs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harms caused by crop spraying Risk of death for drug mules Production health risks |
| SOCIAL/STRUCTURAL HARMS | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiralling criminality Impact of Criminal Justice System (CJS) e.g. time in prison Victim of crime/ intimidation Exclusion and vulnerability Loss of support networks Poor life skills Poor/no accommodation Distrust of authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim of crimes e.g. theft Fear of safety Domestic violence More likely to commit crime Exclusion Family breakdown Poor life chances Negative role model Poor parenting Loss of confidence in authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of crime/anti-social behaviour (ASB) Victim of crime/ASB Attraction or recruitment to criminal life Related crime, e.g. prostitution, gangs, corruption Strain on local services 'No go' areas Local reputation Lack of social cohesion Loss of amenities Corruption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of crime Increased crime statistics Growth in organised crime Underclass of vulnerable people Lack of social cohesion Corruption Loss of respect for law Loss of confidence in authorities Strain on NHS Overcrowded prisons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict/violence Growth in organised crime Exploitation of vulnerable people Corruption Destablised communities/ governments Loss of respect for law/ confidence in authorities |
| ECONOMIC HARMS | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment Poverty/debt Poor prospects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty/debt Loss of breadwinner Cost of being victim of crime Cost of help/support for user | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of help/support services Cost of crime Cost of enforcement and the CJS Property devalued Barrier to regeneration Loss of business Increased unemployment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of help/support services and welfare Cost of crime Cost of enforcement/CJS Loss of tax revenue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of help/support services Cost of crime Cost of enforcement/CJS Loss of tax revenue Dependency on drug revenues stifling economic development/ investment |
| ENVIRONMENTAL HARMS | | | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degradation of neighbourhoods, e.g. discarded paraphernalia Hazards from illicit production, e.g. labs/farms | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deforestation |

1. Define the problem and consider causes and effects

A focus on the underlying harms and their causes (the harmful characteristics of drug markets) during the problem-specification process will be important in deciding agency priorities and then the appropriate course of action. The use of the drug-harm matrix at this stage will help with the identification of all the harms that are associated with the problem being considered.

This stage is analogous to the scanning and assessment parts of the problem-oriented policing approach. An example of this approach is shown in Table 4.2. Here, an open street drug market is causing problems in an urban community. A wide range of harms affecting different groups has been identified, as have the characteristics of the market that are thought to be causing the harms. Thus, the visibility of the market makes ordinary members of the community fearful, leading to mental distress and stopping them from making use of local amenities. Outsiders also avoid the area, leading to loss of trade for local businesses. The apparent lack of action against flagrant dealing leads to loss of confidence in the police, resulting in a lack of co-operation with them as well as a general loss of social cohesion. The ready access to drugs may lead to more young people starting to use drugs, with the potential for harm to themselves and their families. People who are already drug users may be attracted to the area, where they may then use drugs in public or commit crime to get money for drugs. The open nature of the market can also lead to turf wars between dealers and associated harms, and may also mean that supplies are of unknown quality, posing further harms to users.

A detailed understanding of the harms arising from the particular drug problem and the ways in which these arise is best gained through discussion with all the stakeholders. This approach fits well with the current trends towards a community focus and improved partnership working. Defining the problem together and considering harms to all parties provides a platform for developing co-ordinated action to deal with the issues. Our consultations also indicated that the process could throw up important issues that previously had been overlooked; for example, in one area co-morbid mental health problems among drug using offenders was flagged up as a neglected issue.

The early involvement of analysts will facilitate the process of building a clear picture of the extent and nature of the different problems and help in identifying a baseline against which impact can be measured. NPIA/ACPO *Practice Advice on Analysis* (NPIA, 2008) suggests a number of techniques that can help with this baseline analysis, such as '5WH', which involves going through the questions: Who?, What?, Where?, When?, Why? and How? Examples of the sorts of questions that may be helpful in identifying the harms associate with drug markets are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.2: Problem analysis framework – an example for an open or visible drug market

| Problem | Leads to ... | Resultant harm | Who experiences it most | Notes |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Visible drug dealing | Local people are afraid to be in the area / intimidation | Psychological distress, mental health problems | Local community, families and individuals | Elderly people may be particularly concerned. |
| | People avoid the area | Loss of amenity | Local community | |
| | | Loss of business | Local businesses | Increasing cycle of degeneration |
| | | Property values and rents decline | Local property owners | Possible benefit to people on low incomes seeking to rent or buy |
| | People lose confidence in the police | Decreased co-operation | Local institution (police) | |
| | | Alienation / loss of social cohesion | Local community/ individuals | |
| | Drug use considered normal so young people more likely to initiate use | Health problems | Individuals and families | |
| | | Increasing truancy and poorer school performance | Individuals and families | Long-term impact on employment |
| | | Mental distress | Individuals and families | |
| | Easy access to drugs, so increased use | Health problems | Individuals and families | |
| | | Increasing truancy and school failure | Individuals and families | |
| | | Mental distress | Individuals and families | |
| | Easy access to drugs attracts users | Increased acquisitive crime | Local community | |
| Use in public areas | Discarded drug paraphernalia | Risk to health | Individuals | |
| | | Mental distress | Local community | Also adds to cycle of degeneration |
| | Local people are afraid to be in the area | Mental distress | Local community | |
| | People avoid the area | Loss of amenity | Local community | |
| | | Loss of business | Local businesses | |
| | | Property values and rents decline | Local property owners | Possible benefit to people on low incomes seeking to rent or buy |
| Unsafe injecting practices | Health problems | Individual users and peers | | |
| Open nature of the market | Increased risk of victimisation | Physical harm | Individual users / dealers | |
| | Potential for 'turf wars' | Physical harm | Individual users / dealers | Impact on violent crime statistics |
| | | Physical harm | Individuals | + increased fear of crime |
| | Uncertainty about drug quality | Harm from impurities | Individual users | |
| Risk of overdose | | Individual users | | |

Table 4.3: Drug problem analysis: questions to consider

| 5WH | Questions to consider |
|---------------|---|
| Who? | <p>Who are the people causing the problems?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what way are they involved? Do any have specialist roles? How are they recruited? • Are they associated with a particular community/business/institution? • How is the market structured and how many levels are there? • Who are their suppliers and/or customers? • Who are their associates and what are their relationships? • Are they part of a larger organisation? <p>Who is affected by the problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are members of the community aware of who the perpetrators are? How do they view them? • Who are the main 'victims'? Are vulnerable people affected by the problem? • Is it a problem for families/peers and wider community (residents, businesses, institutions)? |
| What? | <p>What is the nature of the problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of drugs are involved? • Is this a new or established problem? • Are there problems associated with drug production, import/distribution, supply and/or use? • Where does the money come from and go to? • Is this associated with other criminality? <p>What are the harms it causes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact do these problems have – on users/dealers, their families/peers, local community (residents, businesses, institutions), national (businesses, institutions)? • Are there health, social, economic, structural or environmental harms? <p>What is the size of the problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of acquisitive crime? • Amount produced/distributed/sold? • Number of individuals involved? • What are the price and purity? |
| Where? | <p>Where does the problem occur?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the problem associated with one or a number of locations? Are there international links? • Are there any specific features of the location that increase (or decrease) the level of harms caused (e.g. near a school / in a residential neighbourhood)? • Does the area have a reputation for drug problems? |
| When? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any particular times when the problem is most severe or which lead to specific harms? • How long has the problem been established/identified? |
| Why? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the problem occurring in this area and/or at this time? • Why are the perpetrators involved? What are the rewards or motivation for offenders? • Why does the problem lead to particular harms? |
| How? | <p>What are the associated modi operandi?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the drugs traded/used? What are the methods used to avoid detection? • How do the key players protect the market? Is violence, intimidation or coercion a feature?, and if so to what extent? • Is corruption of public officials or legal business a feature of the operations? |

2. Prioritise and agree areas for action

A danger when taking such a broad approach is that there are insufficient resources to deal with all the problems identified, or that in trying to tackle everything, effectiveness is sacrificed. Prioritisation is therefore essential, and ideally both the extent and seriousness of each harm identified should be considered. In reality, however, there is likely to be only very limited information on the extents of the different harms, and no common metric for the seriousness of each one. The Drug Harm Index (MacDonald et al, 2005) attempted to measure trends in overall harm from drugs in the UK by putting economic costs against harms, such as drug-related deaths, drug-related crime etc. However, it recognised that this only included a subset of harms for which both costs and amount were known, and as such could not be seen as a measure of total harm. Similarly, the drug classification system seeks to classify drugs into a simple 'ABC' ranking on the basis of the harms they cause to individuals and society. This allows agencies to prioritise those drugs in Class A (the most harmful). However, the harms caused by drug markets are not necessarily related to the class of drug being sold. Drug markets of the same class of drugs, or even the same drug, can differ markedly in the levels and types of harm produced. Therefore, a more sophisticated system of prioritisation is needed.

Another consideration in prioritising markets is the ability to have an impact, but this is an area where the lack of information on cost-effectiveness of enforcement approaches is a major obstacle. However, Tragler et al. (2001) argue that increased enforcement may have a greater impact in new markets (early in what they describe as an 'epidemic'; and that, in entrenched markets, the emphasis should shift to treatment). This might suggest that consideration should be given to prioritising newer drugs, even if they are not considered as harmful as some others.

Prioritisation is an area that needs more attention, particularly when comparing approaches to decide which offer the best value for money. However, in the short term, simply having the prioritisation process made explicit would be helpful. This is another area where discussions with partners may lead to greater joint ownership of enforcement programmes and a better understanding of the reasons behind the choice of areas of enforcement activity. In our consultations we found it was not difficult for different partners to agree on the issues or problems associated with drugs in a local area. However, it may be more challenging to get agreement on which issues are the most important or which need to be addressed most, since different agencies may be driven by different organisational priorities, targets etc. For national agencies tasked with having a sustained impact on the harms from drug markets overall, the task of prioritisation will be even more difficult.

Above all, prioritisation based on harms strongly suggests the need for a good understanding of community perceptions. Different people will put differing weights on the importance of different harms, and their views may change over time. A recent study of public concerns about organised crime (Bullock et al., 2009) showed that drug smuggling and drug dealing were perceived as the most harmful types of organised crime. However, the study also showed that the harms people were most concerned about were those that had an impact on them personally, and that there were lower

levels of concern about harms affecting institutions and society generally, such as costs to businesses, tax losses and costs to the state (e.g. criminal justice system costs). Therefore, at a local level, issues such as anti-social behaviour or visibility of crime are likely to be considered the biggest problem, making residents feel unsafe and affecting their quality of life, while major harms to institutions and businesses would be considered as lower priority.

3. Consider possible response options and their likely impacts

The way in which the problem is specified will have a big impact on how it is addressed. Take the example of the local open drug market that is highlighted as a major problem for the community. Thinking of this simply as a problem of drug dealing leads to approaches that focus on stopping the dealers, such as crackdowns in which dealers are arrested or high-visibility policing which drives dealers away from the area. The evidence, however, shows that although these may have the effect of stopping dealing in the area for a short time, this is difficult to sustain, and the problem may just be moved elsewhere (see Box A for a description of different types of displacement). There may also be a number of negative consequences from these approaches, such as increased violence (as other dealers fight over the 'void' in the market) and the costs incurred by the criminal justice system. At the same time it is possible that some of the underlying harms to the community may not have been affected at all, or may even have been worsened. For example, if local businesses are suffering loss of trade because the area is seen as dangerous, then media coverage of a crackdown or the presence of a large number of police officers in the area may just reinforce that bad reputation and make things worse. Such unintended consequences are more likely to be identified within a harm-focused approach that identifies the relationship between different aspects of the market and harms, rather than one that concentrates on arrests and seizures. Consideration of the possibility of such consequences at the planning stage facilitates their mitigation.

