

## **Guideline 8 - tackling crime at stations in high crime and socially excluded areas**

The DfT commissioned research (carried out during 2005-06) to identify appropriate measures that can effectively address crime and fear of crime at stations in high crime and socially excluded areas. This was in order to help those station operators who are frustrated that, no matter what they do in terms of design and management of the station, its crime rate is adversely affected by the neighbourhood that it serves and the station is consequently excluded from the Scheme.

Measures to improve rail stations and tackle crime and disorder were identified by TOCs and other partners involved in successful crime reduction initiatives as crucial for positively changing the image of an area or centre and for helping to convince other partners that regeneration of the wider area was both feasible and attainable. Issues about financing station improvements in the short term need not be a serious obstacle because relatively small-scale initiatives and the redeployment of existing resources can bring about significant improvements.

The following research findings could be helpful for station operators in high crime and socially excluded areas to see what actions have been undertaken at similar stations to reduce crime and improve personal security.

### **Research methodology**

The study had four main elements:

- 1) A literature review to identify what is already known about personal security at railway stations in socially excluded/high crime areas, and what is known about the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce crime and fear of crime in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rail environment.
- 2) Research at eight rail stations in socially excluded/high crime neighbourhoods that have benefited from crime reduction initiatives to identify with key stakeholders 'what works' and the evidence for their effectiveness, explore how and why measures have been effective or failed, and the inter-relationship with community-based solutions. The research explored whether the extension or replication of initiatives

between the railway station and the neighbourhood created synergy that was of benefit to both.

3) Research at four rail stations that have not benefited significantly from crime reduction initiatives to identify with passengers, the wider community and other stakeholders the extent to which problems at the stations reflect those in the wider neighbourhood, their priorities for improvement, and what mix of crime reduction and community-based solutions are required to tackle these problems. Passengers and other residents were also asked whether their patronage of the station and rail services would change if remedial measures were in place to reduce crime and fear of crime.

4) Interactive research at three rail stations to test the findings from the earlier research to identify and/or coordinate, in partnership with local stakeholders, practical measures to enhance the personal security and perceptions of passengers and potential passengers at those stations. The 'what works' research was used to inform the initial discussions for 'testing the findings'. An action plan was prepared for each station with costs and a programme for implementation.

## Research findings

### ***An analysis of the nature of crime and disorder problems that had been experienced at each of the eight rail stations revealed that:***

- In all case studies, the problems (with the exception of fare evasion) were identified as a characteristic of the area or neighbourhood and not specific to the railway.
- Alcohol misuse to some degree or other was associated with the problems of anti social behaviour and disorder by adults and young people.
- In half of the case studies, the stations had been a venue for drug dealing or for drug couriers to use as a means of travel and, for these case studies, illegal drug use was associated as a particular problem in the locality as well.
- Young people were often associated with anti social behaviour and with problems of disorder and track trespass. Lack of controlled access to the stations and trains, and ease of access to the track between stations was often identified as features contributing to these problems.
- Anxieties about anti social behaviour, disorder and other crimes were a significant factor in deterring passengers and potential passengers from using the stations and train services, especially after dark. Staff perceptions of their own personal security were often said to be undermined by experience of and anxieties about the problems identified with the stations.

- High incidence of fare evasion was a common problem across all the case studies. The BTP associate ticketless travel with anti social behaviour and disorder on stations and trains.

***The literature review drew on evidence from the evaluations of crime reduction initiatives to identify a series of strong indicators of what works best in tackling area-based crime. In summary these are:***

- The co-operation and involvement of key partners, including the police, local authority and community representatives, is essential for crime prevention initiatives to be appropriate in design and effective in outcome.
- Sound and up to date evidence and robust analysis is needed to effectively target initiatives in terms of geographical location and/or types of crime to be prevented or reduced. Systems need to be flexible enough to respond to changes and to meet new challenges presented by offenders.
- Crime prevention measures need to be sustained and the level of activity maintained. Analysis of crime and disorder in deprived neighbourhoods has revealed that many of the problems are entrenched and require sustained activity to be effectively tackled. For example, there is evidence that graffiti will stop reappearing if initiatives for prompt removal are maintained. One-off attempts to solve problems of persistent criminal damage rarely work.
- Achieving long term changes to the crime and disorder profile of a neighbourhood often requires changing the behaviour of perpetrators and potential perpetrators. These are usually longer term solutions that need to go hand in hand with shorter term measures that reduce the opportunities for crime through target hardening and other situational crime prevention measures.
- The regular monitoring and evaluation of crime reduction measures is necessary to ensure they are being delivered in a way that best achieves their objectives and provides good value for money.

