

EARLY LESSONS FROM THE CRIME REDUCTION PROGRAMME: TACKLING ALCOHOL RELATED STREET CRIME IN CARDIFF (TASC PROJECT)

Briefing Note 9/01

Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Hilary Nettleton¹
September 2001

The views expressed in this briefing note are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect Government policy).

Background

This briefing note describes the early experiences of a project aimed at reducing alcohol related street crime in Cardiff. The project is being funded by the Targeted Policing Initiative, which forms part of the government's Crime Reduction Programme².

The briefing note aims to:

- Describe the project and its origins;
- Provide an overview of the nature of the interventions³; and,
- Present some of the base-line data that will be used in the evaluation, and some early and tentative indications of possible trends.

It is anticipated that this briefing note will be of particular interest to those practitioners and policy makers who have been involved in the implementation of the Crime Reduction Programme. However, it will be of interest to anyone who is involved in the implementation and evaluation of projects that aim to reduce crime and disorder.

Introduction

The principal objective of this project is to reduce the levels of alcohol-related violence and disorder in Cardiff city centre and the Cardiff Bay area. Cardiff has developed rapidly in recent years as a major entertainment centre as a result of regeneration and growth as a capital city and site of the Welsh Assembly.

There has been a proliferation of licensed premises in the city centre and there are a growing number of pubs and clubs with licenses extended into the early hours of the morning. Evidence collected locally by *Cardiff*

Marketing shows that there are increasing numbers of visitors to the city, which is becoming a key venue for late-night revelers in South Wales. As such particular policing problems arising from offences that are alcohol-related have been created.

The TASC project constitutes a multi-agency partnership between:

- South Wales Police;
- The Emergency Unit, University Hospital of Wales;
- Cardiff Licensees' Forum;
- Safer Cardiff;
- Cardiff County Council.

The initial idea for the TASC project, and the bid for funding, emerged from the Cardiff Violence Prevention Group (CVPG), a multi-agency partnership set up in 1997. However, TASC has since developed independently of the CVPG and has a separate (though partly overlapping) steering committee. TASC's work is aimed solely at alcohol-related ('street') violence in the city centre and Cardiff Bay, while the CVPG promotes preventive activities across Cardiff in relation to violence of all kinds. Communication and cooperation between the two groups was not always harmonious in the early days of the TASC project, mainly because of disagreements about a 'naming and shaming' campaign by the CVPG which the TASC staff found counter-productive (see below). Happily, disagreements between the two groups have since been largely resolved.

The TASC project is based at Cardiff Central police station. Its staff comprises a project manager (a police inspector), a data analyst, an administrator, a training sergeant, and a project nurse based at the hospital Accident and Emergency (A & E) Unit. Preliminary work began in late 1999, and the project was officially launched in July, 2000.

¹ Mike Maguire is Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Policy at Cardiff University. Rod Morgan is Professor of Criminal Justice Policy at the University of Bristol. Hilary Nettleton is a Research Associate at the University of Cardiff.

² The Targeted Policing Initiative (TPI), has invested about £30 million over three years in projects aimed at developing innovative approaches to crime reduction. The aim is to obtain evidence on what methods are the most effective in reducing crime.

³ It does not discuss matters of implementation in any detail. A report on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the Targeted Policing Initiative will be available later in the year.

Interventions by the project

The interventions can be divided into five main categories:

- Dialogue between the police and managers of licensed premises;
- Measures aimed at improving the quality and behaviour of door staff;
- Efforts to publicise the problem of alcohol-related violence;
- Targeted policing operations (sometimes linked to other interventions) at 'hot spots';
- Support for (and some 'debriefing' of) victims attending hospital.

An additional intervention, not yet implemented, will be the use of a cognitive-behavioural programme for offenders, designed by Dr Mary McMurrin of Cardiff University. This will be delivered under the auspices of the Probation Service.