Additionally, if the problems are thought about in terms of both the harms identified and the characteristics of the drug market that are causing them, it would be more likely that a partnership approach is adopted, similar to those in the case studies. For example, there may be different elements to tackle the dealing, the drug users and the community safety aspects. It might also suggest a need to consider the way in which operations are conducted, such as who is targeted for arrest (e.g. the most violent or flagrant dealers), how arrests are made (ensuring that people in the area are reassured rather than frightened) and publicised (so that it provides a positive message). Displacement might be actively sought to deliver a net reduction in harm to a community, for instance by displacing a market from a residential area to an industrial estate. Thus the focus is not so much on reducing the amount of drug dealing but rather on reducing the harms associated with the way dealing operates in this particular area.

BOX A: DISPLACEMENT FROM DRUG CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT

- Policy displacement: due to the opportunity costs of the high expenditure on enforcement.
- Geographical displacement: markets shift to new areas or using different supply routes.
- Crime type displacement: users and user-dealers turn to other types of crime or more crime if dealing becomes too risky or if they need to raise more money.
- Tactical displacement: development of new ways of dealing or distributing drugs, such as the use of internet or mobile phones or the development of new techniques of concealment.
- Target displacement: dealers may seek to open new markets in different sub-groups of the population if other markets are hit.
- Substance displacement: new drugs are developed all the time.

Adapted from: UNODC, 2008; NPIA analysis guidance

The process of identifying possible response options and their likely impacts will need to draw on the evidence for what works in these situations. The evidence collected for this project will help with this and needs to be developed further. However, it is hoped that considering the problem in this new way might also lead to the development of new approaches, for example targeting the harms more directly or making greater use of partner agencies.

The next stage would be to choose the preferred responses and to specify the harms that the operation is specifically targeting. At this stage the potential negative consequences of actions, the 'trade-offs', need to be recognised. For example, if you are going to be arresting users and dealers, there will be costs and consequences for the criminal justice system, and there will also be consequences for the families of those arrested. Identifying such consequences at this stage makes it possible to include actions to mitigate the harms as part of the project; as in Lancashire, where police community support officers go into families to offer support following the arrest of a family member. Arrangements might also be made to ensure that children of those arrested get targeted support and mentoring.

Another example is the consideration of how to deal with street-level dealers, who are often themselves victims of exploitation by those higher up the dealing chain. Proceeding against them may be expensive and will have only limited impact on the availability of drugs, but arresting them may eventually lead the higher level dealers to become more 'hands on', exposing them to arrest. In several examples described in Chapter 3, such user-dealers are offered the option of being fast-tracked into treatment and rehabilitation services, with the alternative being arrest and prosecution. This has proved successful in Operation Reduction, as described above, saving the criminal justice system the cost of prosecution and incarceration, and providing the benefits associated with treatment to the individual user-dealer and the community (of reduced acquisitive crime).

The issue is also illustrated in the situation with respect to the cocaine market, as described in the most recent SOCA annual report (SOCA, 2009a). SOCA has been undertaking a number of initiatives to reduce cocaine availability; it reports a marked decrease in the purity of cocaine being sold on the street, which it attributes in part to its activities. However, the overall impact on drug-related harms from this is not clear. While the disruption and prosecution of criminals who have been profiting from the drugs trade, and the seizure of their assets, will be welcomed by the public, and might possibly also improve public confidence in the justice system and deter others from dealing in drugs, SOCA's initiatives may also have had some negative consequences. The low purity means that users will be ingesting large quantities of cutting agents, which may themselves be harmful. Furthermore, the uncertainties about the amounts of drug in each gram purchased may lead users to take more than usual, leading to increased risk of overdose and other health harms – with corresponding personal and societal costs (but it might also lead to use of less, with corresponding benefits). If users have to buy more drug to get the same effect, they may have to spend more in total, and if they are resorting to crime to fund their habit this could increase harm to the community. At present this is just speculation as we have no information on the impact of these changes on harms, but it illustrates why it is important to consider harms both in terms of goals of enforcement and as potential unintended consequences to be monitored and mitigated as far as possible.

Caulkins and Reuter (2009) also illustrate examples of trade-offs that need to be considered at the higher levels of enforcement:

- Does it reduce harm to target a 'superlab' producing large quantities of methamphetamine at a low price, or would this create a niche for small labs, where producers are often technically incompetent and frequently careless? (i.e. would it increase the likelihood of harm to workers, the risk of property damage and the output of toxic waste from the production of the same amount of drug?)
- Is a tonne of heroin smuggled into the country by personal couriers less harmful than the same amount smuggled in as large shipments? Large shipments are worth enough to create incentives for employing violence, and may indicate a more powerful organisation. The physical harm to couriers could, however, be greater.

Harm reduction law enforcement requires a culture shift in thinking. However, our consultations have shown there is a growing acceptance that there would be considerable benefits in such an approach. For such an approach to be developed, enforcement agencies and other stakeholders concerned about drug-related harms must collaborate to identify the new tactics required to translate this general framework into successes on the ground.

4. Identify measures of success relating to the harms targeted, plus others for monitoring potential negative consequences

An advantage of using this framework is that it lends itself to the consideration of appropriate outcome measures. It does not rely on the more traditional measures of activity (such as number of arrests or seizures) which do not necessarily reflect the impact on the drug problem and can have the potential to distort activity; for example,

if effectiveness is judged by the number of arrests then there is an incentive to arrest those who are easy to reach – those are likely to be users and user-dealers, who are also likely to be the least dangerous offenders.

Having specified the aims of an operation in terms of impact on harms, it is necessary to identify measures of those harms. Unfortunately, this may not be very easy. While it may be possible to identify measures of the harms involved – e.g. measures of the sorts of health problems associated with drug use – it might not be possible to get data at the geographical level required or specific to drug users. Alternatively, the number of occurrences may be very low or subject to reporting bias, which will make interpretation difficult. In some instances it will take a long time for any impact to be seen on the measure in question, or there may be other factors coming into play that may have more effect. Agencies working at the regional or national level face the additional challenge that some of the harms they are hoping to address occur at the local level, and ascribing with confidence a reduction of harm locally to actions at the regional or national level is difficult.

However, whatever the difficulties, it will still be important to develop measures of the harms that are being targeted, even if it is also wise to collect intermediate outcomes to help with data interpretation. As Caulkins and Reuter (2009) remark, “managing with weak measures of correct objectives may be no more perilous than managing to objective measures of the wrong goals”. It can also be argued that Gilb’s Law (or the Measurability Principle), that **“Anything you need to quantify can be measured in some way that is superior to not measuring it at all”**, although derived from the field of software development, equally applies here.

Harocopos and Hough (2005) suggest the following as possible measures of effectiveness of interventions targeting open-air markets:

- reduced visibility of drug-related activity in public places;
- reduced calls for service related to drug dealing and using;
- reduced calls for service related to crime and disorder;
- diminishing arrest rates for drug selling or drug possession with similar levels of enforcement;
- increased price of drugs or increased search time to purchase drugs;
- increased feeling of community safety (this may entail conducting a survey of local residents);
- renewed legitimate use of public spaces such as parks or recreation areas.
- reduced vehicle traffic and loitering;
- reduced evidence of drug-related paraphernalia; and
- reduced levels of crimes in the vicinity of the drug market that are plausibly related to drug dealing (e.g. thefts, burglaries, robberies).

As will be appreciated by those involved in delivering enforcement interventions, many of these measures are not subject to routine data collection, and some are not that easy to collect in a simple way without adding data collection burdens. One of the major challenges for enforcement agencies, inspectorates and government is how to develop more meaningful measures of impact and outcomes that are more than the

simple activity measures of arrests and seizures. We believe that with the shift away from centralised targets, there is a good opportunity to develop alternative measurements, such as snapshot or one-off surveys. These could be constructed around the various strategic and operational interventions that are a feature of much enforcement activity.

This is an area for development as it is essential that meaningful outcomes are assessed so that good practice can be identified and disseminated. Greater involvement of partners in the specifying of the harms or issues to be addressed may open up the opportunity to access other sources of relevant data that they hold. It is also possible to make what are essentially process indicators more outcome focused. For example, if the aim is to address increasing levels of gun crime associated with drug dealing then an increase in the number or proportion of arrests for dealing that include recovered firearms might be used as an intermediate measure of success, alongside a longer-term measure of incidents of violent offences involving firearms.

The NPJA is developing guidance on the use of results analysis, which could be a valuable technique for assessing the effectiveness of drug operations and lends itself well to the incorporation of measures of drug-related harms. Results analysis involves a critical evaluation of all aspects of an operation or initiative. It includes the consideration of tactics used and whether they were implemented as planned; intelligence gathering; the impact the activity had; cost-benefit analysis; and cause and effect analysis. It seeks to provide an assessment of the impact of the operation and to identify problems and lessons learned. To this end there is a need to identify unintended consequences, both positive and negative, and to investigate if there has been displacement.

As part of this project we held workshops involving a number of analysts working in the drug law enforcement field to try and identify possible measures of drug-related harms at different levels; these are shown in Appendix D and some examples are given in Box B. However, some of these measures and the associated data may not be available, and the list is not exhaustive so additional measures could be identified. This remains a key area for future development.

It is also important to note that we are suggesting that these measures are used for identifying the impact of individual interventions or operations. Some of these may be available from partner organisations and their use may help to strengthen partnerships by highlighting shared objectives and benefits. There is also the potential for involving the community in the collection of data on measures, such as the use of public spaces or evidence of drug-related paraphernalia, which could have the added benefit of enhancing public perception of improvements in drug problems and community confidence.

It should be stressed that it is not suggested that these indicators are necessarily suitable for routine collection for performance monitoring. If data collection is not to become a burden then the number of items collected routinely needs to be limited. They also need to be collected regularly and in a standardised way. Nevertheless, we would argue that such indicators and measurement should also be harm related.

Box B: SOME POSSIBLE INFORMATION SOURCES FOR MEASURING IMPACT

- Intelligence – including crime and organised crime group mapping
- Crimestoppers and other crime reports
- National surveys and data
- Community surveys
- Forensic information
- Partner agency data – use and costs associated with services, etc.
- Crime statistics, Criminal Justice System statistics and drug/asset seizures
- MOSAIC and other demographic data
- Audits/observations – e.g. environmental
- Community feedback mechanisms (e.g. blogs)
- Private sector partner information (businesses, etc.)
- Corruption incidences
- House price data
- Interviews/surveys with criminals, police, victims.
- ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition).
- Media Coverage

Source: consultations with analysts facilitated by NPIA

5. Implementation: mitigate likely increases in harm caused by enforcement interventions while maximising the potential for reductions in harm

Projects, programmes or operations are not always implemented as planned. This may be for many reasons: resources may be switched; problems may be encountered; or an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the intervention may arise. Lessons from the implementation process are often crucial, although they may be hard to identify without an associated evaluation or research project. There is a need for a proper review process – many agencies have one in theory, but in practice it may not be implemented comprehensively due to the pressures to move on to the next operation. Results analysis includes a consideration of how the operation was implemented; it is an approach that, if more widely used, could help in developing improved practice.

6. Evaluate and seek to determine a net benefit for communities

The assessment of how the operation was implemented should form part of a wider evaluation that considers both short-term and long-term impacts. This will involve the analysis of the measures of the key objectives identified at step 4 above, together with consideration of possible unintended consequences.

As Caulkins and Reuter (2009) point out, “developing good performance measures will be a practical challenge. Arrests and seizures are easy to count: drug market externalities that do not happen are not. Bottom-up approaches that allow priority setting by those closest to the problem may be preferred to a top-down or legislative approach”. This fits in with the move to devolve more to local areas within the

framework of Local Area Agreements, although clearly there will be a need to develop local indicators under the limited local indicator set.