***Examples of good practice identified that having the following in place can contribute significantly to improved partnership working, data collection and analysis:***

#### *Partnership working*

- The partnership approach, that involves local communities and local businesses as well, is often essential because the problems affecting rail stations mirror those in the wider neighbourhood, city or town centre.
- A close working relationship between the BTP, transport providers and local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is important for ensuring public transport related problems are on the agenda and

ideally tackling crime on public transport should be an integral part of the Partnership's Strategy.

- A good working relationship between operational staff, the BTP and private security officers can help develop a seamless approach to security operations on stations and trains.
- Although their responsibilities may be similar, local authorities often work very differently and time must be allowed for the BTP and train operating companies to understand their processes and requirements, for example with greater time required for officer recommendations to be agreed by local authority committees.
- The research highlighted that the TOC/Network Rail partnership is crucial for taking forward initiatives. Other agencies sometimes find it difficult to understand who is responsible for what, and TOCs and Network Rail should consider identifying someone with sufficient seniority and expertise to take the lead, involving local staff as appropriate.

#### *Data collection and analysis*

- The systematic and regular collection of quantitative and qualitative data on crime and disorder problems should be a common starting point for the identification and subsequent monitoring of the effectiveness of measures.
- Stations that are located at the convergence of local authorities and different policing districts will benefit from a mechanism that enables crime data for the whole area to be gathered and analysed.
- The analysis of incident data can help to target staff resources for patrolling stations and trains with particular emphasis on days and times when anti social behaviour can be especially problematic.
- It is important that the information from data analysis is presented in an accessible form and available to brief operational staff on trends and hotspots and encourage staff to regularly communicate the situation to the public.
- Staff need to be encouraged to report incidents and the delivery of effective measures to tackle crime and disorder can help give staff the confidence and belief to report.
- Developing formal data exchange protocols to facilitate full and open data exchange between partner agencies.
- Having a close working relationship with the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, including taking an active part in the crime audits, can be an important channel for developing a joined up approach to data collection and exchange.
- Having data and other information relating to neighbourhood problems as well as those at the station can help develop a greater understanding of the issues and help to target a partnership approach to crime reduction measures.
- Data on passenger throughput and the incidence of fare evasion can be valuable in understanding incident data for crime and disorder.
- Qualitative information from passengers, staff and other residents is an important and often unused source for identifying problems at the

station and the neighbourhood, helping to correct to some extent under-reporting of incidents in the recorded crime and calls for assistance data.

- Passenger satisfaction surveys and mystery shopper exercises are additional sources of information that have been used to effectively identify the scale of problems and trends over time.
- Employing a crime analyst who is dedicated to regularly and consistently collecting and interrogating data can be a valuable resource, both for identifying problems and trends and for providing data as statistical evidence for subsequent action.
- It is important for the results from data gathering and analysis to be made available widely, including to operational/frontline staff to ensure that everyone is aware of hotspots from problems and when the peaks occur (for example during school holidays or at the closing times of a local pub or club). Mapping this information can make it more accessible than tables of statistics.
- Regular meetings to present and explain the data, trends and hotspots should include staff from a range of disciplines to ensure the discussion is informed by those with different perspectives and experiences.
- Developing protocols that provide for access to databases to a wider but appropriate audience (for example to other police forces nationally and internationally for graffiti tags) can be a valuable tool for detecting and apprehending perpetrators who extend their practices across the transport network.
- A problem solving partnership approach to the problems is often key to the successful identification and delivery of effective measures.