Dialogue with managers of licensed premises

The Cardiff Licensees' Forum, set up in January 2000, was designed to foster strong and effective working relations between the managers of all licensed premises in the city centre. It is chaired by a very active bar manager, who has played a major role in 'selling' the benefits of participation to others in the area, as well as to regional managers in some of the large 'chains' which own pubs and clubs in the city. The Forum meets regularly with the police, and relationships have become increasingly cooperative over the year. The Forum has played an important supportive role in the drive to improve door staff, and has also encouraged its members to adopt strategies (including design changes and better surveillance) to reduce the risks of violence in their own premises.

A further important channel of communication between police and managers of licensed premises has been the sergeant on the TASC project, who visits the latter on a regular basis to carry out informal inspections and to make recommendations about security.

Regulation and training of door staff

Improving the standards of 'door staff' has been identified as central to the promotion of a safe drinking environment in Cardiff. Although for some years, door staff in Cardiff have in theory been required to obtain a license in order to 'work the doors' of pubs and clubs,⁴ in reality there was little enforcement of this, and the training through which such licenses were obtained took less than one day. One of the key planks of the strategy of the TASC project has been the development of the Licensed Premises Supervisors (LPS) Training Scheme, which delivers a new two-day training package that all door staff will have to attend before they are given a license. This training is seen as one way of encouraging a sense of professionalism amongst door staff. It is hoped, through the new training, to improve the image of door supervisors and to provide them with

new skills in dealing with conflict situations. As of December 2000, 40 door staff had taken the course, which began in October 2000.

Police monitoring of instances where door staff have infringed their membership of the LPS Scheme has increased. Any infringement of registration is subject to a revised 'penalty' points system. An accumulation of 10 or more penalty points in any 3 year period (when licenses are renewed) results in automatic revocation. The TASC project logs such infringements onto a South Wales Police database. This has been devised particularly to monitor those door staff with previous criminal records for assault and other violent offences. Prior to the creation of the TASC project, this was never done on a systematic basis.

Data provided to the evaluation team by South Wales Police indicate that, in 2000, well over 30 door staff were brought before the LPS Disciplinary Committee, and that disciplinary action was taken in almost all cases. Some of these cases were referred by the police (14 cases between January and November) but it is also clear that managers are increasingly prepared to regulate their own business in this respect. Of 16 individual cases brought before the Disciplinary Committee between July and November 2000, seven received penalty points to their licenses, eight had their licenses revoked and one failed to attend. The majority of offences committed during this period involved a failure by door staff to disclose prior convictions⁵.

Public awareness

Alcohol-related violence has received considerable publicity in Cardiff in recent years. Much of this has been generated by the CVPG and the TASC project, both of which have been keen (sometimes in different ways) to keep the problem in the public eye.

Naming and shaming

In October 1998, the CVPG began a 'naming and shaming' campaign by releasing 'league tables' of local licensed premises, based on which ones had been mentioned most often by victims of assault attending A & E in the University Hospital, as the location in (or outside) which they had been injured. The managers of some of those 'shamed' were upset by the campaign, arguing that the monthly figures for any one establishment were small and of dubious validity (for example very large clubs were compared directly with small pubs) and that some of the incidents were not directly linked with the premises named. When the TASC project was formed in late 1999, it encouraged the establishment of a Licensees Forum through which dialogue could be maintained with the owners and managers of licensed premises in the city centre. The continuing 'naming and shaming' made some managers initially reluctant to cooperate with TASC (which they often confused with the CVPG), and members of the TASC project board opposed the negative publicity, which they felt was undermining their efforts to develop a co-operative rather than confrontational approach.

⁴ In fact, many work in security roles inside the larger clubs as much as on the doors, but they are still widely known as 'door staff' or 'bouncers'.

⁵ The evaluation team has already interviewed 12 members of bar/club door staff from five venues in Cardiff city centre on the nature of their jobs and their satisfaction with their general training. Given its introduction in October 2000, it is clearly too early to assess the impact that the new training package is having on door staff practices. The results will therefore be outlined in the next report to the Home Office.