It is important that the outcomes of any evaluation process are fed back into the organisation so that the learning about the effectiveness of interventions can be built on and mainstreamed. At present this often does not happen. National agencies with a central tasking mechanism, such as SOCA, have a structure that allows them to do this more easily. However, at the local level, the learning may be confined within individual forces and the sharing of good practice could be improved. We see an enhanced role here for ACPO and NPIA, as well as for partner bodies such as the local government Improvement and Development Agency. In the longer term, quantification of benefits in this way will allow consideration of the cost-effectiveness of different types of enforcement activity; something that is currently rarely undertaken. Embedding this sort of organisational learning will take time and will require time and commitment to see it through, but it has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of drug-related enforcement and provide those involved with evidence of the impact they have on the real-world harms experienced by communities.

5. Conclusion and implications for policy and practice

The aims of this project were twofold. First, to identify and promote the contribution that enforcement activity can make to total drug-harm reduction, and second, to develop a framework that could be used to develop and assess drug-related enforcement activity at all levels in terms of its impact on total drug harm.

PROMOTING A HARM-REDUCTION APPROACH

With respect to the first aim, the project considered whether a focus on the harms resulting from illicit drug use, drug markets and related enforcement activity might result in greater benefits for individuals, communities and society than are currently being achieved. As such the review did not address the drug control framework itself. Some reading this report will believe that legalisation of drugs will solve many of the harms associated with illegal drugs, while others will argue for much stronger law enforcement. The Commission takes a pragmatic view. The available evidence in support of both perspectives is, in many cases, conjectural or non-existent. The law is not immovable, but at this moment in time there appears to be little political or public appetite to ease enforcement interventions. At the same time, it is important to recognise that within the current control framework there is scope for flexibility in application and approach, which might be used to reduce the overall harms caused by drug markets in a more cost-effective manner.

Enforcement practice is continually evolving and we have sought to support and give added impetus to developments already underway on the ground, rather than attempt to reinvent the wheel. It is also worth noting that 'enforcement' is not simply about policing or the application of drug control laws. Many public services, especially at the local level, apply enforcement-related interventions, for example by using civil actions. The approach outlined by the review has relevance to enforcement at all levels within the UK, although most examples come from the policing sphere, where more evidence is available. While the scope of the project has been limited to the UK, the approach taken could equally be applied to international activities.

Consideration of the evidence we have gathered relating to the impact of drug-related enforcement has produced the following observations:

- While prohibition plus some enforcement contains drug markets and use, in established markets efforts to increase further the impact on availability and use through traditional enforcement approaches may suffer from diminishing returns. Levels of enforcement activity appear to bear no direct relationship to levels of drug use or availability.

- Traditionally, drug enforcement efforts have focused on arrests and seizures, with the aim of reducing supply, but drug markets are large, resilient and quick to adapt. The gaps created are usually filled rapidly, leaving no apparent long-term change in availability.
- Therefore, arrests and seizures may have limited or no sustained impact on the range of drug-related harms experienced by individuals or communities; criminals may have been brought to justice, but problems in the community may have remained constant.
- Enforcement can sometimes have unintended consequences, and may even lead to an increase in the damage that drug markets inflict on a community; perhaps by triggering a turf war, or by displacing activity to somewhere more problematic, such as a residential area or near a school.

Our consultations have revealed a widespread view among enforcement agencies that they should have a harm-reduction role. The impact of drugs on individuals and communities can be reduced in four main ways: reducing the amount of drug use (demand reduction); reducing the harms associated with use (traditional harm reduction); reducing the availability of drugs (supply reduction); and reducing the harms associated with drug markets and distribution. While enforcement agencies do have a role to play in the first two of these areas and have had a traditional focus on supply reduction, it is this last of these areas that has been the main focus of this report.

The essays commissioned as part of the project have stimulated debate, and we have found widespread acceptance of the following key points raised in the essay by Caulkins and Reuter (2009) and in our evidence review:

1. It will not be possible to eradicate illicit drug markets completely through enforcement. In our poll of over 400 enforcement personnel, 90% agreed with the statement 'it is very unlikely that the UK drug market will be eradicated in the foreseeable future'.
2. Not all drug markets are equally harmful. For example, open drug markets may be more harmful than closed ones, and some dealers may be more violent than other dealers.
3. Enforcement does have the potential to shape the market, for example by causing an open market to become closed or to move to another area. Such changes may have an impact on harms.

Our case studies and consultations also demonstrate an increasing use of partnership approaches to addressing drug problems. However, these are mainly aimed at reducing acquisitive crime through encouraging problem drug-using offenders into treatment, i.e. demand reduction. In Scotland, there is also a strong commitment to reducing harm by reducing drug use through prevention programmes aimed at schoolchildren. These demand reduction programmes are extremely valuable, but additional gains might be achieved by also considering directly targeting reductions in harms associated with markets. This is the challenge that SOCA has been set within its remit, and which could also be taken up by other enforcement agencies. **Thus we**

conclude that there is clear potential for a more harm-focused approach to drug law enforcement to deliver real benefits to communities.

Reducing the damage that drug markets do to our communities (reducing drug market harms) would be expected to enhance community confidence, and enforcement agencies would be expected to take a lead role. This could be achieved by:

- dismantling those drug markets that cause the most harm, with the expectation that they will be replaced by less harmful ones;
- tackling the aspects of drug markets that are creating the most harm in order to curtail or change those practices; because drug markets often adapt to enforcement efforts, there is an opportunity to 'shape' them into less noxious forms; and
- modifying or reducing the use of enforcement activities that potentially increase the damage caused by drug markets; or put interventions in place to mitigate such harms (e.g. following up drug raids with support for children and families of dealers, who may otherwise be at risk).

To a greater or lesser extent, enforcement agencies in the UK are already adopting a harm-focused approach. For example, SOCA has a harm-reduction remit, and the move to neighbourhood policing and problem-oriented approaches encourages a greater focus on the harms experienced by communities. It also resonates with the emphasis in the Policing Green Paper, *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our communities together*, on improving community confidence in the police. A recent review of the current approach to tackling organised crime, *Extending our Reach* (HM Government, 2009), also recognised the importance of focusing on harms, stating: "Harm reduction, rather than quantities of drugs seized or individuals convicted, is a more useful way of prioritising activities to improve the lives of citizens in the UK".

The benefits of such an approach are considerable and are summarised in Box C. There is a high level of investment in drug enforcement at the moment, which is often portrayed as ineffective because drugs are still widely available. Taking a harm-focused approach to planning and evaluating enforcement activities will not only benefit the community by having a real impact on drug harms, but will also allow enforcement agencies to receive credit for the reductions in harms they make. It should also increase the efficiency of enforcement operations by identifying potential unintended consequences and mitigating against them as far as possible in advance. Focusing enforcement on harms may also stimulate innovation and reduce ritualistic enforcement.

The approach should facilitate the identification of appropriate measures of success, stimulating evaluation and building better evidence of what works. At present there is very little evidence from which to identify best practice, and still less to allow the identification of which approaches yield best value for money. In the current economic climate, such information is vital to achieving maximum benefit from the resources available.

Taking a broad view of harms should also help in the development of partnerships through the identification of common goals. Taking it further and involving the community in the identification of priority harms can also help build confidence, and if police activities can be shown to impact on these harms, it can also improve the perception of the extent of drug problems in the area. The use of this broader view of harms and the involvement of communities and partners in prioritising and planning activities may lead to a focus on previously neglected areas. Some harms (e.g. risks to children of drug addicts and dealers) have already begun to be more recognised. However, there is also a risk that harms that are harder to see or measure (e.g. corruption and intimidation) are not given due consideration, while in reality they may be causing some of the greatest problems for communities.

BOX C: POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF HARM-FOCUSED REAL IMPACT DRUG ENFORCEMENT

The approach outlined above has the potential to:

- improve partnership working, by providing a common language and framework for identifying priority objectives;
- facilitate the development of better measures of impact, providing a clearer understanding of what works and which interventions are most cost-effective;
- help communication with communities, giving them a clearer understanding of the impact of enforcement on the things that matter most to them and so building public confidence;
- provide impetus for new ways of responding to the problem, which could lead to innovative and more effective responses and;
- above all, make a *real impact* on the harms experienced by individuals, communities and society associated with drug use and, particularly, drug markets; this should enable enforcement agencies to deliver against both confidence and perception targets.

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERING REAL IMPACT DRUG ENFORCEMENT

In respect of the second aim of the project, we have sought to develop a flexible framework for planning and reviewing drug enforcement activities at all level that takes account of the broad nature of the different drug problems and potential enforcement activities. It is therefore essentially an approach that seeks to incorporate consideration of drug harms at all stages of the enforcement process. Rather than presenting a prescriptive process, we provide some tools that can help to focus standard enforcement practice on the key drug harms. It should be possible to apply this approach within other approaches that agencies may already be utilising, such as problem-oriented or neighbourhood policing.

As described in Chapter 4, the adoption of this approach requires a stronger overall focus on harms at all stages, and hence we make the following conclusions:

- Reducing the impact or harms that drug markets have on our communities should be made an explicit overall aim within relevant strategies and organisations.

- Prioritising and planning activities to tackle drug problems should be based on consideration of the full range of relevant drug harms and risks to individuals, families, communities and institutions. Use of the drug-harm matrix we have developed may assist this process.
- Problem identification and priority setting at community level should be in collaboration with the community affected.
- Partnership working is vital to maximise the effectiveness of action to reduce drug market-related harms.
- All operations aimed at drug markets should, within the planning process, explicitly identify the harms they are concerned with and identify the characteristics of drug markets that are the cause of those harms. It is important to specify clearly the mechanism by which the activity is expected to have an impact on the harms that are being targeted to ensure that appropriate tactics are selected.
- A wide range of operational tactics and approaches for addressing drug-related harms through enforcement should be considered. In Chapter 3 and Appendix B we have highlighted a number of approaches that have been shown or are believed to have had an impact on drug harms. However, there is also an opportunity to develop and test new approaches and we hope a focus on harms will stimulate innovation.
- New, harm-focused measures should be used to measure the impact of drug-related enforcement activity. Traditional measures of success, such as seizures and arrests, are of limited value, and even proxy measures for availability, such as price and purity levels, are insufficient. There is a difference between measures that could be used for assessing the impact of individual operations or programmes and those appropriate for performance management. As described in Chapter 4, there is the opportunity to develop new information sources, and some examples are provided in Appendix C.
- The impact on drug harms of all drug enforcement operations should be assessed to demonstrate proven positive impact on communities and to allow for continuous improvement and ensure value for money.

The importance of new measures of impact cannot be overstated. The use of arrests and seizures as measures of success may encourage a focus on volume of activity rather than on achieving reductions in harm, as highlighted in the 2009 World Drug Report (UNODC, 2009):

“Unfortunately, the quantitative performance management systems used in civil service worldwide do not encourage this sort of thinking. If the primary performance indicator of the police is volumes of arrests and seizures, little thought will be given to the impact of these arrests and seizures. Not surprisingly, these arrests and seizures are unlikely to have much positive impact. Research indicates that more enforcement is not necessarily better. Conservation of resources requires that police commanders carefully gauge the amount of enforcement required to produce the desired effect.”

Although there is a growing body of evidence about the way in which the drug production and supply chain, and organised crime more generally, operates (e.g. DesRoches, 2007, SOCA, 2009b, Reuter, 2009b, Wilson & Stevens, 2008) there is a

need to link this more clearly to harms. The lack of evidence on drug markets and the impact of enforcement on the harms they cause hampers decision-making on priority harms to be addressed and the best approaches to tackle them. A comprehensive map of drug markets would help to identify and dis-incentivise displacement from one Basic Command Unit (BCU) to another. As mentioned earlier, the SCDEA has recently published some of the results from a recent mapping exercise which they believe will allow them to prioritise the criminals that are causing the most harm. ACPO has developed a mapping tool also and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are working on one. The Organised Crime Partnership Board is consolidating mapping results from police forces in England and Wales, SOCA, UKBA and HMRC, so there is already considerable work being undertaken in this area. However, it cannot be taken for granted that targeting the most harmful criminals will necessarily reduce “real world” harms and it will still be necessary to consider the impact on the ground.

