

Safer Neighbourhoods

Safer Neighbourhoods is about local policing. It is a ward based initiative where the Metropolitan Police and partners work with the community to identify and tackle issues of concern in the neighbourhood.

All of London's 624 wards now have a Safer Neighbourhood team (SNT) that meets the minimum staffing requirement of at least:

- 1 Sergeant
- 2 Police Constables
- 3 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's)

Their aim is to provide a visible, accessible and familiar presence on the streets of London and to engage with and respond to the needs of communities. In particular, they will work to combat 'signal crime'. That is, those crimes and incidents that impact disproportionately on a person's quality of life and perception of security.

Signal crimes can cover a wide range of issues but typically include things such as anti-social behaviour, graffiti, noisy neighbourhoods or vandalism. Where these are identified Safer Neighbourhood teams will aim to work in partnership with the community and other agencies to find a lasting solution.

SNT's are dedicated to a particular area and are additional to other policing teams and units in London. They will not be redeployed to other policing duties unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Model of Working



Ward Panels

To ensure that SNT's are responsive to local needs they work closely with Ward Panels to assess local concerns and establish priorities for policing in that particular area.

Each panel is made up of 10-12 local people who either live or work in the area and who have been nominated by the community. They serve for at least 12 months but typically commit for a period of 2/3 years.

The panels meet regularly, usually every six weeks, to consider the communities concerns, They identify and prioritise a number of local issues (usually three) and then monitor the progress made by the SNT and partner agencies in tackling them.

Success can be measured in a number of ways. It may include comparing crime levels within the ward, carrying out public attitude surveys, speaking to key individuals who's perceptions can be seen as a barometer of wider public opinion or by conducting environmental visual audits (EVAs), whereby a neighbourhood is visually scanned at regular intervals for evidence of signal crime.

Community Payback

The Metropolitan Police SNT's have joined forces with London Probation and local authorities to implement the Community Payback Scheme. This initiative uses low-level offenders, who have been given an 'unpaid work order' (previously known as Community Service) to tackle quality of life crimes and issues such as removing graffiti, litter and fly-tipped rubbish, clearing over grown areas and pruning bushes and trees.

Although the projects are managed by the local probation service they do so in partnership with local panels and SNT's. Communities are encouraged to identify areas of concern that they would like to see tackled. In particular, communities are encouraged to identify areas of concern that they would like to see tackled and can contact their SNT with their ideas.

Transport Safer Neighbourhood Teams

The next step in the development of Safer Neighbourhoods is the planned introduction in summer 2007 of Safer Transport PCSO's in 21 outer London boroughs. They will be deployed to work alongside existing SNT's in a joint initiative between Transport for London (TfL) and the Met Police. Their role will be to provide a visible, familiar and accessible policing presence on the public transport networks.

Currently, the smaller outer London transport links receive limited coverage from uniformed TfL staff due to resources being concentrated on the main transport termini and routes across London. The transport teams are intended to provide a highly visible uniformed presence to compensate for this and reassure the travelling public.

Getting Involved

SNT's spend most of their time out on patrol. An essential part of their role is to engage with the community. They can be approached to discuss any areas of concern in the neighbourhood and to identify local concerns. Each SNT can also be contacted by telephone or email. Contact details for each local ward can be found on the Met Police's website.

Visit <http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods/involved.htm>

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