

Night-time economy (NTE) wardens – uniformed, non-police resources to prevent serious violence

Reducing serious violence and associated harm in the night time-economy (NTE) by using uniformed, non-police resources as capable guardians/community collaborators during town centre NTE activity.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Violence (other) Community engagement
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Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police Business and commerce Community safety partnership Local authority Private sector

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is at a pilot stage.
Start date	July 2024
Completion date	June 2025
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults General public Offenders Victims

Aim

The aim of this practice was to try and identify a cost-effective serious violence prevention initiative within a town centre's NTE that would reduce the reliance on police patrols.

Policing the NTE can be extremely resource intensive. Officers are often tasked with providing a visible presence in key locations with the aim of deterring crime. This reduces the number of resources available to respond to non-NTE related incidents, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights, across the force area.

Communication between police and staff working in licensed premises can at times be challenging. Officers are regularly tasked with completing licensing checks and ensuring venues are complying with their licensing agreements. This can, at times, lead to stunted engagement and a reluctance to share information.

The presence of police in the NTE, whilst reassuring for some, may antagonise others or suggest that an area may be unsafe if it requires police attention.

The aim of this pilot was to introduce capable guardians in the form of NTE wardens who could provide the requirements that have previously been met by police from a preventative perspective. This would allow officers to intervene as and when their warranted powers were required, for

instances such as stop searches and arrests.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the initiative are:

- a reduction in the volume of serious violent related incidents within the NTE of a town centre that has been identified as a significant serious violence hotspot
- a reduction in the [Cambridge Crime Harm Index \(CCHI\)](#) score associated with serious violence
- an improvement in community perceptions of the NTE in the town centre

Description

Home Office Hotspot Response funding was used to increase partnership patrolling in an identified hotspot of serious violence (SV) and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

This hotspot was targeted due to having high volumes of SV throughout the last three years, predominantly in the NTE period. Several high profile historic instances of grievous bodily harm (GBH) had created the perception amongst some members of the community that the town was not safe to visit for a night out at the weekend.

The town comprises of one, straight main road running through the centre where most licensed premises are located, making it much easier to patrol than city or town centres which have multiple SV hotspots spread out geographically.

The force worked with the District Council/Community Safety Partnership to select a suitable contractor to deliver patrols in the town centre between 10pm and 4am on Fridays and Saturdays, from the start of July 2024. The contractor selected already had responsibility for controlling the CCTV system across the district, so had significant local knowledge of the SV hotspot targeted.

Implementation started with two wardens for the first few months. This increased to four over the winter festive period and continued with four through to the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Hotspot Action Funding has been used to keep this work going throughout the first quarter of 2025/26, which will subsequently provide one year's worth of data to analyse. As part of this work, the force have provided the wardens with GPS trackers, so the time spent patrolling in the hotspot

can be analysed for Home Office reporting.

NTE wardens have been briefed around the need to be visible, engaging, and observant whilst in the hotspot area. They have not required detailed briefings regarding the location itself, due to the existing relationship between them and the local CCTV control room.

The wardens spend their shift patrolling on foot, in a uniform comprising of:

- a dark blue stab vest with 'security' on the back
- body worn video devices, which can be used if required to capture evidence of incidents
- security industry authority (SIA) badges

The cost of this service is just over £25,000 a year for two wardens, increasing to just under £55,000 for four operatives. For this project it has cost approximately £40,000 for the 12 months due to the changing number of wardens throughout the year.

Local officers were still present in the town centre during this pilot phase due to the requirement for continued police patrols as part of Home Office funded hotspot work.

Evaluation

To date, the force have compared crime data from July 2024 through to the end of May 2025 with that of the same time periods for the previous two years and the results are as below:

Volume of SV in hotspot

The volume of SV in the hotspot reduced by 24% in comparison to 2022/23 and 29% in comparison to 2023/24.

- July 2022 – May 2023 – 58
- July 2023 – May 2024 – 54
- July 2024 – May 2025 – 41

Cumulative harm relating to SV incidents in hotspot

The cumulative harm in the hotspot relating to SV (measured by the CCHI score) reduced by 70% in 2024/25 from 2022/23 and 2023/24.

- July 2022 – May 2023 – 11033
- July 2023 – May 2024 – 11013
- July 2024 – May 2025 – 3282

All crime in hotspot

The volume of all crime in the hotspot reduced by 21% in comparison to 2022/23 and 31% in comparison to 2023/24.

- July 2022 – May 2023 – 288
- July 2023 – May 2024 – 253
- July 2024 – May 2025 – 199

Cumulative harm relating to all crime in hotspot

The cumulative harm in the hotspot relating to all crime (measured by the CCHI score) reduced by 72% in comparison to 2022/23 and 75% in comparison to 2023/24.

- July 2022 – May 2023 – 15164
- July 2023 – May 2024 – 16966
- July 2024 – May 2025 – 4301

The force are still awaiting results of a survey completed by the local business improvement district (BID) to gather the views of members of the public in relation to feelings of safety in the NTE.

Overall impact

The wardens have encountered various incidents over the last 12 months and have collected evidence of good practice from the CCTV footage captured in the town centre. They have supported vulnerable members of the public who have been heavily intoxicated, assisted door staff in managing potential volatile situations, intervened before situations have escalated, and contacted the police as and when needed. The use of physical force has been minimal throughout the year, even when assisting police, the wardens often place themselves tactically rather than becoming embroiled in the situation.

They have also become regular spotters of individuals attempting to drive whilst believed to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs and have been able to contact the police to get these vehicles stopped for appropriate action. From a prevention point of view, it is difficult to quantify the impact the NTE wardens have had in relation to these offences, as well as the safeguarding of vulnerable people who could have been potential victims of crime, specifically lone females.

The feedback from door staff has been hugely positive. The wardens are viewed as the link between the door staff, CCTV control room and police. CCTV footage has shown how the wardens are capable of diffusing potentially violent situations without the need for police intervention. When police have been required, the wardens have assisted from a safe distance. There have been occasions where a single crewed officer has arrived to stop search multiple individuals and all individuals have remained compliant due to the wardens being on hand oversee the process.

Learning

The force have reported few challenges in implementing this work, attributed to getting the right partners involved at an early stage and targeting a suitable location. If a partner was selected who didn't have a prior connection with the CCTV control room, it may have been more difficult for effective communication and information sharing to develop.

The force recommends using a contractor that recruits individuals with previous experience of working on nightclub doors, as they understand the challenges that often present within the NTE.

The force would also recommend having regular partnership meetings to discuss the impact of the wardens and to encourage additional partner buy in, such as from the local BID and council.

The force focused heavily on the measurement of time spent in the hotspot as part of this work in 2024/25, and less so on other measures such as the number of vulnerable individuals safeguarded. This is something that could be built upon in the 2025/26 period.

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