Because of the timescales and resources available for this project we have not been able to test this approach, but it has been developed in discussions with various groups throughout the country and there has been enthusiastic support for the basic approach. Therefore, we reach the following conclusions:

- There is a need to improve understanding of the scale and nature of the full range of drug market harms.
- Research on the impact of different approaches to enforcement on drug-related harms should be undertaken to show what works under what circumstances and what approaches provide the best value for money.
- A series of pilots should be developed to test the approach suggested in this review and to encourage new and innovative approaches to delivering Real Impact Drug Enforcement.

Adopting such an approach will be a challenge. Some of the more radical suggestions – such as prioritising open markets and thereby ‘tolerating’ other activities (e.g. closed dealing conducted away from residential areas) – can be seen as letting dealers get away with crime. The current media and political climate would seem unfavourable to such an approach. However, where resources are finite, sometimes these sorts of decisions are made implicitly, and if they can be shown to reduce harms in the longer term then attitudes might change. Indeed, there is evidence that discretion already operates in the enforcement of drug laws, as described by Lister et al. (2008) in their study of the street policing of drug users. There is a need for more public debate of these issues, which would help inform the development of priorities and explain the complexities of the issues.

The approach also has the potential to assist in partnership working. However, partnerships take time and resources to develop and may be dependent on specific individuals involved, so they can sometimes be seen as a burden and hard to maintain. However, the value of doing this, and the potential for communities to coalesce around an approach that targets drug problems, is evident in examples included in this report, such as Operation Nemesis. This may be the key to sustainability as in this example, and in others like it (e.g. Operation Reduction), significant elements of the operations have been mainstreamed, with partner organisations providing the funding.

The challenge of measurement also should not be underestimated, but there is scope for making even process measures more harm focused. The guidance being developed by the NPIA on results analysis should be of use here.

This work should not be seen in isolation as there are considerable developments in the area that complements our review; we have tried to identify this and incorporate it as much as possible. In this respect, liaison with the multi-agency UK Drugs Nexus group has been invaluable. This project sets out a framework which we hope will provide a basis which can be built on by others. Further work is needed: testing the approach; building more evidence; identifying approaches to assessing the relative importance of different harms; and the development of measures of drug harms.

It should also be noted that although this approach has been developed for drug-related enforcement activity, an area that seems particularly complex and prone to unintended consequences from interventions, it was often pointed out in our discussions that the harms approach could be of value to other areas of enforcement or policy. There are many areas that might benefit from a broader view of the aim of enforcement, which encourages innovative and potentially more cost-effective approaches. Fraud is one example, where prevention by designing out opportunities is often likely to be more effective, and cost-effective, than seeking to take out the perpetrators.

The Commission's work on this issue is, in many ways, reflective of evolving policies and practices within the UK, and indeed among governments, international agencies and those involved in delivering enforcement across the globe. The UK Drug Policy Commission's aim has been to add impetus to this trend. However, we cannot emphasise strongly enough the extent to which enforcement is underserved by a serious lack of high-quality evaluations and research. This will continue to hamper innovation, efficiency and effectiveness until it is addressed. In a period of increasing financial constraints, prioritising and delivering value for money will become just as critical for enforcement agencies as in other areas of public service.

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Appendix A: Groups and individuals consulted as part of the project

WORKSHOPS/GROUP SESSIONS

| | Groups represented |
|---|---|
| Preston, Lancashire | Police – local & regional Treatment partners |
| ACPOS drugs committee | Enforcement agencies, local & national |
| ACPO drugs conference | Enforcement agencies local & national, partners & policy makers |
| UKDPC seminars | Enforcement agency personnel – local, regional & national (police, SOCA, UKBA) – representing operations, intelligence and analysts |
| EATA (European Association for the Treatment of Addiction) conference | Treatment providers & police |
| Northern Ireland | Enforcement – local & regional Analyst Education |
| North Kent | Personnel involved in policing, offender management, treatment and financial investigation. |
| Cardiff | Police – local & regional SOCA, Police analysts, local government, treatment provider |
| ACPO drugs standing working group | Police Forces and representatives from key agencies including SOCA, Forensic Science Service, Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service. |
| Forum 42 group | Central Government and Local partnerships |
| ACPOS conference | Enforcement agency personnel and partners |
| CDRP/CRP conference | Community Safety Partnerships |
| NPIA/UKDPC workshop on measurement | SOCA, SCDEA and police force analysts |

INDIVIDUALS/TEAMS CONSULTED/INTERVIEWED

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Paul Furnell | Sussex Police |
| Ivan Beasley Philippa Warren | North Kent Police |
| Bryan Dent Dean Henson | West Yorkshire Police |
| Mark Robinson | West Midlands Police |
| Gareth Elliott | British Chambers of Commerce |

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|---|--|
| Richard Finlow David Bailey Rob Bateman | Staffordshire Police |
| Neil Clark Mike Garvey Susan Thomas | Criminal Assets Team, Merseyside Police |
| Nev Nolan Robert Boggan Lee Hill | Metropolitan Police |
| Peter Moore | Police Service Northern Ireland Crime Operations- Drugs Squad |
| Karen Carey Tom Woodcock Paul Whitehead | Lancashire Police |
| Andrew Davies Gillian Duggan | South Wales Police |
| Andy Bird David Oliver Owen Rowland Sara Skodbo Pamela Spalding | Home Office |
| Stephen Holme | Derbyshire Police |
| Frank Warburton | Consultant |
| David Bolt and others | Serious Organised Crime Agency |
| Kieron Boyle Harvey Redgrave Robert Boyett Nathan Sansom | Serious Organised Crime Review |
| Kevin Green | Association of Chief Police Officers |
| Robin Wilkinson | Arium - Risk Architecture |
| John Graham, Director of the Police Foundation Tom Lloyd, IDPC. Ian Robinson Ian Bates Mike Trace, Chief Executive of RAPt. | Other stakeholders |

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

- David Blakey, Commissioner, UK Drug Policy Commission (Chair)
- ACC Jeremy Paine/Nick Wilkinson, Sussex Police / ACPO
- Trevor Pearce, Executive Director, Serious Organised Crime Agency
- Donna McKinnon, Scottish Government
- DI Andrew Dunlop, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Drug Squad
- Andrew O'Reilly, Audit Manager. National Audit Office
- Professor Michael Levi, University of Cardiff
- Frances Hardy, Drug Strategy Unit, Home Office
- Elizabeth Sadler/Anna Rogerson, Scottish Government
- DSupt Andrew Ronald, Strathclyde Police and ACPOS
- DSupt Willie McColl, National Drugs Co-ordinator, SCDEA
- Mike Hardy, National Programme Manager- DIP, Policy Advisor, Substance Misuse, Welsh Assembly Government
- Dr Alex Stevens, European Institute of Social Services University of Kent
- Elisabeth Mail, Analyst, National Police Improvement Agency
- DCI Trevor Williamson, Coordinator - UK Drugs Nexus Group & ACPO Drugs Committee
- Anisha Worbs, Serious Organised Crime Agency

Appendix B: Case study summaries

OPERATION ABRUPTION

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| A money laundering network, with subjects based in Iran. The network was providing money laundering services for a number of drug trafficking groups in the UK, including one judged to be one of the most significant heroin traffickers in London. The operation addressed drug market-related harms by targeting a key enabler, financial support. |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to identify the money laundering network and their customers, thereby identifying other organised crime groups trafficking drugs to the UK; • Collation of evidence to mount a successful prosecution against principal subject and associates, thereby disrupting several organised crime groups by removing a key enabler of financial support; • building knowledge and understanding of the hierarchy, infrastructure and methodologies of the money laundering organisation, and the financial links between Iran based bankers and Turkish based drug traffickers. |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work on the money laundering network was expected to identify a number of Turkish and Asian organised crime groups trafficking and distributing heroin into and within the UK. Spin-off operations targeting those groups would reduce the supply to particular parts of the UK (and therefore some of the harms associated with drug use) and the harms associated with drug-trafficking. The local consequences of such operations were largely to be handled by local police & not the national agency. • The arrest of couriers and seizure of cash was expected to have an immediate and damaging impact on the short-term future of the money laundering group, but if the arrests were one-off the network was expected to replace these personnel and re-group. • By maintaining a sustained focus on the money and taking it out of the equation systematically, the confidence of individuals concerned and their customers/associates was expected to be eroded – causing longer-term damage to the reputation of the group and their ability to do business. |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrest of cash collectors, couriers and 'smurfers' & seizure of over £1.5 million in a three month period. Four persons convicted of money laundering and passport offences and sentenced to a total of 11yrs imprisonment. • Ongoing focus on remaining members of the money laundering network suggested that they lost customers following the enforcement activity and were trying to re-build their base, and that some parties were unwilling to work with them. There were indications that some individuals linked to the money service business sold assets to raise money to pay back debts to others. |

- One of the spin-off operations dismantled an organised crime group distributing heroin within the UK - with activity extending to both upstream supply contacts and downstream customers in particular regions of the UK. The principal subject had been previously known to law enforcement and had a high-profile in the community. Officers reported that the enforcement activity damaged his reputation and standing within the community, showing that he was not 'untouchable'. However, there was no evaluation of this or other impacts on harms as a result of the enforcement activity.

CONTROLLED DELIVERIES - MPS

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| <p>Importation and distribution of drugs through the use of fast parcel services. Increasingly large numbers of packages of 5-10 kgs of Class A drugs coming into the country. These are then repackaged and distributed further by a wide range of organised crime groups mainly operating out of addresses in the London area. The large number of parcels containing fairly small amounts means that interception of a proportion does not damage the business.</p> <p>The groups involved in the distribution of these drugs were linked to other criminality, including violence, and the drug use and lower level markets to acquisitive crime and disorder at the neighbourhood level. Through prosecuting those involved and intercepting the supplies of drugs it was intended that these harms would be reduced.</p> |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>A Territorial Policing Crime Squad team developed a partnership with the fast parcel industry which formed the basis for the development of an approach which gave them the ability to respond rapidly to intelligence and not only seize the shipment but also identify and gather evidence to successfully prosecute those involved in receiving and distributing the drugs.</p> <p>Key features of the approach developed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• intelligence-gathering, covert surveillance using a range of techniques, and the use of innovative packaging technology;• partnership work with HMRC, UKBA, FSS and the parcel industry to secure intelligence flows;• close working with Crown Prosecution Service to ensure evidence gathered is sufficient to ensure successful prosecutions;• experienced team able to react rapidly to intelligence received as the window of opportunity for action is very narrow;• At the time of arrest, attention is paid to informing the public in the area that the police activity is a drugs operation to build confidence that the police are taking action. |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <p>The main aim of the operations is to disrupt supplies and arrest and punish the middle market dealers. It is expected that the seizures will decrease the level of supply and hence reduced the potential harms associated with drug use throughout the community. In addition it was hoped to build public confidence in the police.</p> |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <p>Through the successful completion of the 20 controlled deliveries 65 arrests were made, 67.5 kg of Class 'A' and 1005 kg of Class 'B' controlled drugs with a combined street value of £6,645,000 were recovered and cash seizures totalled nearly £300,000 and crimes proceeds in excess of £4,000,000 were identified. The strong evidence obtained is thought to have reduced the costs associated with prosecutions as offenders plead guilty.</p> <p>It is hard to measure the impact of middle market enforcement activity on harms. It is reported that the seizures have decreased the level of supply for short periods which may have reduced the potential harms associated with drug use throughout the community but this has not been verified. The successful arrest and prosecution of individuals targeted during the operations removed a significant number of dangerous criminals from society and the positive reaction to enforcement work and subsequent increase in actionable intelligence received from the community suggests improved public confidence in the areas around enforcement activity.</p> |

