Action in Partnership

Tackling **Drugs** in Scotland

Reducing the impact of local drug markets

research

A research review

Effective Interventions Unit

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Effective Interventions Unit

Remit

The Unit was set up in June 2000 to:

• Identify what is effective – and cost effective – practice in prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and availability and in addressing the needs of both the individual and the community.

• Disseminate effective practice based on sound evidence and evaluation to policy makers, DATs and practitioners.

• Support DATs and agencies to deliver effective practice by developing good practice guidelines, evaluation tools, criteria for funding, models of service; and by contributing to the implementation of effective practice through the DAT corporate planning cycle.

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Effective Interventions Unit

Reducing the impact of local drug markets
A research review

What is in this report?

This report reviews existing evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce the impact of low-level markets and describes some current examples of work in Scotland. It draws on a review of existing international research literature and EIU 'fact-finding' visits to nine local areas in six Scottish forces.

What is the aim?

- To present a summary of existing research evidence on effective interventions and approaches aimed at reducing the impact of low-level markets.
- To provide a description of some current activities in Scotland aimed at tackling low–level markets.
- To describe some of the issues facing local areas attempting to reduce the impact of low-level dealing.

Who conducted the review?

Samantha Coope and Nick Bland of the Effective Interventions Unit conducted and compiled this review.

Who should read it?

Police managers, Drug and Alcohol Action Team members and officers, and drug agencies who could, or already do, work in partnership with the police in tackling local drug markets.

Scottish Executive

Drug Misuse Research Programme

ISBN 0-7559-3670 1

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Astron B34418 02-04

Contents

Executive Summary

This report reviews existing international evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce the impact of low-level drug markets and describes some current examples of work in Scotland. It draws on a review of existing research literature and 'fact-finding' visits by the Effective Interventions Unit (EIU) to nine local areas in six Scottish forces between December 2002 and April 2003.

Drug dealing occurs at many levels: from organised importing of drugs from abroad down to deals made on the street. This report is concerned with dealing at the lowest level: the sale of drugs directly to users. This is the point of regular and ongoing interface between drug dealers, those with drug misuse problems and members of the community in which the markets are located. The sale of drugs at this level involves many more transactions than at the higher levels of dealing. It is therefore likely to have an immediate and observable impact upon the communities in which it takes place.

The characteristics of low-level drug markets can be diverse. But it is useful to make a general distinction between open and closed markets. In an open market, a dealer will sell to anyone whereas in a closed market deals will only take place with users who are known to the dealer or who are introduced by a known user. Both markets can occur on or off the street but will operate differently.

Low-level dealers operate to generate income to fund their own drug addiction, and/ or for profit. The experience of police officers in the areas EIU visited is that in any low-level market there is a small number of long-term, organised dealers focused on making profit. The majority of known low-level dealers, however, are addicted users whose dealing tends to be ad-hoc, unpredictable and inconsistent.

The review of international research highlights the diversity of interventions against low-level markets. The broad goals of these interventions are:

- supply reduction
- demand reduction and
- harm reduction

These three approaches should not be regarded as necessarily separate and distinct. Indeed, some research has emphasised the importance of combining all three aims within police strategies. The reduction of supply and demand can arguably be seen as contributing to an overarching harm reduction strategy. Given this range of potential aims, definitions of success or effectiveness vary considerably.

Reducing supply

Police enforcement interventions have conventionally sought to reduce and deter drug dealing. The rationale of this approach is that disrupting dealers' activities may cause them to operate less efficiently and therefore reduce supply. Enforcement interventions may also deter novice drug users by making drug purchase more difficult and risky (it might also arguably deter some drug dealers). There is little current international evidence that conventional enforcement efforts have a significant and long-lasting impact upon levels of dealing.

However, the review of research literature does show evidence for the effectiveness of intensified enforcement activity by the police against open street markets. This may displace or transform the market. Success can sometimes be short-lived unless interventions are repeated. Such interventions comprise a wide range of policing strategies, often with efforts to increase and improve the collection and use of intelligence, but they are resource intensive and expensive. There is a lack of strong evidence for the effectiveness of similar approaches against closed markets or dealing from premises.

There is evidence for the effectiveness of multi-agency enforcement against dealing from premises. This involves the police working in partnership with housing authorities, private landlords and tenants and primarily involves property management procedures used against third parties. Evaluated interventions have all been conducted in the US, where the range of civil codes and statutes that may be used differ from those available in the UK. Other types of multi-agency working to enhance enforcement activity may be effective but there is a lack of evidence at present. Multi-agency supply-reduction measures may also encompass situational crime prevention tactics, which involve making the physical environment less conducive to criminal behaviour.

Reducing demand

The aim of demand reduction is ultimately to reduce the number of drug users/ buyers in a drug market. Approaches which might contribute to this include coordinating and linking police enforcement action against a market with targeted treatment provision. Enforcement and treatment may be targeted in different ways — for example towards a geographically defined market, or towards a certain group of offenders. Such an approach assumes sufficient treatment resources to cope with demand.

There is some evidence to suggest that conventional police enforcement may be a factor encouraging drug users to enter treatment. However, it is not possible to assume a causal link between the two. On the other hand, there is strong evidence that treatment can lead to sustained reductions in drug-use and drug-related crime, including drug dealing.

In England there is emerging evidence to suggest the effectiveness of a number of proactive approaches that link enforcement action to treatment provision. Home Office research shows that rates of drug use, expenditure and drug-related crime fell significantly among offenders engaged in arrest referral schemes in England. There is also some emerging evidence for the effectiveness of initiatives targeting persistent drug using offenders for diversion to treatment and support, which suggests that they are effective in reducing crime rates and drug use among this target population.

Reducing harm

The focus of a harm reduction approach to low-level markets is the reduction of harm to drug users and to the community in which markets operate. This does not involve abandoning police enforcement activities; the reduction of supply and demand may be seen as contributing to an overarching harm reduction strategy. However it is argued that the adoption of a harm reduction approach does require a re-appraisal of the rationale underpinning the policing of drugs at this level.

Some evidence from other countries suggests that certain police approaches against low-level drug markets — for example, those involving intensive enforcement practices — can increase the risk of drug-related harm to drug users involved in the market.

Research has suggested ways in which police can incorporate harm reduction principles. They include:

- not targeting clients in the vicinity of drug services
- limiting attendance at overdose to exceptional circumstances
- systematically collecting and monitoring local level data on drug-related harm as well as illicit drug availability — as a basis for taking account of any counterproductive effects of enforcement activity.

Little research has been conducted to examine the harmful impact of low-level drug markets on local communities, nor much that evaluates whether and how policing interventions reduce drug related harms to communities. Reductions in drug-dealing and/or crime may be positive outcomes for a community. However a reduction in crime does not in itself *straightforwardly* increase a community's quality of life, and may not be reflected in a community's perceptions of their local area.

Displacement or transformation of a market might in itself constitute success. Open street markets may move indoors as a reaction to intensified enforcement efforts. This *may* mean that the market itself becomes less socially damaging. But currently there is no simple answer to the question of 'what intervention, or combination of interventions, works' to improve the quality of life for a community experiencing high levels of drug dealing.

A provisional picture of experiences in Scotland

In the nine areas visited by the EIU, police efforts were focused almost entirely on drug markets operating in residential properties in housing estates. There was a large degree of similarity in the problems local police faced and the strategies and tactics they used. All highlighted the importance of intelligence in directing police activity, according to the National Intelligence Model.

High quality intelligence profiles of suspected dealers tend to take quite some time to develop. Local police managers may be under pressure from the community, or sometimes senior force managers, to undertake obvious action in the shorter-term. This requires some management of expectations and a degree of judgement about when best to use intelligence operationally.

Most of the local areas had, in one form or another, a small proactive team with a remit for tackling low-level dealing. The tasks these teams undertook varied from one area to another, but tended to include a mix of proactive intelligence gathering and enforcement work. Drugs policing is to some degree a specialist role. Officers working in dedicated drugs teams were able to develop a greater degree of confidence and expertise in this work.

Conventional enforcement approaches by the police acting alone were the most common response to local markets. Formalised, regular, multi-agency involvement with enforcement was limited.

Conclusions

Research highlights the limits of approaches that focus simply on supply reduction and emphasises the importance of reducing the demand for drugs and the drug-related harms associated with low-level markets. Interventions arguably need to be judged in the longer term by their success in improving the quality of life of the community in which the market is located. The potential of intensive enforcement to increase the risk of harm to drug users is another important consideration.

Emerging international evidence and current innovative examples in England point to the potential of a problem-solving approach that seeks to **coordinate, target and link** enforcement action and treatment provision. This aims to ensure that any disruption or depletion of a drug market is **sustained** by providing treatment and support to drug users if and when there is a decrease in the availability of drugs.

Reducing the impact of low-level markets thus needs to be a shared responsibility across local agencies. Local DAATs or DAAT sub-groups may offer a useful structure to develop the necessary strategic framework but this integrated working also needs to be replicated at an operational level. Clarity about what it aims to achieve and how success will be judged is crucial to such an approach.

Such an approach seems to have potential to succeed in Scotland. It would build on current innovative and creative attempts to support long-term enforcement by developing more formalised and coordinated multi-agency activity.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The need for research under the broad heading of 'Availability' - on measures intended to reduce the availability of illegal drugs in the community - was identified as part of the Scottish Executive's Drug Misuse Research Programme[1]. The EIU worked with the SDEA to develop specific proposals and it was agreed that initial research would focus on low-level drug markets (sometimes also referred to as 'street level' or 'retail level' markets).

The first steps taken by EIU in developing this research have been to review relevant research studies, and to visit Scottish police forces in order to collect preliminary information about drug markets in Scotland and the ways in which they are policed. All forces in Scotland were contacted about the research and asked to nominate local areas in which there was significant low-level dealing. Six forces nominated areas which the EIU and the SDEA subsequently visited.

This report presents the findings from the review of literature and discussions with police. These findings have also helped to inform the design of further research by EIU into local drug markets in Scotland. Further information on this research, currently in progress, can be found in Annex A.