***Specific measures in place to tackle crime and anti social behaviour at some of the stations include:***

**Law Enforcement measures**

**Policing**

- Dedicated BTP policing initiative
- BTP base at the stations to enhance visibility
- Enhanced and high visibility policing (examples include air surveillance patrols, use of police community support officers and special constables)
- Targeted BTP policing operations (examples include to tackle illegal drug dealing and use, carrying of offensive weapons, misuse and trackside vandalism by young people)
- Establishing a Priority Policing Area that includes the rail station

**Other security presence**

- Private security patrols
- Travel Support Officers, Rail Enforcement Officers and Retail Security patrols at stations and trains
- Street and neighbourhood wardens

- Financial incentive to encourage train conductors to gather fares from those travelling without a ticket and increase on-train visibility

#### Legal remedies

- Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Section 30 Dispersal Orders extending to the station premises as well as operating in the town centres.
- Specific measures taken especially through local youth workers and schools to inform young people of the existence of a Dispersal Order.
- Raising awareness amongst Magistrates on the seriousness of public transport related crimes and anti social behaviour
- Alcohol Exclusion Zones operating in the locality that includes the rail station or operating network wide on all stations and trains

#### Reporting crime

- Measures to encourage the reporting of incidents, including targeted publicity and free phone and text facility

#### Situational crime prevention measures

##### Physical improvements

- Rail station development with measures to tackle crime and disorder and provide good visibility
- Refurbishment works at rail stations including measures to increase informal surveillance and reduce fear of crime
- Special lighting in toilets to deter illegal drug use
- Upgrading of footbridges over track to deter prevent vandalism and placing of on-track obstacles
- Reduction of vegetation and greater security on the trackside to prevent trespass and other misuse

##### Enhanced surveillance

- Across all the case studies, the presence of CCTV cameras is the most common measure for providing surveillance at the stations
- Enhanced CCTV camera surveillance in station car parks to tackle vehicle theft and damage
- CCTV camera surveillance on the trains
- To tackle crime and disorder and fear of crime over the whole journey, there are examples of CCTV camera surveillance in the locality of the station (including for example in the surrounding streets or main approaches to the station) or through use of a street mobile camera facility

##### Encouraging activity and informal surveillance

- The letting of previously unused premises at stations for other uses as an important and cost effective means of increasing activity and generating more informal surveillance. Tenants should be chosen carefully to ensure they will contribute towards and not detract from perceptions of personal security.

- The use of premises for an on-station café and shops to increase activity and create a comfortable environment for passengers. Selling of alcohol at such premises should not be allowed unless it can be strictly supervised.
- Revenue from the letting of premises used to employ a caretaker for the commercial premises and with a wider remit involving on-station facilities such as public toilets

#### Other situational measures

- Automatic ticket barriers or gating to prevent open access to the stations and train services and reduce fare evasion
- BTP encourage marking of property and strong noisy Velcro closures to alert owners of anyone tampering with their luggage

#### Criminality prevention

Many of these measures were in place to tackle problems much wider than the rail station or public transport network and were often delivered by agencies other than the transport operator.

#### Initiatives relating to children and young people

- Working with children and young people to deter their involvement in crime and anti social behaviour on the public transport network and in the wider neighbourhood
- The issuing of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to young people as a means of deterring disorder and anti social behaviour by young people
- Providing diversionary activities for young people

#### Other measures

- Diverted donations scheme to discourage vagrancy and support for those wanted to embark on an alternative lifestyle
- Illegal drugs project to offer support to those wanting to tackle their reliance and associated health and crime risks
- Working with black and minority ethnic communities to address their concerns for personal security and improve relationships with the police
- Continuous publicity on the trains, at the stations and in the local press about the Section 30 Dispersal Orders and ASBOs can be important in getting the message across that measures are being taken to tackle anti social behaviour and, as a consequence, the network is getting safer. This can also give the message to potential offenders that anti social behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Reducing fear of crime by publicity on television screens in the stations that focus on the 'good news' including falling numbers of incidents and the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

***Specific measures in place for regeneration and tackling social exclusion around some of the stations include:***

- Partnership working to implement environmental improvements at trackside parks and housing estates.
- Introduction of changes to the traffic system to reduce kerb crawling and on-street prostitution.
- Development of a new station as the focus for economic regeneration, including a major educational, housing and retail site adjacent to the new station with improved rail and bus links to provide access to training and employment opportunities
- Bar and pub watch schemes, and Alcohol Exclusion Zones in the town and city centres.
- Zero tolerance schemes to tackle fly posting, begging, unlicensed street trading, litter and graffiti. Regular power-washing of the streets to create a cared for and orderly appearance.
- Compulsory purchase of properties in multi occupation to create a revitalised sea front with new housing, hotels, shops, restaurants and bars.