DERBYSHIRE DRUG MARKET PROJECT

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| Local heroin markets in small isolated 'greenfield' or semi rural towns in Derbyshire. Social harms such as drug related (acquisitive) crime generated by local problem users and community acceptance of drug markets. Economic costs to public purse such as police time, criminal justice interventions, healthcare, benefits payment for unemployed. Health harms such as contracting hepatitis. |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) disrupting local 'Level 1' heroin/crack markets through intelligence led mapping, target hardening, test purchasing by undercover police officers and co-ordinated operations producing mass arrests in town level and especially visible or open markets; combined with ii) attracting problem drug users into immediate treatment; iii) providing support to the local community to 'resist' drug supplying/dealing and co-operate with local crime & disorder partnership; iv) giving drugs awareness/prevention workshops to local schools (teachers, parents, and young people) to help reduce drug use and increase knowledge about problems associated with it; v) delivering communications strategy involving stakeholders and local residents to enhance intelligence sharing; vi) providing information and knowledge about local drug markets and problem user populations to improve strategic planning and 'understanding' of the local drug markets in the County. |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) as a result of enforcement activity, create a supply shortage which would increase openness to treatment. Reduce recorded crime, particularly acquisitive crime and violent offences. Positive feedback from local residents b) increase in call-outs for drug overdose, and calls to National Drugs Helpline |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 200 arrests mostly for heroin-crack related supply and possession offences were made in 6 communities, with almost all convictions leading to imprisonment. • even in small rural communities, not possible to create a 'drought' or seriously disrupt dependent users' access to heroin and crack. • Numbers into treatment below target: overall only 73 problem drug users entered treatment against a target of 300. unintended consequence: treatment-enforcement partnership highlighted in the media 'scared' local problem users. Not only did the local mainstream drugs service (CDS) not receive any new referrals but many users already engaged in treatment failed to keep routine appointments. • proved possible to close open town centre heroin/crack markets in 2 towns. Where there was no follow-up enforcement action, initial displacement effects were not always sustained and initial public support turned to scepticism (but basic policing responses at first signs of re-emergence can sustain impact). • mass arrests in each Operation did not affect local recorded crime rates; no crime categories were significantly reduced as a consequence of the Operations. • Operations did not have the adverse effect of increasing overdose incidents which might occur during periods of intermittent supply, varying purity and the use of diverted medications as a heroin substitute. |

OPERATION GRASSLANDS

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| <p><i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i></p> <p>An area of Wakefield had a problem with drug dealing, and one family in particular operating at NIM levels 2 and 3 was having a conspicuous and corrosive influence on the local community. The criminality of this family was well-known to the community. They were heavily into the supply of drugs in the area, and would use the profits to buy expensive property and cars.</p> <p>Associated harms included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage to public confidence in the police and other authorities as criminals appeared to be profiting from drugs and getting away with it. There was a perception that the police were not acting on information provided by the community, or were ineffective when they did act. This was a predominantly Asian community where relationships with the police were sometimes strained.• Drug dealers themselves becoming more confident and more blatant, as arrests did not lead to prosecution due to insufficient evidence.• A potential for negative role models for youth in the area provided by dealers with conspicuous wealth. |
| <p><i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i></p> <p>Activity built on the approach developed by West Yorkshire Police through Operation Brava, It included covert operations including a substantial (three month) period of intelligence gathering and test-purchasing as well as overt operations such as an initial crackdown (arrests) on known dealers. However, whilst Brava was area-based, Grasslands focused on specific criminal networks.</p> <p>Particular effort was made to ensure that the activity was community focused. For instance, neighbourhood policing officers were involved in making all of the arrests and there was a strong communications component. Tactics included posting leaflets to residents in particular neighbourhoods, engaging with the local media, and symbolic publicity stunts such as crushing cars seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act. This helped to explain to communities what was happening and also encourage them to report anything suspicious to Crimestoppers. It was particularly important to demonstrate that both information from the community was being acted upon, and that crime doesn't pay.</p> <p>There was a strong partnership element to the operations, and police officers worked closely with colleagues from the DIP team to direct drug users to treatment. There was also a mobile clinic which visited the area after arrests, funded by the Primary Care Trust.</p> |
| <p><i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i></p> <p>The ultimate ambition was to dismantle the network and reduce the level of crime in the area. Other goals were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• increase public confidence in the police;• increase the number of informants and improve community resilience to drugs;• Create a window of opportunity for users to get help. <p>There was concern about unintended consequences of publicity on community confidence and perceptions/fear of crime. It was recognised that a large number of dealer convictions could displace the problem to prisons, who were alerted to this risk. It was acknowledged that more work with family support partners could be beneficial to help reduce harms to families involved.</p> |
| <p><i>Actual outcomes</i></p> |

Operation Grassland has resulted in:

- The arrest of 105 people who have been charged with more than 400 offences.
- The confiscation of 16 vehicles, £75,000 and a substantial amount of drugs.
- Early indications of an overall significant reduction in crime (e.g. 120 less crimes in one week than same week in previous year) compared to pre-Grasslands levels.
- Substantial positive media coverage.
- Supportive comments from members of the community (e.g. on blogs).
- 14% increase in the number of reports to Crimestoppers at the end of 2008

OPERATION GREENBAY

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| Semi-open markets in five geographical areas across the city. Heroin, cocaine and crack readily available, and dealer networks well established. Price and availability of drugs had remained constant for sustained period; lack of sustained proactive drugs enforcement had allowed networks to operate in relative comfort. |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>Street-level up approach including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test-purchasing operation identified around 80 dealers on whom intelligence profile built, leading to arrest phase; • reassurance strategy after each arrest phase: deployment of mobile police station; leaflet drop specific to dealer territory and surrounding housing stock; high visibility foot and mobile patrol; deployment of force advertising van; execution of drug warrants not associated with Greenbay; deployment of passive drug dog to local pubs and clubs; force ANPR teams deployed to main arterial routes within the city – post arrest phase; • extensive consultation to draw in partners resulting in joined-up activity including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women dealers involved in the sex trade – sent trained officers to meet those who would be coming to buy from arrested dealers; • DIP working with every prisoner – 4-5 years – including the CARAT process; • Health authority: extra clean needles available. Learnt from previous experience, dealers not there to provide clean needles; • Council: follow enforcement team in to clean road, board up houses, cleanse immediate area; • Education: input to Strategic Directors for them to decide on what to provide, and police officer made available if needed; • regular engagement with national agencies (SOCA, HMRC, Immigration) who took responsibility for higher-level nominals identified.; • media & marketing: included radio, papers, electronic notice board (“did you know...”); also linked into council press. Significant work strand. |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition for “harm” reduction never provided by CIDA group, but reduction in acquisitive crime is one indication although not the only means of measure. Force agreed that residents of Coventry needed to “feel the difference”. |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs include: 70 arrests; 6 associated arrests; 16 kilos of heroin and 11 grams of crack cocaine with street value of approximately £600,000; £154,871 cash seized; approximately £339,600 value of assets seized; 1 loaded firearm seized. • Outcomes included: significant reduction in acquisitive crime in 1 area; public surveys – positive feedback for visible justice/respice. CHIS de-brief indicated disruptive effects of arrest phase. Saw a significant crime reduction over 6-8 weeks. This could have been sustained (including through further test purchasing operation) but there was not the scope to do so. |

OPERATION ICEBERG

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| <p>In 2007 there was an established Class A drugs problem in North Kent accentuated by its close proximity to London, Bluewater shopping centre and the good transport links to the rest of the country. In particular, there was a concern about the crime links: acquisitive crime linked to heroin and crack cocaine use, and organised crime linked to cocaine supply and cannabis production.</p> |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>Operation Iceberg is a NIM level 1 BCU project (with links to level 2) which began in May 2007 and consists of three key components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Enforcement and asset recovery.</i><p>The operation started with a major campaign of disruption and arrests. A campaign encouraged the community to call Crimestoppers with information with the slogan: "too much bling? Give us a ring".</p><p>The team has a Financial Investigator and the use of POCA is seen as a crucial element to the operation to ensure a sustainable impact by preventing dealers from continuing where they left off.</p><i>2. Arrest referral and outreach</i><p>Every person in custody is reviewed and those referred to treatment are frequently followed-up outside of the custody suite while motivation is high.</p><i>3. Offender management.</i><p>Offenders are systematically categorised as high/medium/low risk through analysis of the estimated cost of crimes, volume of crime, type of offence and other information. The approach is that "we go to them before they come to us", which includes prison visits prior to release. Approximately 30 offenders are intensively managed to disrupt their criminal activity and encourage them to access DIP and other services.</p> |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <p>This was above all a crime reduction initiative.</p> <p>Also aimed to take out supply rather than merely disrupt it, by addressing supply, demand and seizing commodities.</p> <p>Other goals were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• increase public confidence in the police.• Increase referrals to DIP and other services. <p>Some unintended or negative consequences have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Much of the heroin trade (and associated crime) has been displaced to areas like Slade Green, Abbey Wood and Erith. North Kent police have been working with their neighbouring forces to help to manage this.• The initial media profile of the campaign was leading journalists to ask if N Kent had a major drug problem so there was a change of strategy to low-key communications targeted at neighbourhoods affected by the operations. |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall crime was already down by 10% in 2006 prior to Operation Iceberg, and crime continued to fall: by 25% in 2007 and 33% in 2008 against 2005 levels.• Heroin and crack cocaine are reported to be in 'short supply'. The nature of market has also changed: now more underground (e.g. dealing from vehicles and cocaine deliveries to |

the door).

- There have been 188 arrests, £1.5m worth of drugs seized, 17 large cannabis factories shut down with over 6,000 plants seized and over £900,000 of cash seized.
- In the first year, arrest referrals increased by 76% (overall 151 referrals) and the quality of referral also improved.
- 36 chaotic addicted offenders are being managed. 27 are engaged with treatment, 6 have begun employment or training and the majority have reduced or stopped reoffending.

