

Case Study: West Midlands Police and Kings Norton 3 Estates NDC - PCSO Scheme Evaluation

AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Citizens and Neighbourhoods Team at M-E-L Research was commissioned by Kings Norton 3 Estates NDC and West Midlands Police to carry out an evaluation of the PCSO scheme in the Kings Norton area of Birmingham. The Kings Heath Operational Command Unit was awarded funding by the NDC for a three year programme to tackle the 'reassurance gap' between fear of crime and the actual chance of becoming a victim, and also to provide a more visible policing presence of the streets to tackle low level crime, particularly anti social behaviour.



The programme employed 6 PCSOs to work across the 3 Estates area to focus on specific issues that do not require the specific competences and powers of the police constable. This supportive role was aimed primarily at the most vulnerable residents in the area, particularly the elderly, young people and those experiencing nuisance behaviour.

M-E-L Research carried out an independent evaluation of the project to find out if the impacts and outcomes had met the objectives of the original proposal.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

The evaluation involved three main research methods: an extensive literature review, in-depth stakeholder interviews, and a door-to-door residents' survey.

Literature review: A review was carried out across a wide range of secondary data from West Midlands Police, the NDC and partner organisations. Key evidence that was reviewed included project proposals, baseline data, performance data, monitoring records and previous survey results.

Stakeholder interviews: Telephone interviews were carried out by experienced social researchers with 20 key partners and stakeholders of the programme to explore their perceptions of the projects success. In addition to this, a number of interviews were carried out by personal visit by a research consultant with key stakeholders.

Residents' survey: 1000 household interviews were carried out with the residents in the Kings Norton 3 Estates area to ascertain their views of the PCSOs.

The results were then considered together ('triangulated') and a report submitted to the NDC and West Midlands Police showing where the project had excelled, areas for future improvement, and recommendations for the development of the scheme beyond NDC funding.

CLIENT SERVICE AND SUPPORT

The project was led by M-E-L's policing and regeneration client account manager, Vickie Pargetter with specialist input from community safety consultant Chris Allen. Vickie said about the project *"This project was particularly interesting in light of the recent Policing Green Paper. Many of the issues that were raised in the research over lack of clarity of the identity and role of the PCSO were highlighted in the Green Paper demonstrating a real need to work on these points on both a local and national level. We developed a strong relationship with the client and hope that they will be able to take the learning from the report forward post NDC funding."*

The fieldwork is organised by Azim Khan, our long-established field and client services manager, and the interviews were carried out by our dedicated 'policing confidence' field team of 20 specialist trained interview experts.

This project was delivered through our 'Policing Confidence' Expert Practice Centre - one of several specialist Expert Practice Centres operating across M-E-L's Citizens and Neighbourhoods Team.

For further information about our work with Neighbourhood Policing, please contact Vickie Pargetter @ vickie.pargetter@m-e-l.co.uk or call 0121 604 4664