Background and context

Drug dealing, and police action against drug dealing can be described in very simple terms as occurring at three levels:

- Internationally, against organised drug importation from abroad into the UK and directly into Scotland.
- At the middle level: against dealers who have a network of 'runners'.
- At the lowest level: against dealers who operate at 'street' or 'retail' level, supplying drugs directly to drug users.

In Scotland responsibility for tackling these various levels is *broadly* organised in the following way: the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency (SDEA) tackles the highest level, police force drug squads deal with the middle level of the market and local police areas (divisions) police the lowest level of dealing.

This is of course an oversimplification of how drug policing and drug dealing is organised, but may help to clarify the focus of this report, namely **low level drug dealing, and action taken to reduce the impact of low level dealing**.

It is drug dealing at the lowest level that impacts most directly on the communities in which it takes place. People living or working in communities where drug markets exist report to the police problems and dangers associated with drug-dealing; these include drug–related crime (particularly acquisitive crime) and anti-social behaviour, noise and disturbance, and discarded drug taking equipment.

[1] Reflecting the 'Availability' objectives in the Scottish Executive Drugs Strategy; see 'Tackling Drugs in Scotland: Action in Partnership' (Scottish Office, 1999).

The Scottish Executive's Drugs Strategy[2] emphasises that tackling the problem of drugs requires a multi-agency partnership approach. It is also increasingly recognised that an integrated approach to service provision is most likely to deliver positive outcomes for service users. The Joint Future agenda is taking this forward in the delivery of services to community care groups, which includes drug users. The EIU report 'Integrated Care for Drug Users: Principles and Practice' provides detailed discussion of the issues central to the delivery of integrated treatment, care and support services to drug users.

National targets for the Scottish Police Services (April 2001-April 2004) focus on the reduction of availability of drugs[3]:

- An increase in the number of drug seizures by 25%.
- An increase in detection of offences for supply or intent to supply drugs by 25%.

These have been reviewed for the reporting period April 2004 - April 2006. The new targets are as follows:

- An increase in the weight of Category A drug seizures of 10 per cent.
- An increase in detection of offences for supply or intent to supply Category A drugs by 10 per cent[4].

The ACPOS Drugs Strategy[5] highlights the primary role that the police continue to play in supply reduction. But the strategy also highlights the importance of demand and harm reduction approaches and how the police support and contribute to these.

This complements Scotland's Drugs Strategy which also identifies two further aims relevant to this context:

- To enable people with drug problems to overcome them and live healthy and crime free lives.
- To protect our communities from drug related anti-social behaviour.

Clearly there are a number of aims under the general objective of tackling local drug markets. This is reflected in the wide range of ways in which success has been defined in evaluated interventions. This will be explored throughout the course of this review.

[2] 'Tackling Drugs in Scotland: Action in Partnership' (Scottish Office, 1999).

[3] Scottish Executive Justice Department targets

[4] The target increase will be on the baseline annual average of the financial years 2000/01 to 2002/03

[5] http://www.scottish.police.uk/main/acpos/spicc/policing2703V2.pdf

Aims of the review

- To review international studies which examine the effectiveness of interventions and approaches aimed at reducing the impact of low-level markets.

- To provide a description of some current activities in Scotland aimed at tackling low–level markets.

- To describe some of the issues facing local police in Scotland attempting to reduce the impact of low-level dealing in their areas.

Methods

The evidence presented in this report has been gathered in two ways:

1. **A review of existing international research literature on interventions aimed at low level markets and their impact.** This evidence comes from evaluation and research studies in the US, UK, Australia and the Netherlands, with the majority from the US. We have exercised caution in how these studies have been presented - there are of course limits on how transferable research findings from other countries are to the situation in Scotland.

   There were few evaluation studies of high quality. This limits the possibility of identifying conclusive evidence on effective interventions. We therefore also draw on broader research work that cannot offer firm conclusions but provides useful indications of potentially effective approaches.

2. **EIU 'fact-finding' visits to nine local areas in six Scottish forces between December 2002 and April 2003.** This provided a 'snapshot' of the issues facing local areas trying to tackle problems at the lowest level of drug supply.

   The initial visits involved meetings with a range of police officers, including:

   - *Local area commander*: holds responsibility for the policing of a specific geographical area within a force.

   - *Members of proactive drugs/crime team*: plain clothes team with dedicated remit to proactively tackle drugs/crime problems.

   - *Community beat officers*: uniformed officers who patrol a particular geographical 'beat' and are responsible for maintaining links with the community.

   - *Local crime manager*: holds responsibility for crime in a local area; often head of the local CID.

   - *Intelligence officers*: maintain intelligence system; check new entries onto system and prepare 'packages' of intelligence information.

What is in the report?

Chapter 2 describes and defines low-level drug markets and the aims of interventions against them.

Chapter 3 presents evidence from the review of international research literature on police interventions to reduce the supply of drugs through low-level markets.

Chapter 4 considers evidence from studies that have examined police approaches that focus on demand reduction.

Chapter 5 examines approaches that incorporate harm reduction principles into policing practice.

Chapter 6 describes common issues faced by local police in Scotland attempting to tackle local drug-markets.

Chapter 7 presents conclusions.

Chapter 2 Defining Low-Level Markets And Interventions

This chapter provides

- A description and definition of low-level drug markets.
- A discussion of the range of possible aims of approaches to reduce their impact.
- Definitions of some key concepts in interventions against low level drug markets.

Who deals drugs at the local level?

The nature of low-level drug dealing and the structure of dealing activity varies widely according to the characteristics of the local drug market. Low level dealers typically operate in order to earn primary or supplemental income, either to fund their own drug use (user-dealers) or for profit. Generally speaking, drug research has tended to focus on drug use, and comparatively little research has been done on how drugs are sold. However there is some empirical evidence from the UK on the proportions of drug users who also sell drugs.

The National Treatment Outcomes Research study (NTORS) in England recruited and interviewed drug users entering a drug treatment programme[6]. 29% of clients reported selling drugs in the 90 days prior to entry. A small minority (7%) reported the majority of offences (89%). The high-rate drug sellers in the sample reported the highest rate of heroin use among the cohort[7].

The anecdotal evidence collected from police officers for the purposes of this report suggests that the majority of known low-level dealers are dependent users.

What are low-level drug markets?

Low-level distribution networks are the crucial means by which drugs become available within a neighbourhood- these networks operate both by sustaining existing drug-using subcultures, and also by recruiting new users[8]. Low-level dealing by its very nature involves many more transactions than higher levels of dealing and is therefore more likely to have an immediate and more directly observable impact upon the communities in which it takes place.

Low-level drug markets are in many respects extremely diverse. Characteristics such as the catchment population of a market, its location, and the type of dealing activity vary enormously. However it is possible to make a general distinction between what might be called 'open' and 'closed' markets. In the former dealers will sell to anyone who approaches them, and in the latter dealers will only sell to people known to them.

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[6] Gossop *et al*, 2000

[7] However they did report a relatively low dependence on heroin, which could not be easily explained by the researchers (Gossop *et al*, 2000: 149)

[8] Observed in EIU visits to local forces, and also observed by Gilman & Pearson (1991: 101).

It is also useful to distinguish markets in terms of their location and how they operate. A recent Home Office guide to disrupting crack markets describes different types of low-level markets that may be in operation, summarised below:

Open And Closed Drug Markets

Open Markets

An open market is one where a dealer will sell to anyone. Open markets can be:

- On the street, where several street dealers can congregate offering drugs or waiting to be approached.
- Off the street, at premises which can be approached by anyone. (e.g. clubs, cafes, pubs, crack houses).

Closed markets

A closed market is one where a dealer will only sell to users who are known or introduced to them. Closed markets can be:

- On the street, at meetings arranged via mobile phone.
- Off the street, at premises from which drugs are sold only to known or introduced users.

Premises may also differ in terms of whether or not buyers may also stay and consume drugs

Home Office: 2003

These broad characteristics are likely to be true whatever the specific primary drug dealt in the market. More specific differences may also be present that relate to the type of drug. There is some evidence, for example, that violence can be associated with markets for crack cocaine[9].

Supply, demand and harm reduction

The review of international research highlights many different interventions with a range of aims and impacts. In summary, police activity against local drug markets may encompass the following broad goals:

- **Supply reduction:** The supply of drugs may be reduced through law enforcement, primarily through the criminal justice system (police, customs, courts and the prison service). A secondary goal may be to disrupt rather than, or as well as, to reduce supply.

[9] E.g. Grogger & Willis (2000) found that the introduction of crack in several urban areas in the US appeared to have substantial effects on levels of violent crime, though essentially no effect on levels of property crime.

- **Demand reduction:** Demand for drugs may be suppressed by prevention activities, and by diverting users into treatment. Drug-using offenders may be targeted through Arrest Referral schemes and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs). Arguably demand may also be suppressed through inconveniencing users and therefore discouraging potential consumers.

- **Harm reduction:** Harm reduction can be broadly understood as having the aims of both reducing the harms incurred by users through their drug use, and reducing the harms that drug dealing and drug use cause the community.

The harms of drug misuse may be reduced primarily through health and social services (treatment & rehabilitation, user education, needle exchange). They may also be reduced through an increased understanding of the potential impacts of enforcement activity on harm reduction activities, and the reflection of this understanding in policing activity.

The aims of these three approaches should not be regarded as necessarily separate and distinct. Indeed, some research has emphasised the importance of combining all three aims within police strategies[10]. For example, demand reduction may be seen as the product of effective supply and/ or harm reduction approaches. Arguably, the reduction of supply and demand may be seen as contributing to an overarching harm reduction strategy.

Problem solving

Problem-oriented policing is highly relevant to a style of drug policing that emphasises harm reduction.[11] Problem-solving, or problem-oriented policing (POP) approaches aim to control drug activity by targeting problem areas or situations in order to block criminal opportunities.

In the problem-oriented policing model, police should move from simply responding to the volume of incidents reported to them to analysing the underlying problems that produced them[12]. Many incidents are simply repeats of previous calls to the police. A problem solving approach seeks to understand and resolve the problem producing repeat calls. This should lead to improved morale for the police and a more effective response for the public.