OPERATION KARROSS

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| The money laundering and drug trafficking activities of an organised crime group |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>Range of non-traditional methods used to disrupt the activity of the organised crime group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 8 PACE warrants were served on the home and business addresses of the main subject, and on one day in April 2009 they were visited by SOCA, West Midlands Police, UKBA, Home Office, Trading Standards, Fire Service and Health & Safety Executive; • West Midlands Police informed the local community of the operation after it had commenced by distributing leaflets explaining that warrants had been executed in relation to drug distribution and informing senior members of the community |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) significant disruption of activities of the organised crime group, stifling ability to operate through apparently legitimate businesses in the medium term b) increased public confidence as a result of demonstration of joined up activity by range of enforcement and partner agencies against criminals |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKBA discovered three illegal immigrants who were arrested and taken into detention. The main subject was subsequently served a Liability Notice by the UKBA which will be followed by Civil Court proceedings and is likely to result in a substantial fine; • The Fire Service gathered evidence to launch a prosecution on grounds of Fire Safety. A conviction is likely, and should result in closure of the business and substantial fines; • The health and safety executive found evidence that will aid a prosecution on food hygiene grounds and substantial fines; • Cash was seized at the subject's home address; civil recovery teams are investigating following the identification of assets on the day by SOCA financial investigators • Since this day of action another member of the organised crime group has been convicted of possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply and imprisoned • Evaluation not complete at time of writing, but activity appeared to have significantly disrupted ability of group to operate in short term. |

PROJECT KITLEY

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| <p>Taking a new approach to tackling the UK drugs market, by focusing on the cutting agents used to bulk up cocaine. Whilst the substances concerned have (very limited) legitimate use, their illegitimate use for the drugs trade allows traffickers and dealers to increase their profits and can be the cause of significant health harms for users themselves. In addition, it is possible that an increase in availability and/or reduction in price caused by cutting could draw in new users. By looking at the dynamics of the market and the problem overall, SOCA – working with police forces, UKBA, HMRC and government departments – aims to constrain use of the cutting agents and therefore impact on harms caused by drugs market.</p> |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>A mixture of traditional and non-traditional enforcement techniques to identify the UK procurement, distribution and users of the cutting agents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identified organised crime groups involved in importation of cutting agents and took opportunities for enforcement/intervention action;• in one instance, sent warning to police forces and NHS/Drug Action Teams following enforcement activity, highlighting that in the short-term available supplies of cocaine might be sold at increased purity or, more probably, other potentially more harmful substances could be used to bulk the cocaine – thereby increasing the risks to consumers;• Wider communications strategy to raise awareness amongst general public and key audiences, including legitimate industry, about use of cutting agents and risks associated with them. |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By targeting supply of cutting agents, intended to make it more difficult for drug trafficking groups to operate and make profits.• Targeted enforcement activity was anticipated to create a short-term shortage of cutting agents in local markets, meaning that cocaine could be sold at increased purity or with potentially more harmful substances used to bulk it. |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2008/09, seizure of 15 tonnes of cutting agent or, had it been used as an adulterant, the equivalent of a minimum of 30 tonnes of “cocaine” on the streets;• arrest of individuals believed to be involved in the supply of cutting agents;• Collaborative work with the Police Service across the UK, involving issuing advice to ACPO, ACPO(S) Forces and SCDEA, in which leads from SOCA’s work reportedly led to police arrests, seizures and related activity on over 70 occasions during 2008/09 in many different parts of the country.• Impact on availability of some of the preferred cutting chemicals, and consequent impact on potential profitability of the trade for domestic trafficking groups. Judged by SOCA to be one of the many factors contributing to changes in UK cocaine market in 2008/09, which saw marked rise in wholesales prices of cocaine and reduction in purity of street sales.• Impact on harms, including potential negative health impacts from variable purity (eg increased risk of overdose) and use of alternative cutting agents has not been assessed. |

OPERATION MACARISE

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| <p>One particular OCG, the 'Gee Family' operating out of North Liverpool, was a notoriously violent group known to local police for some time that had been linked to a series of murders, numerous firearms discharges, and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks on rival factions and police stations related to disputes over the supply of drugs in the area.</p> <p>As they were located in a close-knit community in which they had many family members and associates and where they operated through violence and intimidation, it had proved difficult to successfully prosecute the key members of the group. The harms experienced by the community were therefore violence and intimidation, fear of crime with associated reduced quality of life and loss of confidence in the police as the group appeared to be able to operate with impunity.</p> |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>(i) Covert operations including undercover operators, a range of surveillance techniques and test purchasing followed by overt crackdowns were initially directed at level 1 dealers but the intelligence gathered and the removal of a significant number of local dealers meant that higher level gang members became more exposed.</p> <p>(ii) A robust financial investigation into the money laundering operations of the OCG members and related associates using a dedicated Financial Investigator who developed lines of enquiry and pursued them vigorously. With the covert surveillance and financial investigations operating in tandem with each other, new intelligence arising from the covert surveillance operations was used to further the financial investigation, and vice-versa. In this way it was possible to link the different members of the group to each other and the illicit drugs operations.</p> |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <p>The operation aimed to disrupt the operation of the group by successfully prosecuting key group members and seizing their assets. Since the violence employed by the group and the impact that has on other residents in the area was a reason for targeting this group, a reduction in violent crime and an improvement in public confidence in the area was an implicit, if not explicit, aim of the operation.</p> <p>One possible unintended consequence considered was the potential for other groups to move in to take over the market in the area, which might have been associated with violent rivalry.</p> |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <p>Several senior members of the group were successfully prosecuted along with large numbers of street level dealers. 43 kilograms of heroin, 12.3 kilograms of cocaine and 1.77 kilograms of crack cocaine, estimated to have a street value of over£3 million in total, were seized. Additionally, £1.1 million in cash and £2 million in assets have also been seized. Also, 17 firearms have been recovered in addition to 374 pieces of ammunition.</p> <p>The impact on harms was not measured. Intelligence suggests that the price of Class 'A' drugs in Merseyside has risen dramatically although the extent this is related to this operation is not clear. Also police stops and searches following the operation suggested that fewer individuals were coming into the area in search of drugs. The level of violence may have decreased but no data was collected to support this.</p> <p>One possible unintended consequence of this operation was that the negative publicity associated with case may have increased the already negative image of the area, which in the long term may reduce the sustainability of any benefits to residents from the disruption of the group.</p> |

OPERATION MAZURKA –NORTHERN IRELAND

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| <p>Commercial cannabis cultivation became apparent in Northern Ireland. This was linked to organised crime groups of Chinese origin which therefore had the potential for increasing racial tensions even though they were unrelated in any way to the resident South East Asian community.</p> <p>The practice of bypassing the electric meter to avoid detection was a common technique, which presented a substantial risk of fire to adjacent homes or buildings in addition to the property itself. The use of large amounts of electricity without payment also represented a considerable loss of revenue to the electricity companies. The presence of a wide-range of volatile chemicals, and high likelihood of crude and dangerous security measures also posed a risk to the safety of the public, police, and suspects.</p> |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>Covert and overt policing strategies were developed to identify and dismantle the network of cannabis cultivation sites. While lengthy intelligence and evidence-gathering phases were undertaken where possible to assist in penetration and dismantling the organised crime groups this was balanced against the assessment of risk posed by the properties. A systematic approach to forensic assessment of the sites was taken to maximise intelligence-gathering opportunities and a HOLMES (Home Office Large Major Enquiry System) account proved invaluable for handling and processing all the different strands of information.</p> <p>The expertise of a wide range of agencies with experience of cannabis cultivation in other parts of the UK was tapped. In Northern Ireland the Public Prosecution Service, local UKBA officials, and Community Safety Team officers were brought in at the earliest stages, briefed on the issues, and kept abreast of developments throughout the operation. Partnerships were formed with local retail providers of the supplies needed to set up the farms who provided information on sales, as well as with the electricity suppliers. Landlords and estate agents were also targeted with a leaflet campaign providing information to help them identify suspect prospective tenants.</p> <p>Local South East Asian community leaders were involved and their support for the operations publicised so that it was clear that they were not linked to the perpetrators. There was also a careful media strategy that highlighted the work being done without giving details of the strategies being used which generated substantial media coverage.</p> |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <p>(a) Reduction in cannabis cultivation and associated risks to individuals and property. Reduction in losses to electricity companies from theft of electricity.</p> <p>(b) Potential for the local South East Asian population to suffer from racial abuse because the criminal involved were mainly (non-resident) Chinese.</p> |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <p>Closure of 78 cannabis cultivation sites. 86 arrests were made which resulted in 73 individuals being indicted and a very high conviction rate was achieved. Cannabis cultivation was almost eradicated from the province (only 4 sites identified subsequent to the operation). A high proportion of suspects pleaded guilty giving cost savings in prosecutions.</p> <p>There has been no evidence of increased racial attacks on the local South East Asian community and the increased flow of information from the public suggests improved community confidence. There is evidence of possible displacement to Ireland.</p> |

OPERATION NEMESIS

What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?

In 2006 Stoke on Trent was identified as a hub for heroin trafficking within the United Kingdom and a High Crack Cocaine area. Within the City, the Western Neighbourhood Management area was identified as having significant and established Class A drugs markets operated by local Organised Crime Groups (OCG's). There was a growing influence from competing OCG's from Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Sheffield which had led to escalating violence between the gangs resulting in many serious assaults and public order incidents. Some enforcement success had been achieved in Stoke on Trent using conventional policing tactics but the void left following arrests was almost immediately filled and intelligence gathering and enforcement opportunities were becoming more and more difficult to achieve. The lack of sustained success had resulted in some of the dealers becoming negative role models within the community. A significant factor was the number of privately rented properties, many with absentee landlords, and the area was subject to large scale renewal through voluntary and compulsory acquisitions, causing the number of void properties to rise.

Harms identified were:

- Deprivation of particular areas, including through low-level crime, graffiti etc
- High levels of acquisitive crime
- Growing influence of organised crime groups
- Escalating violence between gangs, resulting in serious assaults and public order incidents
- Negative role models
- Lack of community confidence in enforcement and reduced participation in tackling crime
- Increase in users and insufficient drug treatment

Enforcement activity undertaken

Operation Nemesis was developed from the outset as a multi agency project aimed to directly tackle the supply of drugs and drug related problems within the community in a more holistic manner. Five main strands or phases of the operation were identified:

Phase 1 – Understanding the nature of the problem - A comprehensive baseline assessment of the Western Neighbourhood area and its associated problems was completed using intelligence, recorded crime statistics, feedback from household questionnaires and information provided by the Local Authority on housing and tenancy issues.

Phase 2 – Identification of subjects and evidence gathering - Undercover officers were deployed to infiltrate the criminal community, using a bottom up approach over 16 months from February 2006. They were able to move up from street-level dealers. Most of whom were to support their own habits to higher level dealers who were involved in supplying quantities of drugs, predominantly heroin, in amounts ranging from multi ounce to kilo's.

Phase 3 - Enforcement – Three enforcement phases took place in September and November 2007 and January 2008 with each phase involving 350 police officers. In the 6 months following the final arrest phase additional intelligence-driven activity was undertaken in a broader area including adjacent communities to address potential displacement (& unintended consequences). This activity included stop search operations conducted on the main roads in and out of the City, using ANPR, and on the railways supported by British Transport Police accompanied. Also, in partnership with the DAT, crime prevention advice was provided to potentially vulnerable locations, such as doctors, chemists and dentists.

Phase 4 - Consolidation and Partnership strategies - considerable attention was paid to developing partnership work:

- protocol drawn up between all partners, including the Chief Executive of the Local

Authority, Divisional Commander of the Fire Service, Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust and the Chief Superintendent of the Stoke On Trent Division, and regular partnership meetings held prior to enforcement.

- On the same day as the first two enforcement phases community engagement events took place attended by 200+ people from partner agencies at which action plans and best practice were agreed. eg, a weekly tasking group was formed between the police and local authority where civil enforcements were discussed and a second action plan led to work with agencies that deal with families of drug dependent individuals.
- **Treatment and Training.** Two key areas of consolidation were identified: Firstly, additional drug treatment provision and a reduction in waiting lists was needed and the Primary Care Trust secured an additional £30,000 which has now been mainstreamed into the annual budget. A training package was also designed for practitioners and delivered to over 600 people, including police officers, housing and neighbourhood officers to increase understanding of treatment systems and opportunities.
- To address the negative influence of drug dealers on the younger community a seminar was organised at a local community premises, attended by over 150 local youths, to discuss the drug and gang culture followed by 'Crucial Crew Events' run by all emergency services and the local and health authorities for local school children.
- **Environmental clean up operation.** During each of the enforcement phases a coordinated clean up operation took place and 100 addresses were issued with fixed penalty tickets for littering/fly tipping and the associated clean up costs placed onto land registry to encourage absentee landlords to take responsibility for their properties.
- **Crime Prevention.** To enhance public confidence additional funding was secured from Central Government to provide basic crime reduction equipment, eg window alarms, personal attack alarms and vehicle stop locks, to victims of crime and to those who were identified as being vulnerable.

