Safer Neighbourhood Teams

Covering Tulse Hill, Herne Hill, Brixton Hill, Coldharbour and Ferndale wards.

Background
Safer Neighbourhoods were introduced in April 2004 to help the Metropolitan Police tackle criminal activity and anti social behaviour. The aim is to help Londoners feel safer in their communities and to help rebuild community confidence in local policing. The Safer Neighbourhood officers are dedicated to dealing with locally identified concerns and issues, reducing crime and the fear of crime in their neighbourhood. Each ward is to have a Safer Neighbourhood team [SNT] comprising of a minimum of one sergeant, two constables and three police community safety officers [PCSO].
The primary function of the SNTs was initially to focus upon the less serious crime issues, such as anti social behaviour, criminal damage and graffiti which are known to have a disproportionate effect on people’s feelings of safety and security in their homes and neighbourhoods.

The key to the success of neighbourhood policing is listening and responding to neighbourhood priorities – the signal crimes and disorders. Genuine community involvement is a necessity for the success of safer neighbourhoods. It is known that the presence of visible, accessible, locally knows and knowledgeable police officers makes people feel safer. This lead to the introduction of Police Community Safety Officer [PCSOs]. They have increased visible police presence on London’s streets by generally performing routine duties, assisting and working alongside police officers, gathering intelligence, carrying out security patrols and, through their presence alone, reassuring the public. Often recruited from the local area, PCSOs bring to a Safer Neighbourhood team a greater understanding of the issues within the community.

What’s different about Safer Neighbourhoods?
The staff on each team are ring-fenced [they should not be involved in other policing activities] and the Met have made a commitment to keep Safer Neighbourhood officers in their dedicated neighbourhoods providing reassurance to local people.
There are six critical success factors required for the sustainable and effective operation of neighbourhood policing:

- Public confidence in local choices and solutions
- Joint action by police, partner agencies and the public
- Visibly taking control of locally identified issues and doing something about them
- Using community intelligence to target the issues that matter most to the public
- Dedicated resources, such as officers and support
- Effective communication

The safer Neighbourhoods programme is financially supported by the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Mayor of London. SNTs are permanent, not a short-term measure moved to respond to local fluctuations in crime and disorder. It is intended that police officers move onto a team for a minimum period, which gives them the time to develop a detailed knowledge of local issues and develop a wide network of contacts within the community. The teams not only become familiar faces to resident, local workers and regular visitors to the area, they also develop a broad base of local contacts that they use to ensure that local people are fully engaged and consulted about their work in solving local issues. Staff working on a SNT are selected for their ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people, communities and partners. They are further trained to provide the skills required to be effective in this working environment and how to effectively use a problem solving approach to tackle community problems.

**Priorities**

At the heart of the Safer Neighbourhood programme is community engagement – one way of doing this is through the development of SNT community panels. Each of the wards has one with representatives from the local communities attending the meetings which are held every two months. It is at these meetings, the priorities are identified for the SNT to address over the following two months.
Currently the priorities are:

Tulse Hill: prostitution on the ward as a whole; ASB on St Martine Estate; drug dealing at or near identified premises.

Herne Hill: drug abuse/dealing on Lilford Road Estate and on Flaxman Road: security in Ruskin and Brockwell Parks and Milkwood Open Space

Brixton Hill: prostitution, ASB on Blenheim Gardens Estate

Coldharbour: ASB on Moorlands Triangle, ASB on Angelltown Estate

Ferndale: ASB on Edmundsbury Estate; drug dealing/use on Stockwell Park Estate

A community panel has recently been established for the Brixton Town Centre but as yet has not identified the priorities.

Key results of Safer Neighbourhoods
Currently it is difficult for the police to produce statistics which shows the direct impact of the SNTs policing upon crime and disorder on a ward by ward basis as opposed to response policing. However a Safer Neighbourhood Survey was undertaken in the first quarter of 2005/06 [which will provide a baseline to allow a comparison to take place with the second survey].

Irrespective of demographic differences [age, gender, ethnicity] victimisation and area effects [ eg. level of deprivation ] respondents living in 10 of the safer neighbourhoods surveyed are overall:

- More satisfied with the way their neighbourhood is policed than those living in non SN areas – although there is no difference in levels of confidence
- More likely to feel that anti social behaviour and crime levels have improved or stayed the same over the past 2 years
- More likely to have a lower level of worry about car crime, personal and property safety and to feel safer generally
APPENDIX 1

- More likely to have seen a frequent visible policing presence – although there is no evidence that SN has had an impact on increasing informal contact between residents and the police
- More likely to feel informed about local police activities and expect to see improvements in the way their neighbourhood is policed over the next year.

For more information, please contact your local safer neighbourhood teams:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ward</th>
<th>sergeant</th>
<th>location</th>
<th>contact no</th>
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<tbody>
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