This approach also dictates that police become the managers of problems and draw on a range of alternative tactics to solve these problems. Problem-solving tactics incorporate a range of methods including the following:

- Crime prevention methods such as environmental re-design and situational crime prevention.

- Eliciting help from other government and private sector services.

[10] E.g. Williams et al 2001

[11] Williams et al 2001

[12] The ideas behind problem solving or problem oriented policing (POP) originate from work by Herman Goldstein (1979, 1990).

- Mobilizing the community (to identify problems and gather intelligence, and / or to encourage 'third party policing' – that is, the monitoring of disorder by local stakeholders), sometimes by using civil legal measures.

Conventional enforcement is not abandoned; problem-oriented policing advocates the use of arrests, investigations and selective enforcement when a problem requires such a response. The message of problem solving is for police to go beyond the conventional approach and apply responses that match the nature of the problem[13].

Evidence for effectiveness in tackling low level markets

As stated earlier, the impacts of law enforcement activity may extend beyond the reduction of drug supply. The positive impacts of enforcement may encompass the following:

- The curtailment and / or disruption of illegal activities.
- Benefits for the community, such as environmental and 'quality of life' improvements (for example, reductions in drug related property crime, discarded drug paraphernalia).
- Benefits for the drug user (for example, the health and social benefits for users who are diverted into treatment services).

It is important to note that research in this area has defined 'effectiveness' in different ways, according to the aims and objectives of the interventions being examined. The following information sources, used to measure the effectiveness of interventions, have been identified:

- Police arrest data.
- Local crime figures.
- Surveys of local residents.
- Calls for police service to the problem place / address.
- Observations made by researchers.
- Records of police attendance at problem places / addresses.
- Interviews and focus groups with local residents, drug users, arrestees, police, community groups etc[14].

The relevant measures used in the studies reviewed in this report will be made explicit where possible: these vary between studies. However many of the studies included in this review have not been rigorously evaluated, and have used a variety of different methodologies and measures. It has been necessary to include a wide range of studies in order to investigate the question of 'what works' in tackling low

[13] Green 1996:5
[14] Mason & Bucke 2002: 8-9

level drug markets in a very broad sense - not just in strict law enforcement terms - and to include evidence from the UK when possible.

The variety of information sources used reflects the different definitions of 'effectiveness' used explicitly or implicitly by researchers evaluating interventions. For example, 'effectiveness' may be viewed in terms of an intervention's success in:

- reducing the supply of drugs (as measured by data on drug use – e.g. surveys, treatment service statistics)

- increasing drug seizures and arrests and / or decreasing drug related crime (police arrest data, crime figures, calls for service), and / or

- reducing the impact of drug dealing upon a community (community surveys / interviews and researcher observations, as well as data on crime and arrest rates).

The following three chapters will examine the evidence on the effectiveness of various approaches to tackling low-level drug markets. Some take the form of evaluations of interventions against low-level drug markets.

Chapter 3 Supply Reduction

This chapter describes police enforcement interventions to reduce the supply of drugs to low-level markets and reviews studies of such interventions for evidence on their effectiveness.

These interventions are principally intended to deter people from engaging in drug dealing and associated crimes, and to reduce the quantity of drugs in circulation (making the purchase of drugs more difficult and expensive). One of the assumptions behind this approach is that by making drugs less accessible and / or more expensive, drug use and drug-related crime will fall accordingly[15].

We will first consider the evidence on enforcement interventions with the police acting as the sole intervention agency, before going on to look at the use of multi-agency approaches.

Police as the sole intervention agency

This section examines the evidence on police enforcement interventions to:

- Reduce drug dealing, and
- Disrupt drug dealing.

Conventional approaches involve police enforcement of criminal law. The international evidence reviewed identified a range of tactics that may be employed by the police, including the following:

- **Raids** of premises used for drug dealing / drug use.
- **Crackdowns and sweeps**: an increase in police activity, especially proactive enforcement. This is intended to dramatically increase the perceived and / or actual threat of arrest for specific types of offences in certain places or situations, to produce a general deterrent effect[16]. It may involve high numbers of arrests and / or a large and highly visible police presence.
- The **arrest & caution** of buyers after leaving an area where dealing has taken place.[17]

[15] Supported to some extent by research conducted by Weatherburn *et al* 2003. A heroin drought in Australia produced a 'natural experiment' allowing the effects of a significant drop in availability to be observed. As heroin availability decreased, the price of heroin increased, while purity, consumption & expenditure on the drug decreased. The rate of drug overdoses also fell. However there was an increase in the use of other drugs (mainly cocaine).

[16] Worden *et al* 1994: 95

[17] Use of cautioning is not available to police officers in Scotland

- **'Stop and search'** of suspected dealers with the aim of finding possession of drugs to allow arrest.

- **'Sting' or 'buy & bust' operations:** purchases of drugs by undercover police officers followed by arrest of the seller.

- **Test purchases:** purchases of drugs by undercover officers as part of a 'sting' operation, or in order to collect intelligence on drug dealers.

- **Controlled purchases** by registered police sources

Enforcement activities will be informed by police intelligence, which may be gathered by some or all of the following routes:

- Covert observations: by following suspects by foot or in vehicles or conducting surveillance on a targeted dealing site from an observation post such as an unoccupied building.

- Electronic surveillance: CCTV or police surveillance technology.

- Reports from the public / calls for service.

- Unofficial informants / registered police sources.

- Interviews with people detained in custody: to gather more information on drug related crime in the area.

The intended effects of these policing strategies are likely to encompass the following:

- To **reduce** the quantities of drugs in circulation and the number of deals taking place and / or to drive up the street price of drugs (by seizing drugs and making arrests).

- To **disrupt** drug markets, by making the process of buying and selling drugs more unpredictable and difficult, intended as acting as a deterrent to engaging in both dealing and / or buying.

Reducing drug dealing

Interventions have focused on concentrated police action in targeted areas, in the form of intensive 'crackdowns' or 'sweeps', and undercover operations. These have sometimes been augmented by greater efforts to enhance the collection of

intelligence; for example, more crime reporting and information sharing by the public, as in the example below[18].

Lynn Drug Task Force, Massachusetts

A study of a crackdown on an open street heroin market in Lynn, Massachusetts found strong evidence for the effectiveness of an intensification of police enforcement activity. This involved tactics such as undercover surveillance, intelligence gathering through questioning of drug buyers and sellers and establishment of a 'hotline' for anonymous tip-offs, and test purchasing. Levels of drug dealing and acquisitive crime decreased, and demand for drug treatment showed a large increase.

Kleiman et al: 1988

Other evaluations of police enforcement against open street markets are united by the use of intensified police enforcement efforts, although there are differences in the ways in which this has taken place. For example, some have opted for intensive buy-bust operations whereas others have focused on the greater use of high-visibility enforcement.

Intensifying enforcement activity requires more resources to be dedicated to drug policing than would normally be available. High visibility policing and covert surveillance appear to be especially resource intensive. As a consequence, approaches such as these tend to be sustainable for only short periods of time. Evidence of their impact indicates that they often have only short–lived effects.

Evaluations have also highlighted different approaches to the collection, collation and use of intelligence to informed police enforcement interventions. One example of this is the geographical analysis of intelligence to identify drug dealing 'hotspots' for targeting intensified policing.

The success of these efforts has been variable in terms of their impact on crime. Some have produced a degree of displacement of drug dealing to other areas or have moved open street markets to dealing from premises. There is also doubt over the extent to which approaches that have been successful can be transferred to other areas with an expectation of success. For example, the approach that was successful in Lynn failed when applied to a nearby town. This may have been due to differences in the local drug market, such as the presence of stronger supply chains in the area[19].

[18] Kleiman et al 1988, in Mason & Bucke 2002

[19] e.g. Jersey City Drug Market Analysis Experiment (Weisburd & Green 1995)

Disrupting drug dealing

It is also argued that enforcement action may reduce drug supply and demand in an area by disrupting the dealing practices of suppliers and inconveniencing potential buyers.

Disruption: the aim of policing in this respect is to introduce greater uncertainty for drug dealers by making drug dealing a more risky activity. This viewpoint reasons that, through disruption, dealers' capacity to deal will be limited.

Inconvenience: the function of policing in this respect is to increase the search time for buyers to find a supplier. This argument is based on the belief that **irregular** drug users will not conduct exhaustive searches for drugs. Therefore, by increasing the 'search time' to find a supplier, this ought to act as a deterrent to would-be buyers, decreasing the frequency of their purchases and therefore the level of their usage[20].

Evidence regarding the effectiveness of disruption/inconvenience

There are a number of evaluations which show that enforcement crackdowns can lead to a significant increase in the number of arrests made, and a decrease in reported crime, at least in the short term. However such findings do not necessarily show that disrupting drug markets by intensified enforcement necessarily leads to a decrease in *levels* of drug dealing activity. Rather than being eradicated or diminished, drug markets may adapt to policing strategies and become more sophisticated. This may take the form of changes to dealing practices.

For example, a study of drug markets in England found that the use of test purchasing by police in some areas had led to drug sellers increasingly demanding that new buyers should consume drugs in their presence. This made test purchasing a risky strategy for officers to pursue.[21]

Adaptations may also take the form of market displacement. For example, dealers in an open street market may react to policing strategies by switching to dealing from premises instead[22]. Other studies have shown that superficially effective initiatives have seemed to displace drug dealing into neighbouring areas.[23]

There appears to be a lack of strong evidence on how police enforcement affects drug users' behaviour. In one study, drug users in six drug markets in London were interviewed about the characteristics of the markets and the impact of strategies used to tackle them. It found that drug users were very sensitive to police activity (or perceived activity); almost half of the research participants stated that the risk of enforcement was a crucial factor in deciding upon what drug market to use and when to use it. In comparing an open street market and a closed premises-based market, they found that the former was more vulnerable to policing strategies[24].

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[20] Cf. Murji 1994 : 61

[21] Lupton et al 2002: 43

[22] Such as the 'TNT' – Tactical Narcotics Team – operations in New York. See Mason & Bucke (2002: 14) for a summary of the intervention & evaluation.

[23] Such as the COPS programme conducted in St Louis; see this review and Mason & Bucke (2002: 12) for a summary of this intervention & evaluation.