Phase 5 Media and Communication Strategy - the media and communication strategy was seen as key to lasting success by keeping the community informed and involved. The Nemesis name and logo was incorporated throughout. Trusted members of the local and regional press (television and radio) were given a confidential briefing two days before enforcement and the media were invited to follow arrest teams as they executed warrants, accompanied by the City Mayor, the Divisional Chief Superintendent and local authority members. Direct marketing included a total of 10,000 Nemesis leaflets being delivered and posters advertising Nemesis displayed on the sides of public transport, in phone kiosks and at local community and business premises. A giant digital projector displayed the Nemesis logo, photographs and videos of raids on the sides of buildings around the city. Bluetooth broadcasting was deployed around the City delivering a brief message regarding Nemesis, the logo and Crimestoppers information.

Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences

a) The aims and objectives of Operation Nemesis were:

- To provide an accurate strategic and tactical intelligence picture in respect of Class A drug supply and criminality linked to those markets;
- To disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups and existing criminal markets by securing and preserving evidence against identified subjects for offences relating to drug supply and associated criminality
- To identify criminally obtained assets with a view to seizure and confiscation under Proceeds of Crime Legislation
- To engage with partners with a view to maintaining a significant reduction in crime, providing public reassurance and confidence across all diverse communities and a sustained improvement in the quality of people's lives and the environment they live in.

b) the possibility was recognised of: displacement to adjacent areas; dealers from other locations coming into market to fill void; and vulnerable premises, such as chemists etc

targeted due to lack of supply.

Actual outcomes

- Overall, tangible improvement in the area targeted which continues to be sustained through enhanced partnership working and continued focus by the police on those wishing to fill the void.
- 82 arrests including 48 level 1 , 12 level 2 and 2 level 3 dealers resulting in 160 years imprisonment
- 13 OCG's dismantled or significantly disrupted
- £148,000 cash seized, 9 houses restrained and 3 high value cars forfeited
- Significant trust and confidence generated within the community, positive feedback received through housing questionnaires, community forums and the local media
- Reported crime in Western Neighbourhood reduced by 20%
- Retention of users in drug treatment up from 52% to 85%
- Drug treatment waiting time reduced from 16 to 2 weeks
- Operation Nemesis now daily business within Staffordshire and embedded in the community
- 77% increase in drug related Crimestoppers information (31% increase overall)

PERSISTENT OFFENDER PROJECT - GLASGOW

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| <p>A large proportion of Glasgow's persistent offenders are difficult to engage in mainstream treatment services due to their chaotic lifestyles. Many have drug and/or alcohol problems. This group are responsible for a disproportionate amount of acquisitive crime because their drug misuse leads to addiction, offending, poverty, homelessness and in many cases, imprisonment. However, the majority of prison terms are short and they resume their former lifestyles rapidly on release. In addition, this group are also known to have a multiplicity of social issues including difficulties surrounding family relationships, unemployment, financial problems, unaddressed health issues (both mental and physical) and a history of homelessness. There were also concerns about the high rate of drug-related deaths in the area.</p> |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>A joint initiative was formed between Glasgow Addiction Services and Strathclyde Police in 2005. The overarching aim of the project was to establish joint partnership working to improve health and social well being for offenders with drug and alcohol problems and their communities. This was achieved through partnership working between Strathclyde Police and Glasgow Addiction Services (GAS) who were jointly responsible for the operational and strategic management of this innovative service. The team was composed of police officers, an addiction worker and social workers.</p> <p>An out-reach service sought to engage the offender and if successful a comprehensive assessment addressing substance use and health and social needs formed the basis of a comprehensive care plan. Out-reach continued as necessary to maintain engagement.</p> |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <p>The key objectives of the service were initially identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reducing drug / alcohol offending• reducing anti-social behaviour• promoting community safety and well-being• reducing drug related deaths• reducing the fear of crime• promoting training and employment opportunities and encourage offenders to become involved in work initiatives; and• to contribute towards a healthy and a safe Glasgow at ground level in local communities. |
| <i>Actual outcomes</i> |
| <p>The project successfully engaged offenders (only one person refused to engage). Those who participated showed a reduction in offending and antisocial behaviour, reductions in drug use, and improved physical health but with no control group it is not possible to say if this was attributable to the project.</p> <p>Initial figures for 2007 suggest a significant decrease in the numbers of drug related deaths within the Glasgow City area although it is not possible to directly attribute this to the project it may have made some contribution. There was no data collected to allow assessment of impact on fear of crime.</p> |

OPERATION REDUCTION – BRIGHTON & HOVE

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| <i>What was the problem and associated drug harms that were being addressed?</i> |
| Brighton and Hove: highest rate of heroin overdose deaths in the country; designated high crack area; in the top 20 robbery areas in UK; much higher rates of acquisitive crime and substance misuse than other BCUs in Sussex. |
| <i>Enforcement activity undertaken</i> |
| <p>Police have two main roles:</p> <p>(a) test purchase, intelligence gathering and arrests of dealers & users continuous cycles of covert pro-active operations with arrest phases at 8 week intervals. Mainly test purchase operations but observations and CCTV data also used. Aim to get overwhelming evidence before proceeding against targets so 80-90% plead guilty saving court time.</p> <p>(b) outreach work in conjunction with CRI workers – 3 officers (no longer full-time) and neighbourhood specialist officers have individuals allocated to them. They tell individuals they have been identified and offer fast-track route into treatment. They may stop and search to encourage people who are not engaging but may also support individuals who are engaging in court if they have been arrested again.</p> <p>Drug analyst used to collate intelligence and maintain a dynamic picture of drug market and dealer networks.</p> <p>Local Support Team officers provide high visibility policing in identified hotspots and support in arrest phase.</p> <p>CRI role – contact identified individuals and make contact to offer treatment. 2 workers each have caseload of about 30 clients. Continue to work with client whatever happens to them. Offers housing support, benefit help, health care etc as well as drug treatment. They stay with client until clean and able to live independently (can be a year or more).</p> <p>Sussex Partnership Substance Misuse Service – has dedicated key worker (community charge nurse). Does comprehensive assessment then they are seen by doctor – fast tracked onto a script (7-10 days).</p> |
| <i>Expected impact on harms? (a) Goals (b) Possible unintended consequences</i> |
| <p>(a) Expected impact</p> <p>3 main priority aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stop people dying of overdoses • stop drugs being dealt • stop the need for drugs <p>translated into 7 specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of drug users in treatment services • Reduce levels of crime in hotspot areas • Reduce fear of crime in hotspot areas • Reduce reports of anti-social behaviour in hotspot areas • Increase people’s feeling of safety in hotspot areas • Increase number of people charged with supplying controlled drugs • Increase the amount of controlled drugs seized in the course of the operation. <p>Possible unintended consequences identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement of crime to other areas. • Open market up to more harmful dealers. • Undermine treatment programmes in operation. |

Actual outcomes

Positive evaluation by stakeholders. Improved partnerships.

Area-level and individual level offending analysis:

- Reductions in overall offending – particularly impact offending (acquisitive crime).
- Increases in drug offences.
- No change on ASB.

No consistent impact on drug deaths.

Cost benefit analysis: Estimate that for every £1 spent they saved £3 on crime costs.

Reported that number of calls about nuisance decreased (not covered in evaluation).

Appendix C: Examples of potential measures of drug harms

| Type of harm | Possible measures |
|---|--|
| HEALTH | |
| Physical health harm to drug user | Number of hospital admissions/cases where drug use was a factor |
| | Number of incidents of drug treatment |
| | Rates of hepatitis/ HIV infection |
| Overdose/death to drug user | Number of deaths where drug use was the cause or a factor (coroners data) |
| Injury or intimidation from firearms use associated with drug dealing | Number or proportion of arrests for dealing that include recovered firearms |
| | Number of incidents of violent offences involving firearms |
| Access to drugs | Changes in price and purity of drugs |
| SOCIAL | |
| Poor child welfare/ poor parenting | Number or incidence of children on at risk register where drug use or dealing was a factor |
| Family breakdown | Number or incidence of children put into care services where drug use or dealing was a factor |
| Fear of crime | Levels of fear reported in community survey |
| Victim of crime/intimidation | Incidence of crime through crime mapping/displacement |
| | Incidence of different crimes through crime statistics |
| More likely to commit crime | Number (and age) of people who do not have prior criminal record subject to arrest/charge or identified through enforcement mapping activity |
| Exclusion and poor/no accommodation | Number of evictions where drug use was a factor |
| Attraction or recruitment to criminal life | Perceptions of 'untouchable' from community surveys or intelligence reporting |
| | Reporting following proceeds of crime activity |
| Loss of amenity | Number of people using local facilities (e.g. parks) |

| STRUCTURAL | |
|---|--|
| Loss of confidence in authorities | Level of confidence reported in local force surveys and British Crime Survey |
| | Covert intelligence reporting (criminals' perceptions) |
| Loss of respect for rule of law | Number of reports from public to Crimestoppers |
| | Levels of community reporting |
| Corruption | Percentage of enforcement officers investigated by Standards Unit |
| | Reports from private companies and regulators |
| ECONOMIC | |
| Cost of enforcement/CJS | Cost of enforcement & costs of CJS |
| Cost of help/support services & welfare | Treatment costs |
| Costs of crime | Estimated costs of crime e.g. on individuals & businesses |
| ENVIRONMENTAL | |
| Degradation of neighbourhoods | Community reports of discarded paraphernalia |
| | Vandalism reports |
| | Reports from local council on paraphernalia dealt with. |
| Fire hazard from cannabis farms | No. of fires associated with cannabis farms |
| Pollution from cutting agents | Tests of water supplies/rivers |

Appendix D: Enforcement Personnel Opinion Poll Results

HOW WERE PEOPLE INVITED TO RESPOND?

This poll is a snapshot of the opinions of some enforcement personnel. This was not a representative sample as, although the respondents were very diverse in terms of geographical location and level and nature of work, they were a self-selected group likely to be most interested in the area. Therefore, great care must be taken in interpretation of the results.

The questionnaire was distributed by e-mail through several channels: the Serious Organised Crime Agency distributed it to all staff; the Police Superintendents' Association circulated it to members; the co-ordinator of the inter-agency Drugs Nexus Group distributed it through a range of established networks; and the Police Review sent a link to the survey to their subscribers.

In total 427 completed questionnaires were received. Those responding were not all working in the drugs field. They represented all levels of seniority, worked in diverse specialisms, and were involved in enforcement at all levels from local to international.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

The findings described below relate to the initial groups of questions which were mainly of the form of a series of statements to which respondents could respond: Agree strongly; Agree slightly; Disagree slightly; Disagree strongly; or Don't know. The exact wording of the statement needs to be taken into account in interpreting the findings, so they are given below at the start of each section. The number of people who responded "Don't know" varied between questions, ranging from 3 to 69, with the larger numbers relating to the questions on targets.

What should be the primary aim of drug law enforcement?

