

Clear, hold, build

Framework for bringing serious and organised crime group threats into neighbourhood policing.

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Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Prevention Diversion
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Child sexual exploitation and abuse Community engagement Crime prevention Criminal justice Drugs and alcohol Intelligence and investigation Neighbourhood crime Violence (other)
Organisation	West Yorkshire Police
Smarter practice	Clear, hold, build – West Yorkshire Police and Merseyside Police
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Region	North West

Key details

Partners	Business and commerce Community safety partnership Education Local authority
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	August 2020
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Communities

Aim

The initiative aimed to:

- tackle organised crime groups (OCGs) acting in the neighbourhood
- build community resilience
- improve confidence and trust in the police
- make the area a safer place to live

This is achieved through three flexibly deployed phases of activity – clear, hold and build (CHB).

Clear

The clear phase involves initial targeted enforcement activity (arrests and relentless disruption) that target OCG members, their networks, business interests, criminality, and spheres of influence. The police use all powers and levers to impact on their ability to operate, creating safer spaces to begin restoring community confidence.

Hold

The hold phase involves consolidating and stabilising the initial clear phase to stop remaining or other OCG members capitalising on the vacuum created.

This phase aims to improve community confidence by ensuring spaces remain safe. Visible neighbourhood policing in hot spot areas is used to provide continuing reassurance.

Build

The build phase involves a whole-system approach to delivering community-empowered interventions that tackle drivers of crime, exploitation of vulnerabilities and hotspots of harm.

This phase aims to build:

- improved engagement with services
- increased confidence within the community
- greater reporting through to police and partnerships through continued neighbourhood policing and partnerships working

Intended outcome

The activity focuses on reducing the activity of organised crime in the area and improving community safety and confidence in the police. This is likely to initially increase reporting of crime and enable further problem solving to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

The area was chosen for implementation of CHB following the development of serious organised crime (SOC) local profiles was the BD3 postcode area. This includes the Bradford Moor estate. The area includes the wards with the highest harm scores in West Yorkshire, measured by:

- the Managing of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE score)
- high numbers of organised crime groups operating out of the area
- having high levels of deprivation

The area was hostile to traditional policing, with low reporting to the police and low confidence and trust in the police.

A baseline was measured using the crime severity scores for a number of crimes that are often associated with organised crime. These included:

- drug trafficking
- serious violence
- organised acquisitive crime
- robbery

These were measured every six months. The BD3 area moved from highest to third highest, then outside of the top three, then eighth position.

The community also mentioned in surveys that the anti-social use of vehicles was a local problem. This was included in the strategy as a measure.

Description

The framework involved undertaking three phases of activity under the headings of clear, hold and build. These three phases are deployed flexibly and can happen repeatedly as required.

Preparation

In order to prepare for the initial clear phase, SOC local profiles were developed. Local neighbourhood teams started to make contacts and building relationships in readiness for the hold and build phases.

Officers knocked on doors doing surveys asking questions about what the community wanted from the police. The local SOC community coordinator set up a kick-off meeting to get all local community organisation representatives onboard and begin the build phase.

Clear phase

Intelligence was developed on key local nominals for week-long period of intensive action of enforcement activity. Several high-profile arrests were made and there were with high levels of visible policing.

Hold phase

This involved hot spot policing using neighbourhood teams to show a maintained presence.

The neighbourhood teams were given local responsible officer (LRO) training to help them focus on further disrupting organised crime through the use of tactics such as gang injunctions, civil orders and warrants.

The hold phase also involved working with partners – including Housing and Environmental Services – to use all disruption tactics available.

Build phase

The initiative must be community owned to be sustainable.

Local schools were involved in coming up with a name that was not police-related for the initiative and BD3 Unite was chosen.

Asset mapping was undertaken to understand the organisations working in the area. This looked at what these organisations provided, to which demographics and communities, and where in the area they were based.

This enabled the identification of gaps in provision and identifies key partners to be involved in community building work.

Clean up and repair operations began to reclaim areas from drug dealing and create new community spaces. For example, the community identified a set of garages were a hot spot for drug dealing. Working with the local authority, these were demolished and lighting was put up to make the area safer.

Relationships were continually developed and maintained by the neighbourhood teams with the community and partners, and those implementing initiatives to fill the gaps identified by the asset mapping. For example, implementing initiatives for young people with the local football team and other community groups for women from communities not previously catered for.

Funding sources were identified to support local initiatives. For example, through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) and Community Safety Partnership funds.

Regular communication with the community provided details of what the initiative was doing and what it had achieved.