[24] Hough & Edmunds 1999: 124

However these respondents did not suggest that they would be deterred from buying drugs in the face of increased police activity; they would simply use a different 'market' or they would take greater care to avoid detection. As few of the participants in this study were inexperienced, novice or non-dependent drug users, it is perhaps unsurprising that inconvenience policing did not appear to reduce demand within this group.

Multi-agency enforcement approaches

The strongest evidence for the effectiveness of interventions against closed markets has been for approaches involving a degree of multi-agency involvement. This often also features the use of **civil legal remedies** rather than criminal law, and the use of **situational crime prevention measures** (such as environmental improvements). They do not necessarily involve the abandonment of conventional law enforcement measures such as those detailed in the previous section. There is no generic approach to multi-agency working and examples of evaluated interventions in the literature all appear to include a number of different elements. Rather, they adopt a problem-oriented approach, tailoring the range of interventions employed to the nature of the problem in evidence. Having said this, the programmes that have been rigorously evaluated have tended to comprise interventions involving property management, and have been based on interventions in the US.

This section will describe the US evidence on interventions using civil legal remedies (which principally involves the use of property management procedures). It will then examine some multi-agency work that has taken place in the UK and discuss the role of situational crime prevention in multi-agency interventions.

Use of civil legal remedies

Evaluated interventions from the US have involved police working with:

- Private landlords and property owners
- Local housing authorities
- Tenants
- Municipal & public utility inspectors

These interventions have typically involved the use of civil statutes and regulations rather then criminal law. These have been used in the US in a variety of ways to prevent or reduce criminal problems. Many instances of the use of civil remedies have targeted non-offending third parties, principally to compel owners and landlords to maintain drug- and nuisance- free properties (these are often referred to as 'nuisance abatement' strategies). However civil remedies have also been used to directly target offending individuals (e.g. restraining orders and injunctions), often as intermediate steps towards criminal sanctions. The research that will be outlined here focuses on the former type of civil intervention, i.e. those directed towards non-offending third parties[25].

[25] None of the research projects subject to 'systematic' review by Mason and Bucke (2002) examined the use of civil remedies to directly target the individual.

These interventions involved the police working with local housing associations and authorities to evict known drug dealers, and the enforcement/ threat of enforcement of civil codes directed towards landlords and owners. The following example provides an illustration of the former.

Community Oriented Problem Solving (COPS) programme, St Louis

This involved police working with residents and property owners at specific locations to keep them updated regarding the problems in their area and for the police to collect information. Local housing officers arranged inspections of identified drug dealing addresses to uncover any breaches of local authority rules. This led subsequently to the eviction residents responsible for drug activity. Calls to the police increased significantly during the intervention period. The effect of the intervention quickly decayed however and there was evidence that there was a degree of displacement of the problem.

Hope: 1994

The following describes an example of the use of civil codes to compel landlords and property owners in San Diego to take action. This was found to reduce drug crime.

Drug Abatement Response Team (DART), San Diego

The DART initiative used property management procedures to disrupt closed drug markets. Properties identified as having a drug problem were identified and the owners contacted by letter. This outlined the assistance that police could provide to owners, should they need to remove any residents involved in drug activity. In some cases the letter was then followed up with a visit from a DART detective who helped the owner develop a plan of action. Results over the trial period indicated that the letter and meetings led to a reduction in crime, in comparison to the control group who did not receive either.

Eck and Wartell: 1993

There are obviously differences in the civil legal frameworks of the US, in which interventions have been evaluated, and existing legislation in the UK. Little research on the use of property management procedures to tackle drug dealing in a UK context was identified during the course of this review.

A study of drug markets in deprived neighbourhoods in England and Wales touches on the issue of civil interventions[26]. The study examined community and police responses to drug markets. It found that civil procedures were hardly used in their case study areas. Reasons cited for this included:

[26] Lupton *et al* (2002)

- Gathering evidence for possession proceedings and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders could be time-consuming and expensive if professional witnesses were involved.
- Local authorities were reluctant to evict drug–dealing tenants when they may be required to re-house them again.
- Drug dealing tended to be treated as a criminal matter and civil measures were not invoked unless behaviour was considered to be severely antisocial.

The law in England and Wales is different from that in Scotland in these respects. A short summary of the current situation in Scotland with regard to anti-social behaviour legislation can be found in Annex B.

Another UK study refers to civil actions taken out against drug dealers in Southwark, although this was not its focus. These actions included enforcement of tenancy agreements against residents involved in drug dealing and injunctions to prevent known drug dealers entering the estate. One Housing Manager explained the appeal of civil actions in crime control terms:

"Of course, a close and co-ordinated relationship between the Police and the Housing Department is a prerequisite for a successful application for an injunctive order. The key point in pursuing a civil remedy is that the criminal courts require that a case be proved beyond all reasonable doubt whereas in the county court an order may be made on the balance of probabilities".[27]

Multi-agency initiatives may also focus on improving the ways in which intelligence is collected. In the COPS example above, efforts were made to engage with the community more effectively and this did result in an increase of calls made to the police and therefore the quantity of intelligence gathered.

It should be noted here that the above discussion focuses on multi-agency working with the ultimate goal of enhancing *enforcement* activity. However the goals of multi-agency working often extend beyond simple enforcement, and examples of such approaches will be provided in later chapters.

Situational crime prevention

Situational crime prevention refers to approaches taken by the police and other agencies to reduce the opportunities for crime in specific places. These approaches have often been used as part of a broader problem-oriented policing strategy. US evidence indicates ways in which environments may be made less conducive to disorder by the use of civil codes e.g. by requiring a landlord to repair or board up properties which are used for drug dealing or use. Situational crime prevention measures focus on the events and settings in which crimes occur. This involves identifying and then modifying the physical and social features of high-crime locations which support criminal activities.

A study of users in six markets in London identified situational factors that make sites more amenable to drug dealing. These are:

[27] Lee 1995: 391

- Ease of access: by public transport.
- Places to 'hang out': important for sellers waiting for trade.
- Good meeting places and transaction sites: fast food restaurants, betting shops.
- Cash points outside banks and Post Office facilities for cashing Giro cheques.
- Access to equipment: syringes, water, citric acid or lemons.
- Good using sites: toilets in fast food restaurants.
- Access to phone boxes: to call sellers on arrival at market.
- Opportunities to raise money to buy drugs: e.g. through sex work.

The study suggests how these situational factors may be modified to make sites less attractive to buyers and sellers, although it notes that such measures would only tend to apply to street markets. Examples include:

- training 'place managers' to discourage drug activity; e.g. 'place managers' in fast food restaurants may be given awareness training about ways of discouraging drug dealing (such as discouraging long-stay customers who fail to make purchases).
- limiting access to phone boxes by putting them under direct surveillance of 'place managers' and barring incoming calls may make drug transactions more difficult.

However, some of these measures may be problematic, particularly those which examine how drug-using sites may be made less attractive to users (and by implication less attractive for dealers to operate in). Suggested modifications include:

- installing blue lighting in toilets (to make injection more difficult).
- restricting access to unused basements and stairwells.
- securing disused buildings.
- patrolling parks and gardens.
- improving lighting around using sites.

While such measures may well discourage drug dealers and users from sites, the study notes such measures may have unintended consequences. For example, the reduction in availability of drug-using equipment may simply lead to more dangerous injecting practices. Also, installing blue lighting in toilets to deter drug use may simply make injecting more hazardous, and displace and disperse drug users to other areas[28]. The potential health consequences of policing practices will be addressed more broadly in the discussion of harm reduction in Chapter 5.

[28] cf. Flemen (2003)

Summary

Police as sole intervention agency

- There is evidence for the effectiveness of intensified enforcement by the police alone against open street markets.
- These interventions comprise a wide range of policing strategies, often with efforts to increase and improve the collection and use of intelligence.
- However such interventions are resource intensive and expensive.
- There is also evidence to show that even when interventions have been successful, their impact is often short-lived and / or can lead to market displacement or transformation.
- There is also a lack of strong evidence for the effectiveness of such approaches against closed markets / dealing from premises.
- In theory, inconveniencing dealers may cause them to operate less efficiently and therefore suppress supply. Disrupting drug markets may deter novice users by making drug purchase more difficult and risky.
- There is little current evidence that conventional enforcement has a significant or long-lasting impact upon dealing and buying.

Multi-agency enforcement approaches

- There is some evidence for the effectiveness of multi-agency enforcement against dealing from premises. This relates primarily to property management procedures used against 3rd parties.
- Agencies working in partnership with the police in evaluated interventions have included housing authorities, private landlords and tenants.
- Evaluated interventions have all been conducted in the US, where the range of civil codes and statutes that may be used differ from those available in the UK.
- Other types of multi-agency working in order to enhance enforcement activity may be effective but there is a lack of evidence at present. Possibilities explored include the enforcement of tenancy agreements, and the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
- Multi-agency working may also encompass situational crime prevention tactics, which involve making the physical environment less conducive to criminal behaviour.

Chapter 4 Demand Reduction

This chapter presents evidence from studies that have examined how police approaches to tackling low-level drug markets can encompass demand reduction.

The aim of demand reduction is ultimately to reduce the number of drug users / buyers in a drug market. Approaches which might contribute to this include coordinating police enforcement action against a market with targeted treatment provision. This chapter concentrates on different approaches to *linking* enforcement activity with treatment. Clearly, such an approach assumes sufficient treatment resources to cope with demand.

The enforcement contribution to demand reduction

Researchers have highlighted the potential for law enforcement to impact positively on the lives of drug users and user-dealers. Some have proposed that street enforcement should aim to arrest users and divert them into treatment programmes. This challenges the perception that drug users will generally seek treatment on a voluntary basis. It is argued that there are ways in which law enforcement activity can persuade drug users to take 'early retirement' from their drug careers[29].

This argument relies on the provision of community-based programmes for drug users, provided within a multi-agency framework (involving the police, courts, criminal justice social work & medical profession), in which law enforcement measures may offer an effective way of encouraging drug users to seek and accept help[30].

