



The Safe Newcastle Consultation 2005-2008

Final Report



Carried out by:
Barefoot Research and Evaluation - May 2008
www.barefootresearch.org.uk

Introduction and background

In March 2006, Barefoot Research and Evaluation was commissioned by Safe Newcastle to provide independent research and consultation services to Safe Newcastle around the implementation of their 2005-2008 community safety strategy.

There were two basic objectives of the work which were: to determine whether the community safety projects that Safe Newcastle implemented made communities feel and be safer; and to make Safe Newcastle's response to community safety issues more effective and more efficient.

Since March 2006, over 1300 people have been consulted, including approximately 370 professionals and 930 residents on a variety of different community safety topics, from anti-social behaviour to hate crime, and in a range of different ways from focus groups to street consultation (see appendix).

The original remit was to consult with residents, communities of interest and those benefiting from Safe Newcastle's initiatives. During the course of the commission we have however played a variety of other roles in addition to the original remit including:

- Evaluation
- Project development
- Policy development
- Strategy development
- A critical friend

In all of the work we have done, the results have been fed back to Safe Newcastle through a series of meetings, briefings, full reports and presentations at events. These have been used by those responsible for the specific portfolios or project areas to develop and improve the work that Safe Newcastle does.

The results of our work include:

- The consultation work we did around the 2004 to 2006 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Anti-Social Behaviour programme led to an improved 2006 to 2008 programme based on the evidence we collected;
- The research and consultation we did with students directly informed the Know Your Stuff publicity initiative;
- The evaluation of the Redeployable CCTV initiative provided evidence and gave weight for future planning and policy developments;
- Research with local journalists fed into and strengthened Safe Newcastle's relationship with and response to the media;
- The consultation with beneficiaries of YHN's Asylum Seeker and Refugee service confirmed and validated their approach;
- The consultation we did with young people provided justification for a continuation of the enforcement approach and led to legal mini moto taster days;
- Research for the Transport Priority Outcome informed the response of the transport strategy group;
- Presentations at Safe Newcastle's AGM showcased the partnership's commitment and willingness to engage with local communities;
- Research with the staff of Safe Newcastle provided a foundation for their engagement strategy;
- The consultation with members of the public and the SNAPS groups formed a central element of Safe Newcastle's 2008 strategic assessment;
- Contacts with HMP Durham enabled research to be carried out with two groups of prisoners for the Designing Out Crime initiative; and
- Our advice that we gave to ARCH about their partnership events helped their strategy planning process and improved relations with their partners.

Our advantage and key worth is our independence and the level of analysis we provide. We only base our judgements on evidence and in this way, we can make defensible judgements. Therefore, we rely upon our research method to be our justification. As a result of this, we have become a trusted and valuable partner of Safe Newcastle.

There has also been an added value to commissioning Barefoot Research and Evaluation and this has come through concurrent community safety research and evaluation and through our network of contacts. As can be seen from the appendix, we have consulted with groups in Newcastle during other pieces of work and this has also informed and been used for this commission.

Methodology

Barefoot Research and Evaluation worked very closely with Safe Newcastle through the commissioning manager to identify initiatives which required research and consultation.

A number of methods were used for the consultation including:

- **Semi-structured interviews;**
- **Focus groups;**
- **Telephone interviews;**
- **Participatory appraisal techniques (e.g. H forms);**
- **Street work consultation (i.e. using stands and engaging and interviewing passers-by);**
- **Participant observation (attending open days, summer events, project activities, observing behaviour and interactions and then informally engaging with people);**
- **Presenting at meetings and conferences;**
- **Facilitating discussions and workshops at events and conferences.**

These methods were used in a number of locations in the day and the night time, including: on the street; in people's homes and doorsteps; at conference centres; offices; community centres; in parks; sports centres; canteens; the town centre; in prison; on public transport.

The methodology had breadth and depth and covered a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, with an emphasis on the former. We have chosen from a toolbox of methods depending on the task¹ and we have paid particular attention to triangulation, i.e. using a series of data and information sources to verify the research findings.

The overall methodological approach was needs-led and responsive to the requirements of Safe Newcastle. For example:

- In developing actions for the Transport Priority Outcome Safe Newcastle wanted to know more about the community safety issues experienced by those that worked on public transport, so Barefoot Research and Evaluation consulted widely across metro and bus systems by interviewing drivers both in groups and individually in canteens at break times.
- Safe Newcastle was developing their student safety campaign and wanted to know in more detail about crime and disorder amongst the student population and Barefoot Research and Evaluation interviewed around 200 students about these issues outside of the student union and on their way to classes.
- The Designing Out Crime initiative wanted to test the theory by interviewing offenders. Barefoot Research and Evaluation arranged for interviews to take place with two groups of five prisoners in HMP Durham who were serving burglary-related sentences.