The issue was resolved when the CVPG stopped supplying data to the press, a move which met with general approval. However, despite raising the hackles of pub and club managers, the campaign may have had some beneficial results. It appeared to have a galvanising effect on them and - however unfair it may have been - had it not taken place, there may have been less interest in joining the Forum and co-operating with TASC. This view was supported by one of the managers interviewed, who saw the value of a 'short, sharp' negative campaign to 'concentrate minds', followed by a more co-operative and partnership based approach.

Promotion and advertising of the scheme

The official launch of TASC in July, 2000 attracted a fair amount of positive media interest, and the TASC team has continued to seek local publicity for its work, with a strong emphasis on the value of a partnership approach in the reduction of violence. TASC has also used large-scale advertising on the sides of buses (and will repeat the exercise twice in 2001) and a variety of other methods to attract public attention.

Schools initiative

An awareness campaign in schools has been pursued as a key component of the TASC project. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Licensees Forum have also committed themselves to a series of schools visits. The education campaign undertaken by the TASC project includes role play, medical footage of assault injuries, a video presentation, and a discussion of alcohol measures through the use of a mock bar. It has been devised on the premise that school age children are likely to be the customers of bars and clubs in future years and as such, should be aware of the consequences of abusing alcohol. This need was reinforced by data which showed that 5.5% of alcohol-related incidents in the city centre involved people under 18, either as complainants or defendants⁶.

Co-ordinated interventions at 'hot spots'

A central objective of the TASC project is to analyse more closely where alcohol-related violence occurs through the pinpointing of specific trouble 'hot spots' and, where feasible, to implement appropriate measures to prevent it. These may be primarily traditional, enforcement-based police operations, or may involve 'hard line' policing in combination with a raft of other interventions. Formal interventions under the TASC project began in July 2000 on the basis of data obtained by the data analyst.

From an analysis of figures collated between September 1999 and May 2000 (see below), the decision was taken to undertake the first targeted operation. This involved concentrating police resources on one of the most prominent violence 'hot spots' in Cardiff, a large dance club (another large club was also targeted, but less intensively). This club was identified as experiencing a high rate of alcohol-related incidents. The data analyst was additionally able to gain important information about the nature of the incidents and

prominent times/days of the week when they were occurring.

The dance club operation

The operation lasted for eight weeks between July and September 2000. It was multi-pronged, and combined both friendly co-operation with the management and a 'harder line' approach. It included:

- *High profile policing.* Additional police officers (32 officers working 5 hours overtime each between the hours of 10pm and 3am) were deployed at selected street locations, especially in the vicinity of the hot spot premises.
- *Dialogue with managers.* A frequent dialogue was established with the club's staff and management, keeping them informed of developments in the operation.
- *Monitoring of premises.* Regular police visits were made to inspect CCTV facilities, dance and bar areas, both by the TASC sergeant and the community constable
- *A pro-active CID operation.* An operation targeting drugs misuse was mounted for one night, resulting in 10 arrests
- *Door staff.* A presentation was made to the club's door staff about the TASC project objectives, and a meeting was held with the security company responsible for providing door staff at the club.
- *Police monitoring of door staff licenses.* The Licensed Premises Supervisors Register was examined to ensure that all door staff had been properly trained under the LPS scheme and to check for any serious previous convictions.
- *Late night dispersal of customers.* Consideration was given to re-organising the road layout to ensure that people attending the club could be quickly moved away from the area when it closed. Discussions were held with the Chair of Cardiff Hackney Association to plan for the relocation of the taxi rank outside the club, so that taxis could enter and exit more easily, avoiding possible conflict between people waiting for taxis. The management was also encouraged to alter the closing time to 4 am, thus avoiding a congregation of young people on the street at the time other clubs were shutting (commonly between 1.30am and 2am).