An attempt to capitalise on the disruptive effects of policing on drug markets is currently being carried out as part of a project in Derbyshire. It brings together supply reduction, demand and harm reduction activities together in one approach. The project includes a wide range of agencies as part of a problem solving approach to the targeted drug markets. The project is currently being evaluated and is summarised below.

[29] Cf.Gilman & Pearson (1991).

[30] Gilman & Pearson 1991: 109. For example they are supportive of a coercive model of arrest referral services.

Derbyshire Drug Market Project

The Derbyshire Drug Market Project was set up in 2000 to profile & disrupt drug markets in Derbyshire. It combines enforcement activity with rapid access to treatment for drug users, prevention activity & community development.

Staffing for the project is split into 2 project teams, both based at Derbyshire Constabulary HQ:

1. Derbyshire Drug Market Project: This project team performs analysis of drug markets, and formulates enforcement action plans on the basis of this analysis, within the prioritised markets. The team is managed by a Detective Sergeant and also comprises analysts and research officers.

2. Drug Market Response Group: This team co-ordinates treatment, community development and prevention activities around the targeted areas. The team is managed by an Addaction project manager and comprises 1 community development worker, 1 community intervention worker, 1 community safety / housing worker, 2 treatment workers and a project administrator.

Initial analysis, and the enforcement and response action plans formulated by the project teams from this analysis, focuses on 10 identified problematic drug markets ('hotspots') in Derbyshire. The action plans are designed to encompass multi-agency activities that can be undertaken before, during and after the enforcement period.

The aim is to **focus efforts on targeted geographical areas** by accompanying enforcement efforts with appropriate responses from the DMRG, such as the provision of treatment interventions. Both the timing and the approaches of policing efforts and the work of the DMRG are co-ordinated, and throughout the life of the project have been concentrating on one market at a time. The project aims to ensure that any disruption to and depletion of the drug markets targeted are **sustained** through providing treatment and support to drug users at the time that drug users are experiencing particular difficulty in accessing drugs due to enforcement interventions.

The effects of 'supply reduction' policing upon demand

One evaluation of a police crackdown[31] showed an increase in local demand for drug treatment during the period of the intervention[32]. However, it is not clear whether this increase in demand for treatment translated into a decrease in the demand for drugs, or whether the initial demand for treatment led to a sustained impact on drug use and, by extension, on the drug market.

[31] See summary of the Lynn Drug Task Force evaluation in this review (pg. 17)

[32] Hough 1996: 22

There are a number of studies that have examined whether or not police enforcement in itself encourages entry into treatment. One of the best-designed studies tested the hypothesis that drug law enforcement encourages entry into methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) by surveying heroin users with and without experience of MMT[33]. Those who were currently in MMT were asked about the most important reasons for them entering treatment. Although not the most frequently cited reason, the majority of respondents cited 'avoiding more trouble with the police / courts' as 'important' or 'very important' in their decision to enter treatment. This seemed broadly consistent with the behaviour of heroin users in the sample; those who had been imprisoned or had a friend or family member imprisoned were more likely to have tried MMT[34].

It should be noted that this particular study did not examine the effects of a police crackdown. Weatherburn and Lind (2001: 586) caution that:

"…even if the results… are read as indicating that street-level drug law enforcement encourages entry into treatment, it does not follow that dramatically increasing the level or intensity of street-level drug enforcement will further hasten the rate of entry into treatment. The present study… examined the effects of ongoing drug law enforcement activity on heroin users drawn from a range of locations and over a long period of time."

Overall, existing evidence seems to suggest that the existence of enforcement may be a **factor** in any user coming to a decision, at some point, to try and quit. It does not confirm a causal relationship between enforcement interventions and moves to treatment.

The effectiveness of such a role assumes that treatment will ultimately reduce users' demand for drugs and the criminality associated with this demand. There is a strong body of evidence for the effectiveness of treatment in both of these respects[35].

NTORS found strong evidence for the effectiveness of different treatment modalities in reducing drug use, even 4-5 years after entering treatment. It also looked at rates of drug-selling among drug users. It found that one year after entering treatment, dealing offences were reduced to less than a fifth of the levels on entry. The rate of involvement in crime was also reduced, to less than two-thirds of entry levels[36]. This marked reduction continued to be evident after 4 - 5 years[37].

[33] Weatherburn & Lind 2001

[34] Heroin users' own experiences of arrest and imprisonment were only found to increase the likelihood of entering treatment when age and length of time as a regular user were excluded from the set of control variables (Weatherburn and Lind 2001: 577).

[35] See for example EIU treatment review: The effectiveness of treatment for opiate dependent drug users: an international systematic review of the evidence, 2002, Simoens et al

[36] Gossop, Marsden & Stewart 2000: 143

[37] Gossop, Marsden & Stewart 2001

There are a number of ways in which the police can play a role in diverting persistent offenders to treatment. More can be done than simply hoping that disruption of drug markets will eventually cause drug users to address their problems. One example of a proactive approach that diverts offenders with drug problems into treatment is the Tower Project in Blackpool:

The Tower Project

The Tower Project is a crime reduction initiative that has been operating in Blackpool and the Fylde since Jan 2002. The initiative targets drug users who are persistent offenders. The chaotic lifestyle of this group has meant that they rarely engage with conventional drug treatment approaches. A multi-agency team (composed of police, the probation service, Crown Prosecution Service and NACRO) approach the target clients in prison or in the community.

The project's aims are to reduce:

- Offending of the targeted persistent drug-related offenders by 30%
- The cost of criminality of targets by 30%
- The average illegal drug use of the targets by 30%

Clients are offered **immediate** access to drug treatment and support with accommodation, benefits, employment and lifestyle issues; programmes of treatment and support are individually designed. Clients are made aware that if suspected of committing offences whilst on the scheme, police surveillance and disruption tactics will be initiated (referred to as the 'carrot and stick' approach). The evaluation of this project concluded that the project had met its initial targets. However the evaluators note that as their study only covers the first year of the project, it should still be seen as in the process of developing, and that this is a project geared towards 'long-term gains'.

Applied Criminology Group, University of Huddersfield: 2003

Diversion to treatment: Arrest referral

Arrest referral offers another way for the police to take a more proactive role in encouraging users into treatment. This section describes the ways in which arrest referral schemes are designed and some of the evidence for their effectiveness.

Arrest referral schemes offer an opportunity to drug users who have been arrested to engage with drug treatment and / or other appropriate services with a view to reducing their offending behaviour. Arrest referral is a gateway into services from police setting but has no formal link with the due process of law. It is entirely voluntary on the part of the offender.

The EIU guide to Arrest Referral identifies 3 broad approaches to arrest referral:

- *Information – giving* schemes involve the provision of information to arrestees about local drug and other relevant services by the police. There is no advice, counselling or follow-up. Take-up rates have been found to be low.

- *Proactive* schemes involve arrest referral workers working in close co-operation with the police, often with direct access to prisoners in custody suites. Police may screen or target arrestees for the arrest referral worker. Agreement to talk to the worker is voluntary.

- *Coercive / incentive* schemes are linked to diversion from prosecution, or other disposal. Essentially, the incentive model uses the coercive nature of the criminal justice system to encourage drug users to seek assistance in tackling their drug problems. To operate legally, they have to avoid offering the possibility of dropping charges as an inducement to seek treatment[38].

The majority of DAT areas in Scotland either have, or are planning, an arrest referral scheme. The EIU guide identified little if any current support for the coercive model in Scotland.

Evidence on arrest referral schemes in England and Wales suggests that arrest referral can assist the transition from chaotic lifestyles to treatment by providing a pathway into services from a criminal justice setting. Findings from the national monitoring & evaluation of arrest referral in England and Wales looked at effectiveness measures such as:

- Schemes' success in ensuring entry into specialist drug treatment services: evidence showed that over half of all problem drug-using offenders who were screened by an arrest referral worker were voluntarily referred to a specialist drug treatment service. Of those referred, a quarter made a demand for treatment.

- Whether engagement with specialist drug treatment facilitates reductions in the levels of crime: evidence did show significant reductions in offending and re-arrest.

However drug-using offenders referred by an arrest referral scheme were significantly more likely to drop out of treatment once engaged compared to self or GP referred drug users[39].

Findings from more detailed evaluations of 3 arrest referral schemes in England[40] assessed the schemes' impact by conducting follow-up interviews with samples of people who had passed through each scheme. The schemes evaluated were all 'proactive' schemes. Self-reported drug use and drug expenditure fell steeply among the respondents who had contact with a scheme and avoided a prison sentence. There were also reductions in crime rates among the study population. However the

[38] Edmunds *et al* 1998: iv

[39] Sondhi *et al* (2002)

[40] Edmunds *et al* (1998)

researchers observe that there may have been a bias towards success caused by the design of the study.

There is no comparable evidence in a Scottish context, although a national evaluation of arrest referral schemes is due to take place in 2004-5.

There are other diversionary measures in operation at different stages of the criminal justice system, e.g. Drug Treatment and Testing Orders, which have not been considered as part of this review. In this report we have restricted consideration to those that operate prior to or at the point of arrest by the police.

Summary

The aim of demand reduction is ultimately to reduce the number of drug users / buyers in a drug market. Approaches which might contribute to this include coordinating police enforcement action against a market with targeted treatment provision. Enforcement and treatment may be targeted in different ways – for example towards a geographically defined market, or towards a certain group of offenders. This chapter concentrates on different approaches to *linking* enforcement activity with treatment. Clearly, such an approach assumes sufficient treatment resources to cope with demand.

There is some evidence to suggest that conventional police enforcement may be a factor encouraging drug users to enter treatment. It is not possible to assume a causal link between the two. There is strong evidence that treatment can lead to sustained reductions in drug-use and drug-related crime, including drug dealing.

There is developing evidence in England for the effectiveness of proactive approaches that link enforcement action to treatment provision. Home Office research shows that rates of drug use, expenditure and drug related crime fell significantly among offenders engaged in arrest referral schemes in England.

Chapter 5 Harm Reduction

This chapter examines the evidence on approaches which incorporate harm reduction principles into policing practice. The focus of such approaches is the reduction of harm to drug users and / or to the community in which low-level drug markets operate. This focus does not involve abandoning police enforcement activities, and indeed the reduction of supply and demand may be seen as contributing to an overarching harm reduction strategy.