The research and consultation has been iterative; researcher and Safe Newcastle have worked together to investigate unknown areas. For example, discussions took place about an issue and a piece of work is scoped out; it is then decided that certain agencies or people need to be consulted and a certain amount of 'digging' is required; then a review meeting is held and it is decided that a new avenue needs to be pursued; consultation takes place and results are presented; if anyone has been missed, then further areas are pursued. Individual pieces of work have been allowed to evolve and develop and the results have been the more valuable for this. In this way, we have learnt more than if it had been a rigid and prescribed commission.

¹This is a particular expertise of Barefoot Research and Evaluation, who specialise in creating innovative approaches to complex social and economic research tasks.

There has also been the advantage that the researcher has responded to issues that Safe Newcastle has had to respond to. For example, the Designing Out Crime initiative which is now high on the Government agenda, required some developmental support. Barefoot Research and Evaluation undertook background reading, then developed a portfolio of photographs from across the city of good and bad design examples. Prisoners in HMP Durham were then interviewed and shown the design examples and these visits cross-checked the theory with reality and served to improve and strengthen the Designing Out Crime initiative. If a responsive approach was not adopted, then such a result would not have been achieved.

What has been delivered

Barefoot Research and Evaluation has delivered a number of 'products', including 24 written reports, presentations, challenge meetings and briefings. Many of the written reports act as baseline information which can be revisited by Safe Newcastle in the future to measure progress. All written reports are available in the accompanying CD to this report and include:

Name of report	Date
Community Broadcast Initiative and GEM Arts consultation (part of the NRF Round 1 ASB programme consultation)	June 2006
Greenspaces (part of the NRF Round 1 ASB programme consultation)	June 2006
Nightwatch at PHEPS (part of the NRF Round 1 ASB programme consultation)	June 2006
The graffiti project (part of the NRF Round 1 ASB programme consultation)	June 2006
Research and consultation into YHN's Asylum Seekers Service	June 2006
Research and consultation into St John's Estate	June 2006
Research and consultation for the SNAPS pilot – how to more effectively incorporate community concerns	September 2006
Summary of SNAPS research for the SNAPS board	September 2006
Research and consultation for the Transport Priority Outcome	October 2006
Research and consultation with students	November 2006
Research and consultation into mini motos	January 2007
Research and consultation with the local press	May 2007
Evaluation of the re-deployable CCTV initiative	July 2007
Report on the consultation for the Responsible Authorities	July 2007
Presentation on the consultation for the Responsible Authorities	July 2007
Consultation review for the 2008 strategic assessment	July 2007
Interview with an ASBO recipient	August 2007
Addition to ARCH conflict and SNAPS training	August 2007
Community engagement review of Safe Newcastle	November 2007
Report on Safe Newcastle's first AGM	January 2008
SNAPS consultation for the 2008 strategic assessment	February 2008
Review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Tactical Group for the 2008 strategic assessment	February 2008
Streetwork consultation for the 2008 strategic assessment	February 2008
Consultation with Safe Newcastle's partners for the 2008 strategic assessment	February 2008

Although these reports represent a record of the work that has taken place and act as a baseline, the most important product resulting from the work has been the improvement and development of Safe Newcastle's work streams. The work has led to a greater understanding of issues and has informed the response to community safety issues. In cases where the research and consultation has found good practice, it has ratified the response, in cases where the response has been found to be poor, then note has been taken and actions put in place to remedy that response.

What could be improved

It was planned to regularly feed the results of the consultation to Safe Newcastle's board and to the Responsible Authorities. In this way, those groups could not only monitor progress and impact of the implementation of the strategy, but also get a real feel for the effect that Safe Newcastle's work has on residents and local communities. Unfortunately, there has not been the space in these groups' meetings as their schedules have been extremely full.

However, the work has been presented at a number of key meetings towards the end of the commission, including at Safe Newcastle's first Annual General Meeting and at the Board meeting to ratify the strategic assessment.

It was also envisaged that more work would take place around the Quarterly Monitoring Returns to investigate outputs and outcomes that were detailed therein and also to assist project leaders across all of Safe Newcastle's partners in specifying unrecorded outputs and outcomes. However, this also did not happen as planned principally because many agencies failed to complete and return the QMRs. In future, there is more scope to do this on a dip sampling basis.

Conclusion

The piece of work has been extremely beneficial to Safe Newcastle's community safety response, which can be demonstrated in the impact the individual pieces of work have had on the project or portfolio leaders and their respective work streams. Safe Newcastle has benefited more from working with an agency which is flexible and can respond to needs as opposed to contracting a traditional research organisation to provide a specific function.