Support for victims

The project has appointed a nurse, based in the A & E unit, whose main task is to get in touch with victims of assault after they have been treated (usually by telephoning them at home) and offering advice and support. Where appropriate, she may refer them to Victim Support or other organisations. In addition to her supportive role, she may encourage them to report offences to the police and also gather more information about the incident, its location and its causes. The latter kind of information (which is passed on in anonymised form) is valuable to the research, as it contributes to a clearer and more detailed picture of the nature of alcohol-related assaults in the city centre and of the circumstances in which they occur.

⁶ The evaluators will keep a close eye on the development of the schools education campaign, although it will be difficult to state with any confidence the extent to which it has contributed to any reduction in assaults observed over the period of the evaluation.

Data Collection and Analysis

An important element of the project has been the development of a comprehensive database, using information from a variety of sources (including the A & E department), on every incident of alcohol-related violence or disorder known to have taken place in the streets or licensed premises in the city centre and Bay areas since July 1999 (a year prior to the launch of the project). This database, which was developed jointly with the evaluators, is maintained by the project's data analyst. The data will be collected over the lifetime of the project, and will be used to measure trends on a variety of scales. This will be of great value to the evaluation, which is of quasi-experimental design – essentially one of pre-test, post-test comparison (without comparison sites, although comparisons will be made with trends in recorded crime and incidents in adjacent areas). It will be especially useful for identifying changes in violence and disorder at a highly localized level following targeted interventions, an example of which will be given later.

Patterns of violence and disorder: alternative pictures

The database contains information about alcohol-related incidents of assault and/or public disorder occurring on the streets or in licensed premises in central Cardiff or Cardiff Bay. It does not include incidents of domestic violence, some of which may be inflamed by alcohol (these are anyway relatively few in number in what is primarily a commercial area of the city). The database draws mainly on four different sources of information:

- Police incident records: computer records made by staff in the control room on receipt of reports of incidents by telephone or police radio.
- Custody handling records: the custody records of people arrested for violent or public order offences in the relevant police sectors.
- Crime records: officially recorded offences of violence and disorder.
- Hospital data: short questionnaires completed by receptionists on behalf of victims of assault attending the Accident and Emergency (A & E) department at the main hospital in Cardiff.

In many cases, of course, the same incidents are to be found in two, three or all four of these sets of records. Further details of incidents and the people involved in them are obtained from:

- Other police records (especially CCTV logs)
- Written queries to police officers
- The hospital nurse.

Whether an incident is 'alcohol-related' is to some extent a subjective question, and the available information to inform judgements is sometimes limited. The basic approach adopted by the researchers is to include in the database any incident of assault or disorder where it is known, or highly probable, that one or more of the parties involved have recently been consuming alcohol. Where police incident data are concerned, police operators themselves apply an identifying code to all incident reports where the consumption of alcohol – by assailant, victim, or both - appears to have played a part. Incidents coded in this way are accepted and classified by the researchers as 'alcohol related'. In addition, as noted above, police officers attending the scenes of particular incidents which may be alcohol related are often requested by the data analyst to supply extra information to help decide whether or not to include them.

In the case of hospital data, the questionnaire used does not include any questions about alcohol (seen by some hospital staff as intrusive), although the project nurse obtains information on this. Consequently, it was decided, where no other information is available, to deem as 'alcohol-related' any incident reported by the patient as occurring inside or outside named licensed premises in the relevant area of Cardiff.

So far, data covering a 15 month-period, from July 1999 to September 2000, have been analysed. Table 1 shows the numbers of incidents identified from each of the four main data sources referred to above. These are subdivided into incidents involving assaults, and incidents involving public disorder only. The Table also shows how many incidents led to the official recording of one or more criminal offences.