It is argued that the adoption of a harm reduction approach requires a re-appraisal of the rationale underpinning the policing of drugs. This may include recognition of the following principles:

- Strict law enforcement may sometimes increase drug-related harm and is therefore not always appropriate.

- Law enforcement may therefore not automatically / necessarily be the primary aim of police interventions.[41]

- The criteria for success of police interventions need to be examined closely and not simply assumed. While reductions in levels of recorded crimes are the commonly used criteria, there are others, and levels of drug-related harms may also be included when measuring 'success'.[42]

The chapter begins by reviewing the evidence from international studies on how police enforcement approaches may impact on the risk of harm to drug users health and to the wider community. It then considers some ways in which harm reduction principles may be incorporated into policing practice.

The impact of policing upon drug-related harms

Research has identified potential harms to public health, community safety and police-community relations which may arise from specific approaches to control or reduce drug dealing and / or use. The majority of this research has concentrated on the impact upon public health, particularly the health concerns of drug users.

Studies of the effects of a recent heroin 'drought' in Australia indicate that while supply-side enforcement has a role in harm reduction, it is also important for enforcement agencies to be mindful of the unintended adverse consequences that might flow from successfully disrupting a drug market[43].

As heroin availability decreased, research found that the price of heroin increased, while purity, consumption and expenditure on the drug decreased. There were positive public health benefits to this development: namely, that the rate of drug overdoses fell. However, this may have been offset by an increase in the use of other drugs (mainly cocaine)[44].

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[41] Williams *et al* (2001)

[42] Dixon & Coffin (1999)

[43] Weatherburn & Lind (1999), Weatherburn *et al* 2003

[44] Weatherburn *et al* 2003: 83

A study of the impact of street-level law enforcement in Sydney identified a number of increased health risks resulting from police crackdowns. One example stemmed from intensified police pressure which led to a change in the ways dealers and users chose to carry drugs. A shift towards oral and nasal storage and transfer of heroin between dealers and users resulted in increased risk of infections and blood-borne viruses, and risk of overdose in cases when orally stored heroin was swallowed to avoid detection.

Another reported consequence was the increased reluctance of users to carry injecting equipment for fear of detection. This was caused by a policing practice in the area which targeted drug users for stop and search. If found, users' injecting equipment was removed (although possession of injecting equipment is not an offence in New South Wales). This, in turn, led to riskier injection practices among users such as sharing and re-using needles. The greater urgency in which users found themselves injecting also appeared to lead to other health risks such as hurried (therefore more dangerous) injecting, including damage to veins, and higher risk of overdose due to not 'tasting' the heroin before using it all. Finally, the displacement of the street market from public areas to private and semi-private areas, it was argued, spread the problem over a wider geographical area and exposed a greater number of people to the various harms to the community caused by the presence of drug dealing[45].

A qualitative study of drug markets in Rotterdam examined the effect of a 'more repressive' enforcement operation upon residential drug dealing practices[46]. Dealers raised the minimum unit of sale of heroin and cocaine to reduce the number of customers and the number of transactions. They no longer allowed buyers to use drugs on the premises, or limited the time that drug buyers were permitted to stay at the address to consume drugs. There was also a shift from selling cocaine hydrochloride to ready-to-smoke cocaine base, again to reduce the length of time buyers spent at the dealing address. The study concluded that:

"increased police repression of a local drug market is followed by a reorganisation of drug dealing practices that is aimed at the 'self protection' of the dealers and that might be at the expense of drug users' interests"[47].

These problems were identified as resulting from 'zero tolerance' policing practices in evidence in the particular area. They also inevitably reflect particular local circumstances and practices. While it is not necessarily the case that the findings from these studies will be directly transferable to the situation in Scotland, some of the themes and mechanisms identified from international research are very likely to have validity in other settings.

A recent study in England and Wales by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) examined the frequency and circumstances of drug-related deaths in police custody or care to identify risk factors and recommendations for minimising risk in the future. There was clear evidence that drugs ingested for the purpose of concealment caused 17 of the 43 drug-deaths in the study. Two of the cases were thought to be 'body packers': people who had systematically prepared drugs for concealment. The

[45] Maher & Dixon (1999)

[46] Blanken & Barendregt (1998)

[47] Blanken, Barendregt & Zuidmulder (1999, 2000)

research concluded that the remaining 15 cases of concealed drugs were likely to have occurred as a response to actual or anticipated contact with the police[48].

Twenty-six of the 31 forces in England and Wales contacted by researchers did not have a policy on how to deal with suspects who swallowed drug packages[49]. The study highlighted a need for clear policies on drug swallowing and associated training for custody officers and staff. In particular they emphasise the need to treat suspected package swallowing as a medical emergency that requires urgent hospitalisation[50].

Incorporating harm reduction principles into policing practice

This section examines studies of police interventions that have attempted to develop enforcement approaches to drug markets that incorporate harm reduction considerations.

Studies in Australia suggest this may be achieved through the implementation of diversionary schemes and 'hands off' policies in relation to needle exchanges (i.e. not targeting clients in the vicinity of needle exchanges) and other selected areas. Partnerships at the local level could provide a formal mechanism for health and user groups to inform police of the wider impacts of enforcement activities, such as when these appear to be inducing or exacerbating drug-related harms.

An evaluated programme of interventions adopting this approach is Operation Mantle, a problem-oriented policing operation in Adelaide. It involved specific changes to policing practice and a general increase in multi-agency working to facilitate an integrated approach to drug reduction and harm minimisation[51]. The specific changes included policies preserving needle exchanges as non-targeted locations and limiting police attendance at overdose incidents to exceptional circumstances (as fear of arrest may deter companions of the drug user from seeking medical help)[52]. The operation succeeded in halting a previously escalating crime rate.

Enforcement agencies may not possess the information necessary to allow them to take account of any possible counterproductive effects of their interventions. Further work in Australia on routine police practice found that the police did not systematically collect and monitor local level data on drug related harms. As a result, they were unable to make well informed judgements about the possible impact of their activities on drug related harms. This research informed a programme of work which aimed to reform policing practice, partly to facilitate information sharing which would make police aware of any counterproductive effects that may result from enforcement activity[53].

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[48] Havis & Best 2003: 19

[49] Lund 2003:7

[50] The Home Office guide 'Disrupting Crack Markets' provides guidance to police on the issue of handling suspected dealers who are believed to be storing crack orally (Home Office 2003: 43).

[51] Williams *et al* (2001)

[52] This was also a recommendation of the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (2000: 79). It stated that ambulance services should not inform the police when they are called to a drug overdose *as a matter of course*, rather, that police should be involved only in exceptional circumstances.

[53] Canty *et al* (2001)

Reducing 'social' harm to the community

There is little research evidence that examines the harmful impact of low-level drug markets on local communities nor much that evaluates whether and how interventions reduce such 'social' harm.

Research conducted in Rotterdam explored the feasibility of modifying retail drug dealing. This project brought together representatives from different parties affected by the undesired side-effects of drug dealing under prohibition in order to discuss the potential ways in which drug dealing could contribute to – as formulated by participants in the discussion – "the general well-being of both drug-using and non-drug-using citizens"[54]. This helped to identify ways in which drug dealing could be organised to reduce nuisance to the community. In other words, this project aimed to transform the drug market rather than aiming to eradicate it, to ensure its operation minimised any negative impact on the community.

Other researchers have noted that the driving force behind changes to a local drug market may come from within the community. Communities are not powerless and drivers for change may come from within the community, rather than outside. For example, the role of changing community dynamics was observed in ethnographic research in New York's inner-city neighbourhoods, which examined the role of communities in regulating their local drug markets and reducing levels of violent drug related crime[55]. Further work may be needed to examine the role the community might play in modifying drug markets, including the ways in which communities can be empowered to do so.

Chapter 2 noted that evaluations of interventions have used a variety of definitions of 'effectiveness' with a range of different outcome measures. Not all have included community perceptions and experiences as a measure, so there are no straightforward answers to the question of 'what works' in improving the quality of life for a community experiencing high levels of drug dealing.

There has been disagreement between researchers about whether the displacement of a market may in itself constitute 'success'. Some of the studies evaluated by Mason and Bucke have shown that open street markets may move indoors as a reaction to intensified enforcement efforts. This may mean that the market itself becomes less socially damaging, for example by becoming less public [56].

There are a number of other ways in which interventions may impact positively on a community. The reduction and / or disruption of drug dealing specifically, and the reduction of crime rates more generally, may be a positive outcome for a community. However reductions in crime do not straightforwardly increase a community's quality of life, and may not be reflected in a community's perceptions[57].

It may be that the success of interventions need to be looked at in a broader way than simply expecting any changes of crime rates to directly impact on community

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[54] Blanken *et* al 2000: 146

[55] Curtis & Wendell (1999), in Dixon & Coffin (1999)

[56] Mason & Bucke (2002)

[57] See for example the work of 'Special Duty Unit 3', evaluated by Uchida *et al* (1992)

perceptions. Rather, factors such as environmental improvements, qualitative research into community perceptions, and other measures which indicate the level of harm caused to a community (such as calls for service and needle finds) may be more helpful.

Finally, when examining the harms that drug dealing causes to a community, and the effects of policing drug dealing, drug users also need to be regarded as a part of the community. In measuring harm, information needs to be collected on the patterns of drug use emerging within markets, to expose any potential problems that may be developing.

Summary

The focus of a harm-reduction approach to low-level markets is the reduction of harm to drug users and to the community in which low-level drug markets operate. This does not involve abandoning police enforcement; the reduction of supply and demand may be seen as contributing to harm reduction. However, it is argued that the adoption of a harm reduction approach does require a re-appraisal of the rationale underpinning the policing of drugs at this level.

Evidence from Australia suggests that particular police approaches against low-level drug markets, involving intensive enforcement practices, can increase the risk of drug-related harms to drug users involved in the market. Suggested ways in which police can incorporate harm reduction principles have included:

- not targeting clients in the vicinity of drug services
- limiting attendance at overdose to exceptional circumstances
- systematically collecting & monitoring local level data on drug related harms as well as illicit drug availability.