Safe Newcastle has also demonstrated its commitment to improvement through commissioning this work. Project and portfolio leaders have done this by recognising that, although they are responsible for specialist areas, they do not know everything and then working with the independent researcher to investigate and respond to new issues. And again, the use of the independent researcher has been recognised as key to elicit accurate and useful information from local communities, i.e. people will tell Barefoot Research and Evaluation things that they would not tell the Partnership or 'the Council'. In many ways, the commission has allowed Safe Newcastle to 'reality check' their work.



The consultation has also fulfilled a number of Safe Newcastle's commitments including significantly contributing to Priority Outcome Nine of the 2005-08 Community Safety Strategy - 'Community confidence is increased through communication and participation by providing opportunities to a range of communities to feed into and hear about the work of Safe Newcastle'. It also contributes to three out of six of the Government's hallmarks of effective practice², namely:

- **Intelligence led business processes**
- **Effective and responsive delivery structures**
- **Engaged communities**

Recommendations

We strongly believe that there is significant benefit to Safe Newcastle in continuing this commission. There is benefit in continuing the iterative and developmental approach and there remains more to be gained in terms of existing and new work streams and ultimately to community safety in Newcastle. The independent, reality checking of Safe Newcastle's initiatives and the development of new work areas should not be seen as an additional cost to the implementation of the 2008-11 strategy, but should be considered integral to its effective delivery.

We believe that there is particular scope for such work in the following areas:

- Continuing the Designing Out Crime initiative; there is further work to be done with cross checking theory with offenders in relation to student burglary, retail and domestic burglary, criminal damage and robbery and assault. This work would develop from the initial work that we have done with prisoners in HMP Durham.
- Restorative justice; one element of this potential work stream relates to the above, where offenders could be linked in to work with students and landlords.
- Reducing re-offending; continuing to create links between local prisons and young offenders institutes and the partners of Safe Newcastle.
- Work with victims; effectively capturing their voices and channelling them back to the work of safe Newcastle. This has the possibility of improving restorative and reducing re-offending initiatives mentioned above.
- Safe Neighbourhoods; particularly as such emphasis has been placed on the identification of models of good and bad practice to inform the local response to community safety issues and to share learning. This needs to be carried out by an independent agency.

In a future commission, there is also the significant potential of presenting the voices of victims, offenders and local communities together with the response from Safe Newcastle to corporate departments, such as planning, to reinforce Section 17 work. We believe that independence is the key to this role.

²As part of the work of the CDRP Reform Programme, the Government introduced a set of regulations that established a framework of minimum standards for partnership working based on the six 'hallmarks' of an effective partnership framed around an obligation on the CDRP to formulate and implement a strategy to address the crime, disorder and substance misuse issues in their area (www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm).

Appendix: Priority outcome, project and the number of people consulted

Priority outcome	Project consulted upon and activities	Numbers interviewed	
		professionals	residents
1. ASB (and multi outcomes)	Mediation in North Tyneside (MINT)	1	3
	Sounds Sense 1: Community Broadcast Initiative Tyneside	1	0
	Sounds Sense 1: Youth Diversion to Black Minority and Ethnic Groups via GEM Arts	3	20
	Sounds Sense 1: The Graffiti Project	2	7
	Nightwatch	3	10
	Greenspaces	1	10
	Positive About Youth	1	0
	St John's Estate: A coordinated approach to tackling anti-social behaviour (multi outcomes)	8	27
	Mini moto research	6	17
	Victim Support	1	1
	Fawdon Park House – creative arts project	6	20
	St Martin's Byker – creative arts project	2	4
	Cowgate drama group – creative arts project	5	10
	Jon Boste Graffiti project – creative arts project	6	13
	PHEPS	6	4
	Interviews with an ASBO recipient	0	1
	ASB Tactical Group review	12	0
	Evaluation of Bottlewatch (separate commission)	8	30
	Evaluation of the Respect parenting programme (separate commission)	20	20
	NRF ASB evaluation (separate commission)	42	53 (incl. 27 young people)
2. Hate Crime, Domestic Violence and Harm to Vulnerable Groups	The YHN Asylum Seekers Service	3	12
	Hexham Avenue research – community cohesion research	1	3
	ARCH partnership events	20	20
3. Transport	Research with Arriva, Stagecoach and Nexus drivers and a review of data	5	32
4. Alcohol	Evaluation of the taxi marshalling project (separate commission)	18	68
5. Drugs	Drugs and alcohol research (separate commission)	15	92
6. Multi Outcomes	Review of SNAPS first months and community consultation	8	33
	Consultation with all SNAPS groups	138	0
	Engagement review	12	0
	Streetwork	0	200
	Research with students	0	200
	RCCTV	12	23
	Media and Comms	5	0
Total		371 professionals*	933 residents
		1304	

* There will be some double counting in this figure. However, the professionals who have been interviewed more than once have been interviewed on separate occasions and concerning different topics.