It can be seen that the highest number of incidents (1,509) appeared in the police incident records. Trawls of crime records and custody records threw up 1,139 and 976 incidents, respectively (if more than one person was arrested in relation to the same incident, only one incident was counted). Most of these were found in both sets of records, and many of them, too, had already been identified in the incident records. However, as Table 2 shows, the two new sources together produced

Table 1 Total numbers of alcohol-related incidents in central Cardiff, July 1999 to September 2000, according to four main data sources

	Type of incident					
	Assaults		Disorder		All incidents	
Data source	N	Crimed	N	Crimed	N	Crimed
Police incident records	1050	496	459	176	1509	672
Custody records	528	460	448	418	976	873
Crime records	689	689	450	450	1139	1139
A&E questionnaires	766	351			766	351
Total incidents	1471	689	738	450	2209	1139

N.B. The totals are smaller than the sum of their columns, as many incidents were recorded in more than one data source.

a further 478 incidents not identifiable in the incident records, bringing the total number of incidents identified from police sources to 1,987. Finally, the grand total

was boosted to 2,209 by the inclusion of another 222 assaults identified from the hospital data but not identifiable in any of the police records.

Table 2 Overlaps between sources of data

Source of data	Number of incidents of crime or disorder	Number of assaults	Number of crimed assaults
Incident records	1509	1050	496
In custody and crime records but not in incident records	478	199	193
Total in police records	1987	1249	689
In hospital records but not police records	222	222	(potentially 222 crimes)
Totals	2209	1471	689 (potentially 911)

At first glance, it does not appear that the hospital data add a great deal to what is already known from police records. Not only were 71 per cent of the 766 cases retrieved from the hospital already in police records, but the 222 'new' incidents increased the total of 'known' incidents by only 11 per cent (from 1,987 to 2,209). However, it has to be remembered, first of all, that the overall figure includes a large number of incidents of public disorder not resulting in injury, which one would not expect to result in visits to hospital. If we look only at incidents resulting in *assaults* (see column 2 of Table 2), the hospital data add 18 per cent to the police-derived total.

Secondly, identifying assaults from police incident records is a time-consuming task, and it would probably not be considered a worthwhile exercise in many forces. The most accessible police-derived statistics are those obtainable from crime records, and it therefore seems

most appropriate to compare hospital data with data on police-recorded crimes of assault. Remembering that, in our study, the only incidents included are *alcohol-related assaults occurring on the street or in licensed premises in two police sectors*, it emerges that the police figure of 689 incidents involving 'crimed' assaults of this kind could be supplemented by an extra 222 incidents from hospital data. Each of the latter involve potentially recordable offences of assault, and could in theory – for example, if all victims were persuaded to report their case to the police - add 32 per cent to the officially recorded total (Table 2, column 3).

Trends over time

Table 3 shows the numbers of incidents occurring in each quarter from July 1999 to September 2000, as measured by a variety of different sources. The second half of the Table shows the same thing, but covering only those incidents which involved assaults.

Table 3 Incidents of alcohol-related violence and disorder, July 1999-Sept 2000

Time period	Number of incidents of violence and disorder as measured by:				
	Incident records	Crime records	All police data	A&E data	All data
July-Sept 1999	229	211	305	140	342
Oct-Dec 1999	324	285	452	181	514
Jan-Mar 2000	316	222	412	156	464
Apr-Jun 2000	319	184	390	129	423
July-Sept 2000	321	237	428	160	466
Totals	1509	1139	1987	766	2209

	Numbers of incidents of alcohol-related assault as measured by:				
	Incident records	Crime records	All police data	A&E data	All data
Time period					
July-Sept 1999	180	144	213	140	250
Oct-Dec 1999	231	186	296	181	358
Jan-Mar 2000	212	120	247	156	299
Apr-Jun 2000	205	113	236	129	269
July-Sept 2000	222	126	257	160	295
Totals	1050	689	1249	766	1471

It should be emphasized that very little can be concluded from these data alone, as there is as yet only one period (July to September) over which a direct year-to-year comparison can be made. Seasonal fluctuation is almost certainly an important factor – for example, in line with many other studies, it is apparent that the period leading up to Christmas produces higher levels of crime than other times of the year – and it will be necessary to examine at least a full year's figures from July 2000 before any conclusion can be drawn. Moreover, simple comparisons are insufficient on their own as evidence of significant change: it will be necessary eventually to look at moving averages, to

compare trends in violence with those in neighbouring areas, and so on. For what it is worth, there were rises between the summer period of 1999 and that of 2000 in the total numbers of known incidents of alcohol related violence and disorder, however these are measured; but at the same time, *recorded* crimes of assault involving alcohol appear to have fallen.