Evaluation

The Home Office has funded an evaluation of the pilots of CHB. This looked at the Bradford initiative in phase 1 as a pilot proof of concept, but has not yet been published.

Following the proof of concept, the Home Office is trialling CHB in eight further forces in 2021/22 and more in 2022/23. This will help to understand the impact in a wider range of operational, threat and socio-economic settings. The forces include Merseyside Police, Northumbria Police and Bedfordshire Police.

MoRiLE scores had been used as an indicator of threat assessments from OCGs relevant to local communities.

Overall impact

There has been a reduction in the crime severity score for the crimes being monitored. The area has fallen from the highest scoring ward to the eighth highest. The community have become more engaged.

In the Bradford BD3 area, the crime severity score monitoring showed a 37% reduction over six months. There was also a 30% reduction in serious violence offences, a 20% reduction in drug offences and a reduction in MoRiLE threat scores for the locations.

Over the duration of the proof of concept period, the force reported a reduction in:

- burglaries of 57%
- drug offences of 27%
- anti-social behaviour of 38%

Relationships between the police and the community have improved – the community feels the police are more accessible. This has built confidence about reporting intelligence through the partnership portal.

Learning

Key learning suggests the following is important for success.

- Senior leadership buy-in – support from the outset by senior leaders including local elected members should be sought. This can unlock resource that enables the implementation of CHB

and avoids potential problems later on.

- Analysis resource – this is required to developed place-based SOC profiles. These should incorporate all available local information at the onset, specifically identifying threats. There should be input from partners and the community.
- Dedicated CHB resource – there needs to be organisational awareness of the resources needed to implement CHB and to provide that over the long term to ensure sustained success. The old model of a crackdown before moving on to the next location has been shown not to work. Sustained dedicated resource is required to hold the location long enough to build enough community resilience that police resources can be scaled back. Additional neighbourhood policing resources are required for the hold period. Neighbourhood officers require additional training to enable them to effectively focus on disruption tactics.
- Asset mapping – it's important to identify what's already being offered at a local level, then working to join up different agencies instead of agencies working alone.
- The right people – it's important to identify key influencers in the communities and get them on board. Sometimes this might mean working with some people who would not normally work with the police but who have the influence in the community. It's also important to find a neutral person acceptable to all parts of the community to chair the strategic community group and lead on driving the build activities. The police can kick start the process but to succeed in the long term it must be led by the community.
- Realism about time scales for impact – for improvements to be sustained they must come from the community. But it takes time to build confidence, to build capacity and capability within the community, and to identify those with the skills to ensure the relationships, activities and infrastructure of the partnership work is maintained long term. CHB needs to be long term. Quick wins may fail to break reactionary cycles.
- Baseline measurement – getting a holistic picture of the total threat of SOC is important to understand harm at a local level. Agencies need to ensure their data metrics can be monitored at the local level before starting interventions, so monitoring and impact is consistently measured. Data should not just be from the police but from all agencies to give a whole picture. There needs to be a stronger focus on the standardised clarity of quantitative metric monitoring in any future piloting of CHB, to inform tracking of impact. Data needs to be in place at the outset, so that baseline data can be recorded and data can be recorded consistently throughout. A data dashboard can show where crime is going down (for example MoRiLE) and where prevention is going up.

- Communications – it's important to agree in advance all communications from the group about the activities with all partners involved. Some stakeholders may can be put in danger if it is seen that they gave information to the police that facilitated arrests or other police action against key local crime gang members.
- Preparation for future stages – CHB is a continuous process. It's important to have the next stages ready, especially for the hold phase. Hold is the first step that is different to previous, traditional ways of addressing SOC, as it acknowledges that making arrests is not enough alone. Getting the hold stage prepared and launched to provide a seamless move towards the build stage is vital to realise the difference offered by the CHB framework.
- Branding – it's important not to only use police language or acronyms. CHB is a collaborative multi-agency approach about building up the community, so CHB should be explained in terms everyone understands. A name for the initiative that reflects the community is important.
- Collaborative working – the clear phase will be largely dealt with by police through enforcement. But partner agencies should be dominant in the hold phase, and local government strategic structures should lead during the build phase. Partners should lead operational delivery groups, aligning interventions based on threat and need. The hold and build phase are key for collaborative working and helps agencies work towards a common goal.

Best available evidence

Currently the [crime reduction toolkit](#) does not include information on an intervention similar to CHB. However, an element of the tactical approach used in this intervention is covered by the best-available evidence on [hot spots policing](#).

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Tags

Neighbourhood policing Organised crime group