There is little research evidence that examines the harmful impact of low-level drug markets on local communities nor much that evaluates whether and how interventions reduce such 'social' harm.

Reductions in drug-dealing and/or crime may be a positive outcome for a community. However reductions in crime do not *straightforwardly* increase a community's quality of life, and may not be reflected in a community's perceptions of their local area.

Displacement or transformation of a market might in itself constitute 'success'. Open street markets may move indoors as a reaction to intensified enforcement efforts. This *may* mean that the market itself becomes less socially damaging. But currently there are no simple answers to the question of 'what intervention works' to improve the quality of life for a community experiencing high levels of drug dealing.

Chapter 6 A Provisional Picture Of Experiences In Scotland

The EIU visits to Scottish forces highlighted a range of issues that were common to local police attempting to tackle low level markets. We describe and discuss these issues in this chapter. The visits were short and exploratory so the information collected does not allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of police approaches. We refer to the evidence reviewed in previous chapters where there are direct links.

The chapter covers the following issues:

- The nature of local drug markets.
- Resourcing and resource allocation.
- Collection, collation and use of intelligence.
- Policing strategies.

Local drug markets

Our initial visits to Scottish forces provide a provisional picture of some low-level drug markets. This description presents the problem as experienced by the police. It is likely that we would have formed a more comprehensive view of the markets if we had talked to a wider range of people, such as drug workers, drug users and / or drug dealers themselves.[58]

The police in all the areas we visited reported heroin dealing as the primary problem they were facing. Dealing of crack was identified as a developing problem in a couple of areas, cocaine in another. Diazepam was also identified in an inner city market. The most commonly dealt quantity of drug was, for heroin, for example, the 'tenner bag', under a tenth of a gram of heroin sold for about ten pounds. Such a quantity would usually provide only one or two 'hits' for the user.

All areas visited reported that markets were located predominantly in residential areas, usually small housing estates or blocks of flats. Dealing activity took place inside specific properties or, far less frequently, in stairwells. Small scale, ad-hoc street dealing, for example from phone boxes or cars, was also described as occurring in the residential areas. We encountered only one current example of significant street dealing. This was based in an inner city, commercial location. Dealing in pubs and clubs was also mentioned.

In many of the areas we visited, the police were clear that the local markets could draw people in to buy drugs from quite some distance. Nonetheless, these markets were described in the main as closed markets.

The characteristics of these markets made enforcement operations difficult because police officers were easily spotted. They became 'known faces' quite quickly and so this limited their ability to do observational or surveillance work in the area in which the drug market was located.

[58] The EIU case study research will utilise these research methods. See Annex A for further details.

We did not visit small villages in rural areas but some police did report the existence of drug markets here. They were likely to be far smaller, tightly knit closed markets where dealing activity was less visible.

The experience of the police officers we spoke to was that most, though not all, low level drug dealers are drug users, dealing to fund their drug addiction. Their involvement in dealing activity was described as generally ad-hoc, inconsistent and unpredictable; they might deal one week but not the next. It was thus often difficult for the police to make a clear distinction between drug users and drug dealers at this level. The most commonly dealt quantity of drug tended to be that required for one or two 'hits' at most.

The police did also identify some drug dealers whose dealing activity was longer-term, better established and more organised. Although some of them used drugs, others did not. Their dealing was aimed at profit. These dealers were far fewer in number.

Resourcing and resource allocation

Perhaps the central issue facing all local policing areas was how to resource a response to the problems posed by low-level markets. There are limited staff resources available in any local area and most of these are dedicated to uniformed response, community beat patrol and dedicated criminal investigation officers (i.e. CID). Providing a sufficient patrol response is often difficult due to staff vacancies, sickness, training and other abstractions (officers reallocated to other tasks - for example to staff a major inquiry should a murder occur). So there is rarely any readily available 'slack' from which to draw.

Tasking and allocation of resources are undertaken in Scottish forces according to the National Intelligence Model, which is described below:

National Intelligence Model

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is a framework for intelligence-led policing currently being implemented across all police forces in the UK. The model sets out the tasking and co-ordination of resources and how intelligence should be analysed and used in this process.

The NIM stipulates that analysis of intelligence should include crime pattern analysis, and the creation of profiles on both 'problems' and 'targets'. Intelligence analysis should inform the tasking and co-ordination process. Tasking and co-ordinating group meetings should be the forum in which such decisions, by making informed judgements on force priorities, identifying resources, and commissioning actions. It is recommended that these meetings are held quarterly to six monthly as a strategic group and weekly to fortnightly as a tactical group.

All forces we visited had a central drugs squad, but their remit was to focus on what might be termed the middle-market or level 2 dealer. Local areas could bid for resources from the drugs squad to assist with their work on low-level markets but squads' ability to respond was limited by their other demands. Decisions to deploy officers would be based on assessment of current operational priorities. Their involvement was perhaps most likely where low-level dealers were known to have links to the higher level dealers of interest to the drugs squad.

It was clear that there are no easy answers to this problem. Force and local area managers are constantly juggling their limited resources to best meet current priorities. The areas we visited had identified a variety of resourcing responses to try and solve this problem.

Two areas we visited relied on existing resources to deal with problems as they arose: response patrol teams, community beat officers, CID. Primary responsibility tended to rest with community beat officers covering the areas in which dealing took place. There were indications that suggested that this resulted in a rather inconsistent and ad hoc response.

All other areas had, in one form or another, a small proactive enforcement team with a remit for tackling low-level drug dealing. In most areas this team had a remit for crime generally, including drugs. This meant that a focus on drug dealing had to be juggled with other priorities, such as car crime or housebreaking. Consequently, there would always be periods of time when the team was not concentrating on local dealing. In two areas there was a small unit of officers dedicated to tackling low-level dealing full-time. This role was made explicit in the name given to one of the teams, as the local area's Drugs Unit.

In some more rural areas, it was clear that community constables took on the responsibility for tackling dealing activity in small villages. They could draw on some support from specialist teams if necessary.

There was also some variation in crime/drug proactive teams between whether they were a local or a force resource. Some crime teams were a force resource with a remit for the entire force area. The inevitable danger was that this diluted the focus that the team could give to any particular area. Local management had to bid to receive the team's assistance and if another area had a crime problem regarded at force level as being of greater priority then the resource would be lost. Teams linked to one particular area were also able to build up their knowledge of that area to a degree not possible by force teams.

The crime / drug teams were all proactive plain clothes units staffed by a mixture of detectives and uniformed officers. The team would be led by a detective sergeant and invariably reported to a CID manager.

The set of tasks undertaken by these teams obviously varied but tended to include a mix of proactive intelligence and enforcement work. This would include:

- building up intelligence on suspected dealers through a variety of means such as interviews with drug users in custody, contacts with drug users on the street.

- working with local intelligence officers to develop formal intelligence packages for enforcement operations.

- planning and leading enforcement operations undertaken with assistance from uniformed patrol colleagues or the drugs squad.

- patrolling market locations and nearby areas on foot and car, conducting stop/searches of suspected/known users and dealers.

Drugs policing is to some degree a specialist job requiring particular knowledge and expertise, such as:

- knowledge of the relevant legal framework, particularly RIPSA.[59]

- processing paperwork specific to drugs work, most importantly putting together successful applications to the procurator fiscal for search warrants.

- recognising and identifying signs of drug dealing, equipment for drug use.

- trained to conduct surveillance either in static observation points or on foot and in cars.

- developing knowledge of the local drugs scene: known and suspected dealers and users.

- proactively gathering intelligence.

- developing an appreciation of what constitutes good and bad intelligence.

Officers working in teams with a drug focus were able to develop this expertise and the necessary confidence to allow them to do their jobs more effectively. Some local areas had recognised the need to spread that expertise and confidence more widely. In at least one area, a couple of members of the team were attachments from patrol teams. These attachments were rotated at six monthly intervals to broaden levels of expertise and confidence in drug work in response patrol teams. Other areas encouraged patrol officers to develop their own drug packages, sometimes with support from the crime / drugs team, and undertake the operational enforcement to gain experience.

Collection, collation and use of intelligence

Information on drug dealing and the operation of low-level markets comes from a number of sources, including:

- police officers

- crime and incident reports to the police

- calls to confidential telephone lines such as Crimestoppers

[59] Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000

- members of the public
- drug users
- interviews with drug-using offenders
- media campaigns
- known community contacts
- formal covert informants (Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) - regulated by RIPSA)
- local councillors
- other agencies.

The quality of this information will vary greatly and may not all be regarded as 'intelligence'. Local Intelligence Officers (LIOs) collate, sift and grade this information before it enters police intelligence systems. These systems are constructed to anonymise the intelligence sources from those who may want to make use of it.

High quality 'packages' - profiles of suspects based on intelligence, including recommendations for future enforcement- tend to take quite some time to develop. This is an important task for some of the crime/drugs teams, and a crucial part of the National Intelligence Model. Their dedicated remit provides them with the resources and the time to do proactive drug intelligence gathering work that response and community patrol teams cannot. However, there is understandable press from local communities and within forces themselves to get results in the short-term. This can require some management of expectations and a degree of judgement about the 'best' time to use the intelligence operationally.

Drugs teams we visited were also able to build up contacts within the drug using / dealing network and this could provide a useful source of intelligence on who was currently active and their methods of dealing operation. In some areas, community beat officers links to the wider community provided a source of complementary intelligence on the timing, location and characteristics of dealing activity observed by community members.

Policing strategies

The police areas we visited were focused almost entirely on tackling drug markets in residential properties in housing estates. There was a large degree of similarity across areas in the problems they faced and the strategies and tactics they used.

- **Surveillance**

All areas highlighted the importance of intelligence in directing their activity against markets. They all reported that they were working under the National Intelligence Model. As most areas were dealing with markets based in residential properties, intelligence was crucial for securing warrants to enter and search these properties. Observations and formal surveillance operations were sometimes used but were

highly resource intensive. As a result, they tended only to be used where a dealer was suspected to be dealing significant quantities, often employing 'runners' to conduct street deals.