Respondents were asked "*What do you think the main aim of enforcement should be?*" and were requested to select one of four options:

- To enforce the law and deliver justice;
- To reduce the availability of drugs;
- To reduce the harms caused by drugs; or
- Other (please specify)

Responses were quite evenly spread and quite a few respondents could not choose between the three options. However, the reduction of drug harms was the most

common response chosen, followed by enforcing law and justice and then reducing drug availability.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Reducing drug-related harms | 39% |
| Enforcing law and delivering justice | 28% |
| Reducing drug availability | 22% |
| Other / All / Don't know | 11% |

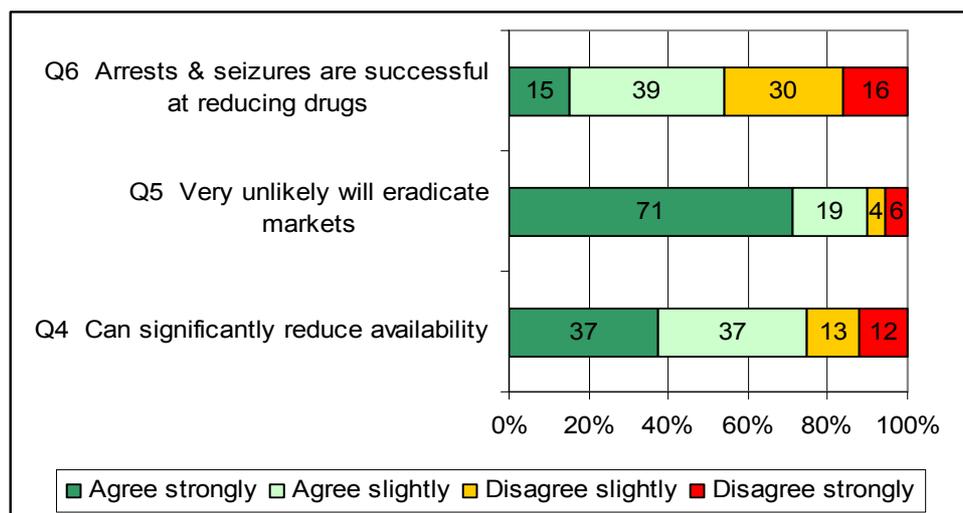
Restricting supply

The statements in this section about which respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed were:

"Arrests and drug seizures are very successful at reducing the availability of drugs."

"It is very unlikely that established UK drug markets will be eradicated in the foreseeable future."

"Enforcement has the potential to significantly reduce the availability of drugs below current levels."



- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed that it is very unlikely that the UK drug market will be eradicated in the foreseeable future.
- About three-quarters also agreed that enforcement had the potential to significantly reduce availability below current levels.
- Opinion was more evenly split on the statement that arrests and seizures were very successful at reducing the availability of drugs – just over half agreed that they were although most only agreed slightly.

Reducing harm

The statements in this section were:

"Even if arresting someone increases harms caused to a community (e.g. by triggering a turf war) they should still be arrested."

"There is an opportunity for enforcement agencies to shape those drug markets that persist in the UK to make them less harmful."

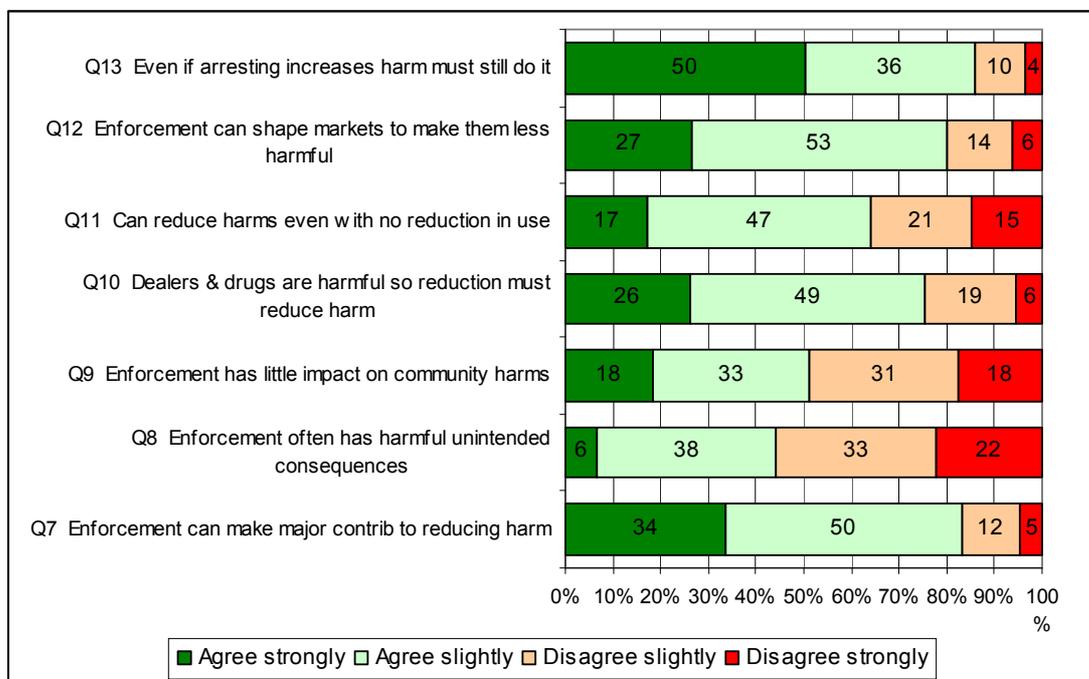
"It is possible to reduce the harm caused by a market even when there is no reduction in the amount of drugs sold or used."

"Drug dealers and drugs are both harmful, so seizures and arrests are bound to reduce the harm to a community."

"Current enforcement activity in my area of work has little impact on the drug-related harm experienced by communities."

"Drug enforcement activity often has harmful unintended consequences."

"Drug enforcement activity can make a major contribution to reducing drug-related harms."



The majority of respondents agreed that enforcement activity can make a major contribution to reducing drug-related harms (84%) and that there is an opportunity for enforcement to shape drug markets to make them less harmful (80%).

- Over half of respondents (64%) also agreed that it was possible to reduce the harm caused by a market even if there is no reduction in the amount of drugs sold or used.
- However, there was also strong agreement that, since drug dealers and drugs are both harmful, then arrests and seizures must reduce harms (75% agreed, 26% strongly).
- People were more or less evenly split as to whether or not current enforcement activity in their area of work had little impact on community harms. This was also true for the statement that enforcement often has harmful unintended

consequence, although over half (55%) disagreed with this and over a fifth disagreed strongly.

- The vast majority of respondents felt strongly that even if arresting someone causes increased harm to the community they should still be arrested – 50% agreed strongly and 36% agreed slightly.

Targets and measurement

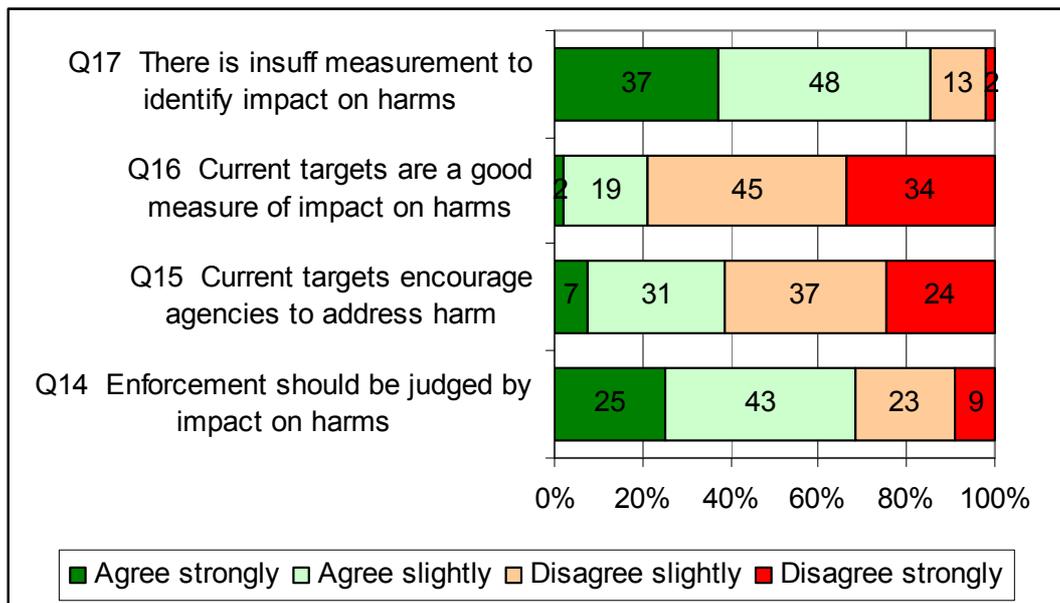
In this section the statements were:

"There is not sufficient measurement of enforcement outcomes to know if harms to the community have actually been reduced."

"Current targets for enforcement agencies are a good measure of the impact they have on drug related harms."

"Current targets for enforcement agencies encourage them to address the most important drug related harms."

"The success of drug-related enforcement activity should be judged mainly by its impact on drug harms (e.g. health harms to users, harm to local communities and corruption or costs to institutions/businesses)."



- There was very strong agreement that the success of drug-related enforcement activity should be judged by its impact on drug harms (68% agreeing, 25% strongly).
- However, there was also strong agreement that there is insufficient measurement of enforcement outcomes to know if harms have been reduced (85% agreeing, 37% strongly).
- The vast majority (83%, 34% strongly) indicated that they do not feel that current targets are a good measure of the impact enforcement agencies have on harms.

Well over half (61%) also did not agree that current target encourage agencies to address harms.

The survey also included a few other questions relating to types of enforcement activity that should be prioritised and asked for comments. A considerable number of respondents provided detailed comments, which is an indication of the salience of the topic for many enforcement personnel. These will all be analysed and a more detailed report from the survey produced in the future.

Annex E: About the UKDPC

The UK Drug Policy Commission (UKDPC) is an independent charitable body that uses evidence to scrutinise current UK drug policies and to influence policy decision-making. The Commission aims to be objective in its approach, allowing its conclusions to be led by the evidence, and it is not a 'campaigning' body. Commissioners are listed below:

Dame Ruth Runciman (Chair).

Chair of the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

Professor Baroness Haleh Afshar OBE

Professor of Politics and Women's Studies at the University of York.

Professor Colin Blakemore FRS

Professor of Neuroscience at the Universities of Oxford and Warwick

Chair of the Food Standard Agency's General Advisory Committee on Science.

David Blakey CBE QPM

Former President of the Association of Chief Police Officers and Chief Constable of West Mercia.

Annette Dale-Perera

Strategic Director of Addiction and Offender Care for the Central & NW London Mental Health Foundation Trust.

Daniel Finkelstein OBE

Comment Editor and a weekly columnist of The Times

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

Consultant in palliative medicine and honorary professor of Cardiff University's School of Medicine

Jeremy Hardie CBE

Research Associate of The Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science at the London School of Economics, Treasurer of the Institute for Public Policy Research and a trustee of Somerset House and International House.

Professor Alan Maynard OBE

Professor of Health Economics at the University of York

Adam Sampson

Chief Ombudsman (designate) Office for Legal Complaints and former Chief Executive of Shelter.

Professor John Strang

Director of the National Addiction Centre, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.

John Varley (Honorary President)

Group Chief Executive of Barclays Bank Plc

Chair of Business Action on Homelessness and President of the Employers' Forum on Disability.

Published review reports from the UKDPC include:

| | |
|--|--|
| An Analysis of UK Drug Policy (2007) | Although drug policy appears to have a limited effect on overall levels of drug use, it has a more significant role in reducing the impact of drug use on individuals and communities. |
| Reducing Drug Use, Reducing Reoffending (2008) | We risk causing more harm than good by sending significant and growing numbers of problem drug users to prison, especially for relatively short sentences, rather than using community sentences to address their drug-related offending. |
| Tackling Drug Markets and Distribution Networks in the UK (2008) | Even the most significant drug seizures and dealer/trafficker convictions usually fail to have a sustainable impact on street-level supply and demand due to the scale of the markets and their ability to adapt quickly. However, enforcement agencies can contribute towards reducing the impact of drug markets on communities. |
| Working Towards Recovery: Getting problem drug users into jobs (2008) | Employment is an important component of rehabilitation and reintegration, yet two-thirds of employers would not employ a former heroin or crack cocaine user even if they were otherwise suitable for the job. More support for employers is needed to encourage them to engage with this group. |
| Developing a vision of Recovery (2008) | "The process of recovery from problematic substance use is characterised by voluntarily-sustained control over substance use which maximises health and well-being, and the participation in the rights, roles and responsibilities of society." This UKDPC Consensus Group statement challenges services and wider society to consider what it means to be recovery-oriented. |

All reports and other materials are available without charge at www.ukdpc.org.uk/reports.shtml