Table 4 adds some more encouraging news, as well as *prima facie* evidence of a clearer trend. This shows figures on incidents and injuries occurring inside or just outside the two large dance clubs which were the subject of police operations in July to September 2000.

Table 4 Trends in incidents and injuries, two large clubs in Cardiff

	Club A			Club B		
	Number of incidents involving:					
	Violence/ disorder	Assaults	Crimed assaults	Violence/ disorder	Assaults	Crimed assaults
July-Sept 1999	28	24	14	27	23	18
Oct-Dec 1999	32	27	15	30	28	15
Jan-Mar 2000	27	20	5	25	21	10
Apr-Jun 2000	24	19	8	22	18	9
July-Sept 2000	19	12	3	18	14	6
Totals	130	102	45	122	104	58

	Club A		Club B	
	Number of incidents involving:			
	Someone to A&E	Moderate to severe injuries	Someone to A&E	Moderate to severe injuries
July-Sept 1999	27	12	12	6
Oct-Dec 1999	19	8	18	9
Jan-Mar 2000	14	6	17	3
Apr-Jun 2000	8	5	11	1
July-Sept 2000	7	2	11	3
Totals	75	33	69	22

It can be seen that the numbers of assaults, of incidents of disorder, of incidents resulting in moderate or severe injuries, and of incidents resulting in trips to hospital, all declined considerably in and around both clubs during this year, and especially in the period of the operation itself, July to September. Moreover, a direct comparison of the period July to September 1999 with the equivalent period in 2000, indicates decreases in both crime and disorder according to every available method of measuring them. While the overall totals are small, and the changes cannot be attributed with full confidence to the interventions, the table provides some highly encouraging preliminary evidence of effectiveness.

Summary and conclusions

The TASC project constitutes a multi-agency partnership between South Wales Police, The Emergency Unit (University Hospital of Wales), the Cardiff Licensees' Forum, Safer Cardiff and Cardiff County Council. The project undertakes a variety of interventions including improving dialogue with and between managers of licensed premises, measures to improve the quality and behaviour of door staff, efforts to publicise the problem of alcohol-related violence, an offender programme, and policing operations targeted at hot spots.

Data have been collected from four main sources: police incident records; police recorded crimes; custody records; and information from the Emergency Unit. Data have so far been analysed from the period July 1999 to September 2000. Preliminary results and base line evaluation indicate that:

- The data source yielding the highest numbers of incidents of alcohol related assault and disorder was found to be police incident records. However, questionnaires filled in by victims attending the A &

E unit of the local hospital increased the number of known alcohol-related assaults by 18%, and if reported to the police could potentially add up to 32% to the total officially recorded offences of this kind in the city centre.

- It is too early to give a clear indication of the impact of the project on the levels of alcohol-related violence in the city centre. No overall trends are as yet evident. However, at the sites of major targeted, multi-pronged policing operations aimed at two large clubs, there were reductions during 2000 in the numbers of incidents of disorder and assault, and fewer resulted in moderate or severe injuries and visits to A & E. The reduction was especially marked during the period of the operations.

What next?

The TASC project will be funded until March 2002 and the evaluation is continuing. The data on which the above preliminary analysis was based provide an important baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the project. The precise nature of TASC project interventions will also be logged and financial data will continue to be collected and analysed. The final evaluation from the TASC project – to include a cost effectiveness evaluation - will be available in summer 2002.

Related RDS Publications

Deehan, A. (1999) *Alcohol and Crime: Taking Stock*. Policing and Reducing Crime Unit Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 3. London: Home Office.

PRCU would like to thank Dr Trevor Bennett, lecturer in Criminology at the University of Cambridge for acting as independent assessor for this report.