Formal surveillance operations are regulated under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 (RIPSA) which requires prior authorisation for intrusive or directed surveillance. Officers must be specifically trained to undertake such work and the number of officers with this training in any local area was limited. Members of the crime and drug units tended to have this training though they would also have to draw on support from the force drug squad for expertise and equipment.

Such operations were often difficult to set up because of the characteristics of the residential areas in which markets were located. Sites allowing covert observation were difficult to find and few residents were willing to allow their property to be used for fear of the possible consequences. It could be difficult for the police to enter estates to set up operations without being spotted.

- **Operational methods**

The primary enforcement method used in local areas were operational strikes against properties from which dealing was taking place. It was frequently reported that it was difficult to gain entry to such properties quickly. This is important if the police are to secure evidence necessary for a successful prosecution. Reinforced doors were one method used by dealers to prevent rapid entry by the police. As a result, dealers had time to dispose of the drugs before they were arrested. This limited the evidence the police had for dealing activity, restricting the severity of the charges dealers could be reported for.

More detailed intelligence on, for example, dates when drugs are delivered to the property may help such operations. But such intelligence can be both difficult and time-consuming to acquire. It seems certain that the police could not rely on always having such intelligence before proceeding. The contribution of good fortune to enforcement successes was recognised by many officers we spoke to.

To counter the problems of entry, most areas had used other tactics to gather evidence of dealing. Securing formal statements from drug users about dealing activity was one example. On this basis, the police would simply go to the dealing address and arrest the occupant without the need to rely on seizing drugs.

- **Action against open street markets**

We encountered only two examples of policing open street markets, one current and one historical. The current example was an inner city commercial location where significant dealing activity was reported. A small team of officers focused on policing this market relied on stop and search as their primary method of enforcement. This was reported as producing regular arrests primarily for supply of small 'tenner bag' deals. There was no obvious impact on the market's activity overall.

There was a historical example of significant street dealing in a town centre serving a largely rural area. Despite CCTV and the use of high visibility patrols, there had been a lot of dealing activity which had become increasingly obvious. Dealing took place in alleyways, public toilets, bus shelters and phone boxes. Shops and businesses in the

area had complained to the police about the problem. An increased use of stop and search had become ineffective because dealers could recognise officers and discard drugs before they were stopped.

Police decided to employ undercover operations to build up evidence and intelligence on the market. This informed enforcement strikes against addresses and locations identified as being used by dealers. Over twenty people were reported for drug dealing. Since the operation the police report only sporadic occasional street dealing in the town centre. Local officers perceive that it has in the main been displaced back to housing schemes surrounding the town centre.

- **Multi-agency working & problem-solving**

Conventional enforcement approaches by the police acting alone were the most common response to local markets in the areas we visited. **Formalised, regular, multi-agency involvement with enforcement was limited**.

There was one innovative example of the police attempting to make links between enforcement and the work of other agencies. This involved the police conducting a brief survey of other local agencies tackling drugs, such as treatment providers, to assess the impact of a significant enforcement operation. The results were perhaps rather inconclusive but suggest the potential for further such developments in multi-agency links.

Many areas did report good working relationships with the local authority Housing department but similar examples with other agencies were rare. Housing departments were reported as useful providers of information to the police. There were also a couple of examples of the police and housing working together to secure evictions of local authority tenants for drug dealing. This was not a common or regular action. Officers regarded this as a difficult and time consuming process.

None of the local areas we visited made routine, formalised use of problem solving approaches as part of a strategy against drug markets. One case reported to us provides an illuminating example of how simple but effective such an approach can be.

In this example, local police had received reports about discarded syringes in a stream. An officer with responsibility for maintaining links with drugs agencies was aware that some drug users lived upstream from where the syringes had been found. He contacted a local drug treatment provider to suggest that an outreach worker visit the users to explain the problem. Although the officer did not hear back from the provider, there were no further reports of problems.

- **Harm reduction and Scottish police forces**

Harm reduction principles are clearly embedded in the ACPOS Drug Strategy. It commits to supporting harm reduction measures by doing the following:

- promote public health
- not stigmatise or exclude drug users, carers and workers
- promote the benefits of treatment for drug users

- create the appropriate environment for harm reduction measures to succeed
- promote and protect human rights
- maintain an equitable, needs led and person centred approach to service delivery.[60]

Little investigation has been made during the course of this review into the ways in which this commitment has been pursued by police forces. However one example of a harm reduction approach in some Scottish forces is the establishment of needle exchange schemes in police custody suites. Needle exchange schemes are currently run in three force areas (in eight custody suites in total). In two of the forces, schemes are operated by custody suite police officers and support staff. In the third, an arrest referral worker also provides support. The remaining forces have no plans at this time to develop such schemes.

Summary

The police areas visited by the EIU were focused almost entirely on tackling drug markets operating in residential properties in housing estates. There was a large degree of similarity in the problems local police faced and the strategies and tactics they used. All highlighted the importance of intelligence in directing police activity, according to the National Intelligence Model.

High quality intelligence profiles of suspected dealers tend to take quite some time to develop. Local police managers may have to sustain pressure from the community, or sometimes senior force managers, for obvious action in the shorter-term. This requires some management of expectations and a degree of judgement about when best to use intelligence operationally.

Most of the local areas had, in one form or another, a small proactive team with a remit for tackling low-level dealing. Tasks varied but tended to include a mix of proactive intelligence and enforcement work. Drugs policing is to some degree a specialist job. Officers working in dedicated teams were able to develop a greater degree of confidence and expertise in this work.

Conventional enforcement approaches by the police acting alone were the most common response to local markets. Formalised, regular, multi-agency involvement with enforcement was limited.

[60] ACPOS Drug Strategy 2003: 10

Chapter 7 Conclusions

Low-level markets are the point of regular and ongoing interface between drug dealers, those with drug misuse problems and members of the community in which the markets are located. Dealing at this level thus has the most direct and immediate impact on the daily life of communities.

Tackling drug-dealing is conventionally the role of the police and other enforcement agencies. However, given the nature of low-level markets, interventions against dealing at this level need to be considered carefully. A supply reduction approach emphasises the role of enforcement. There is clear evidence that concentrated, intensive police enforcement can have an impact on low-level drug markets — specifically in displacing or transforming them. But it requires a significant and continuing resource commitment to sustain this impact. Involving other agencies is likely to increase the effectiveness of enforcement approaches.

But research highlights the limits of approaches that focus simply on supply reduction and emphasises the importance of reducing the demand for drugs and the drug-related harms associated with low-level markets. Interventions arguably need to be judged in the longer term by their success in improving the quality of life of the community in which the market is located. The potential of intensive enforcement to increase the risk of harm to drug users is another important consideration. Knowledge of such risks relies on the sharing of information about drug-related harm between the police and drug agencies.

Emerging international evidence and current innovative examples in England point to the potential of a problem-solving approach that seeks to **coordinate, target and link** enforcement action and the provision of treatment. This aims to ensure that any disruption or depletion of a drug market is **sustained** by providing treatment and support to drug users if and when there is a decrease in the availability of drugs.

Reducing the impact of low-level markets thus needs to be a shared responsibility across local agencies. Local DAATs or DAAT sub-groups may offer a useful structure to develop the necessary strategic framework but this integrated working also needs to be replicated at an operational level. Clarity about what it aims to achieve and how success will be judged is crucial to such an approach.

Such an approach seems to have potential to succeed in Scotland. It would build on current innovative and creative attempts to support long-term enforcement by developing more formalised and coordinated multi-agency activity.

Appendix A EIU Case-Study Research

The findings of this review have informed the development of longer-term research that the EIU is now taking forward. The research involves work in three case-study areas. The overall aim of the work is:

- to generate research evidence that identifies lessons for improved practice in tackling the problems of low-level drug markets in Scotland.

The first stages of the research will focus on describing the nature of low-level drug dealing in the case study areas and the police activities aimed at tackling it. This may highlight the possibility for further development of police action, including multi-agency working. Three elements to the work are proposed:

(i) Describing & analysing the nature & extent of the drug market in each of the case study areas using existing police data and information from other sources.

(ii) Describing & analysing key elements of police action against low-level drug dealing.

(iii) Developing local strategy in accordance with the evidence gathered from stages (i) and (ii), and evaluating elements of strategies where appropriate and feasible.

Appendix B Anti Social Behaviour Legislation

The Anti Social Behaviour (Scotland) Bill was published on 31st October 2003, and at the time of writing is being debated in Parliament.

However Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been available to local authorities as an intervention since they were introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (this power has been extended to Registered Social Landlords as of 27th June 2003). One aspect of this that is a potential intervention against drug dealing is the provision of local authorities' ability to evict tenants for anti-social behaviour.

The new ASB Bill includes provision of new powers for the police to close premises in which serious and persistent anti social behaviour takes place (such as drinking and drug dens).

The Bill also provides local authorities with powers to ensure that private landlords take appropriate steps to address anti social behaviour by people occupying or visiting property that the landlord lets.

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Scottish Executive Effective Interventions Unit Dissemination Policy

1. We will aim to disseminate the right material, to the right audience, in the right format, at the right time.

2. The unit will have an active dissemination style. It will be outward looking and interactive. Documents published or sent out by the unit will be easily accessible and written in plain language.

3. All materials produced by the unit will be free of charge.

4. Material to be disseminated includes:

- Research and its findings
- Reports
- Project descriptions and evaluations
- Models of services
- Evaluation tools and frameworks for practitioners, managers and commissioners.

5. Dissemination methods will be varied, and will be selected to reflect the required message, and the needs of the target audience.

These methods are:

- Web-based – using the ISD website 'Drug misuse in Scotland' which can be found at: http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/eiu/eiu.htm

- Published documents – which will be written in plain language, and designed to turn policy into practice.

- Drug Action Team channels – recognising the central role of Drug Action Teams in developing effective practice.

- Events – recognising that face-to-face communication can help develop effective practice.

- Indirect dissemination – recognising that the Unit may not always be best placed to communicate directly with some sections of its audience.

6. This initial policy statement will be evaluated at six-monthly intervals to ensure that the Unit is reaching its key audiences and that its output continues to be relevant and to add value to the work of those in the field.

Astron B34418 02-04

ISBN 0-7559-3670-1

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