Organisational governance

Strategies to drive problem-oriented policing.

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Chief officers should ensure that organisational strategies include governance and performance processes that can drive problem-oriented policing in their force.

Essential elements include:

- identifying and empowering senior leaders to drive and deliver problem-oriented policing across the force
- ensuring that force strategies support problem-solving across all force functions, not just neighbourhood policing
- developing formal structures and processes to record, monitor, review and reward problem-solving activity

Problem-oriented policing is an effective policing strategy for reducing crime and disorder, and for improving public confidence.

Chief officers have a critical role in the successful implementation of problem-oriented policing throughout their organisation, as they set the force's operating environment and priorities.

Ensuring that governance processes and structures incentivise problem-oriented policing, both at the strategic and at the operational level, supports effective implementation. Incorporating problem-oriented policing into a force-wide strategy, rather than just limiting it to neighbourhood policing, provides an opportunity to set the direction and articulate how the organisation intends to make problem-solving a core policing activity.

Evidence summary

Evidence suggests that sustained problem-solving activity across a force is driven by clear, visible and consistent support from senior leaders who champion problem-solving. Evidence indicates that effective leadership emphasises the importance of problem-oriented policing and reinforces any decisions for staff to participate in problem-solving activity over time.

In order to incentivise problem-oriented policing, evidence suggests that effective strategic and operational governance structures are required. These structures should demonstrate the applicability and potential benefit of problem-solving to all areas of force activity and demand, not just within neighbourhood policing.

In relation to governance, evidence suggests that chief officers should establish formal structures that enable:

- the recording and monitoring of problem-solving activity, to ensure that problem-solving activity is taking place
- quality assurance, to ensure that problem-solving activity is being applied correctly
- regular assessment and monitoring of the impact of problem-solving activity
- the capturing and sharing of learning, to influence and inform future problem-solving activity
- successful problem-solving activity to be rewarded

Reflecting problem-oriented policing in force strategies

When incorporating problem-oriented policing into an existing or new force strategy, you will need to consider:

- the overarching aim and desired outcomes of problem-oriented policing activity within the force
- what you need to be good at to deliver problem-oriented policing, including enabling factors
- how resources will be configured and deployed to meet the strategy's aims and objectives

The strategy should also be accompanied by an implementation plan to help embed the required changes across the organisation. Assessing your force's readiness for problem-oriented policing, as well as identifying any barriers that need to be tackled, will help to inform the plan.

The self-assessment tool in the 'Implementing and sustaining problem-oriented policing' guide can help you do this (see the supporting resources below). By ensuring that your senior leaders have a good understanding and appreciation of problem-oriented policing and its benefits, this will help with effective implementation and with recognising how the approach can be aligned with other police strategies.

The College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) can assist with knowledge-sharing online events and practice exchanges between forces to help develop suitable strategies and implementation plans.

Forces should explore building on experiences of problem-solving in neighbourhood policing and other areas (if applicable), in order to see what opportunities are available to widen problem-solving activity across the force. This provides an opportunity to reflect on the force's current problem-solving activity, and to identify and assess factors that may encourage or inhibit wider implementation of problem-solving.

Forces should decide what is proportionate for different priorities, functions and levels of the organisation. For example, problem-solving can be applied to specialist operations and criminal investigation (eg, creating dedicated teams to help with high-demand problems, such as persons missing from home), as well as to back-office functions (such as fleet or Human Resources). Any learning from the wider application of problem-solving can also feed into, and enhance, current and established areas of problem-solving.

The College of Policing has also produced specific advice and guidance on applying problem-solving in order to reduce crime that can lead to homicide (**the homicide prevention framework**).

Force practice examples

One force holds several meetings and reviews with senior leaders to ensure the effective governance and leadership of problem-solving. These include:

- a fortnightly meeting with the senior leadership team on neighbourhood policing
- weekly partnership meetings chaired by a chief inspector to provide a 'fresh eyes' approach to the problem, which helps to tailor and focus responses
- a live-time problem-solving event held at strategic level
- weekly reports sent to chief superintendents regarding high-level problem-solving issues

Governance

A strategic lead should be accountable for delivery of the strategy and should drive implementation. Ideally, this should be as a member of the chief officer team.

Having a strategic lead for problem-oriented policing will demonstrate commitment to the approach and will allow them to take ownership for:

- promoting the benefits of problem-solving (both internally and externally)
- balancing the demands of embedding problem-oriented policing with other national initiatives and priorities
- helping to create a strong problem-solving identity and ethos across the organisation – for example, allocating ownership of problem-solving plans to senior staff and management in different departments
- establishing and resourcing new infrastructure to support problem-solving across the force
- incorporating problem-solving into recruitment and promotion processes
- leading communication campaigns on problem-solving in force

The strategic lead should also consider developing a governance structure that can help them with the above. For example, this may involve appointing tactical and operational leads in different parts of the organisation with responsibility for delivering components of the strategy and implementation plan, and for ensuring that problem-solving activity takes place across the force.

Performance

To ensure accountability and to understand the impact of problem-solving, forces should consider how they will record, monitor and review problem-solving activity. Problem-solving plans (PSPs) can help to achieve this aim.

Forces should consider:

- the development of a PSP template that can help promote a consistent approach across the force
- criteria for when problem-solving activity meets a threshold that requires a PSP
- whether different types of PSP are required for different circumstances and audiences (for example, broad PSPs aimed at entrenched or priority problems and light PSPs for wider use across the organisation)
- what platform is used to store and access PSPs
- the training that is required to ensure that staff know when and how to develop and submit PSPs

PSPs also provide an opportunity to include guidance and aides-memoires that can help officers and staff to approach problem-solving.

Considerations for monitoring and reviewing problem-solving activity include the following.

- Who reviews PSPs (for example, a supervisor or problem-solving tactical advisor) and how does this feed into the force performance approach?
- When are reviews conducted (for example, at fixed points – such as every 28 days – or variable and dependent on the problem)?
- How are problems resolved or escalated through the monitoring and review process?
- How is learning on the problem-solving process, as well as interventions and outcomes, captured and made available for future use?

Rewarding good problem-solving activity can incentivise and increase the uptake of problem-solving across the force. Forces should consider developing mechanisms for identifying, acknowledging and rewarding good practice. They should also encourage the submission of good problem-solving practice to the Tilley awards. This provides an opportunity to celebrate and share good practice at regional and national levels.

Force practice examples

Examples of problem-solving performance principles that forces have implemented include:

- using IT systems to monitor the progress of problem-solving activity and carry out quality assurance
- reporting progress of problem-solving activity at local performance boards

Supporting resources

- **Neighbourhood policing guidelines and supporting information**

- **Homicide prevention framework**
- **Competency and Values Framework**
- **Cost benefit model**
- **NPCC National Policing Prevention Strategy**

See also

- **Implementing and sustaining problem-oriented policing: a guide**

Tags

Evidence-based policing