



Extending the benefits of BCRPs to smaller towns, rural areas etc

SUMMARY

Local Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs), covering larger towns and city-centres, play an increasingly important role in tackling low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.

They are self-funding, relying on subscriptions paid by their Members – usually retailers and licensees. So they represent a major resource for crime-reduction, especially as publicly-funded initiatives are rare in times of financial austerity.

While remaining local and independent, run for and directed by their Members, they can share information with other BCRPs and police, and play an increasingly important part in local, county-wide, regional and even national strategies for addressing and reducing low-level crime.

The subscription revenue of BCRPs based in larger towns and city-centres is sufficient to fund part- or full-time administrators and technology-based support such as powerful online information-sharing and partnership management tools to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, and to ensure compliance with the law.

Meanwhile, large numbers of 'Watch Groups' – such as shopwatches and pubwatches – exist in smaller towns and rural areas, as well as in urban areas between retail centres. However, they struggle to fund even part-time administration and often cannot afford IT support because, with only a relatively small number of Members, they generate only small subscription revenue.

This White Paper shows how 'Umbrella BCRPs' can manage multiple Watch Groups, and provide them with part- or full-time Administrative support and access to the latest online information-sharing and partnership management systems, while ensuring that each group retains its operational independence .

In this way local communities of all sizes, not just those in our larger towns and city-centres, can benefit from the support of BCRPs.

**THE BENEFITS OF
BUSINESS CRIME
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIPS**

Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) reduce low-level crime and anti-social behaviour that impacts local businesses – mostly retailers and licensees. Because this reduces losses/increases business for the Members, BCRPs are financed by Members’ subscriptions. Reducing low-level crime and anti-social behaviour is a key part of neighbourhood policing so constabularies around the country are increasingly supportive of the work of BCRPs. And because reduction in low-level crime and ASB in specific locations generates social benefits within and around the areas covered by BCRPs, public safety agencies and local authorities are also keen to support BCRPs.

New technology, in the form of DISC – the online system for information-sharing and partnership administration – is now available which enables BCRPs to operate more efficiently and effectively, to enhance their services to Members, and to allow closer interworking with police.

Additionally, DISC-enabled local BCRPs can link with neighbouring DISC-enabled BCRPs for the purpose of sharing information - especially useful for identifying travelling offenders. This is not only of benefit to the Members of participating BCRPs - it also provides invaluable intelligence on low-level crime and anti-social behaviour for police use, and for early intervention by community safety agencies. This information-sharing can extend not only between neighbouring BCRPs but between all BCRPs in a police force area and, where relevant, more widely.

DISC is now well-established in larger towns and city-centre BCRPs - where a large number of Members together can afford to employ an Administrator - either part- or full-time - as well as fund the online system that is revolutionising the administration of crime reduction partnerships.

However, extending the benefits of BCRPs beyond the larger towns and city-centres in which they are already well established represents a challenge.

**THE CHALLENGE: SETTING
UP BCRPs OUTSIDE
LARGER TOWNS AND
CITY-CENTRE**

Because BCRPs are local – made up of local businesses, focused on local problems, managing local offenders – they can only be self-financing where there is a sufficient number of Members to cover administrative costs. Where there aren't sufficient Members - in smaller towns, rural areas or in the extensive areas between retail and night-time centres in suburban areas – Watch Groups – such as shopwatches and pubwatches - are administered by the Members themselves, depend on voluntary input, and have little or no access to the new online information sharing and partnership management systems such as DISC.

How can Watch Groups afford to employ a full- or part-time Administrators and implement online support systems such as DISC?

**THE SOLUTION:
'UMBRELLA
BCRPs'**

This White Paper describes how smaller Watch Groups can come together within 'Umbrella BCRPs', thus enabling each Group to benefit from the same level of administrative support and online technologies as BCRPs, while at the

same time retaining the local independence of each of the participating Watch Groups.

By grouping multiple Watch Groups together in this way the membership of the individual Groups, counted together, becomes sufficient to generate the subscription revenue required to pay for a part- or full-time Administrator and supporting online technology.

Within an Umbrella BCRP, individual Watch Groups can continue to apply their own Exclusion and Banning schemes, set their own Exclusion Periods and criteria, and focus on their own local priorities. However they can now all benefit from the support of a shared Administrator with access to powerful online systems to manage almost every aspect of the Watch Groups' affairs including Exclusion and Banning Schemes, management and distribution of Exclusion Lists and Galleries, management of Membership, and ensuring strict compliance with legal obligations such as the Data Protection Act 1998.

In a typical example, instead of having just one Excluded Gallery, perhaps with a separate 'Targeted' gallery, an Umbrella BCRP can maintain different Excluded Galleries for each of the participating Watch Groups, each of which may have different expiry periods and exclusion criteria. While Members of each participating Group can view their own Excluded Gallery, and use it to deny access to the individuals displayed on it, they can also view the Excluded Galleries of all the other participating Groups within the Umbrella. This enables easy identification of offenders who may move between the different Groups' areas and thus can be classified as 'travelling offenders' or 'Level Two' offenders.

The greater administrative support available to individual Watch Groups within an Umbrella BCRP allows each Watch Group to adopt more complex but more effective banning systems. An example is the so-called 'Two Card' banning system which has been shown to be especially successful in reducing low-level crime and ASB. These schemes require a relatively high level of Administrative support, and for this reason are not widely used in smaller Watch Groups. Within an Umbrella BCRP, however, Two Card banning systems become realistic options for participating Watch Groups.

BCRPs handle sensitive personal data and therefore must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as other legislation. Data must be processed carefully, and must be kept secure and made available only to Members. Small Watch Groups are not always as rigorous as they should be in these areas, and few can afford to effectively manage their internal processes to ensure compliance. By becoming part of an Umbrella BCRP, proper internal management to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act becomes practical, and with it, increases the confidence of public authorities such as the police in sharing sensitive personal information about offenders with them

Indeed, by joining with other Groups within an Umbrella BCRP, certification by a specialist independent authority such as the National Association of Business Crime Partnerships becomes practical and low-cost. Certification by such an authority is often required by police forces before they agree to share police information with any Watch Group or BCRP.

In addition to reducing the cost of certification for each participating Watch Group, other cost-savings are achievable. Watch Groups and BCRPs alike should be properly insured and the cost of insuring multiple Watch Groups within a single BCRP Umbrella effectively reduces the cost of insurance for each participating Group.

CASE STUDIES

There is nothing especially new about Umbrella BCRPs. A number of BCRPs already bring together multiple Watch Groups under one Administrator. What is new is the opportunity that online information-sharing and partnership management systems provide to establish more of these, operating over a relatively wide geographical area, and at low cost.

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf is a unitary local authority in South Wales and its Business Crime Reduction Partnership was set up to tackle the problems of retail-related crime throughout the whole area: today it supports Watch Groups in four towns: Aberdare, Merthyr, Pontypridd and Talbot Green.

Mike Jacklin, the BCRP's Crime Reduction Manager, is the 'glue' that holds the scheme together. "We're an umbrella organisation for all the individual town Groups and their Members. The heads of those groups form the board of the BCRP and my role is to run the exclusion schemes, support the Members in working with the local authority and the police, and make the whole scheme self-sufficient."



Mike Jacklin

The first Watch Group to come under its wing was in Aberdare, with impressive results: in the first two years of the scheme there was a 30% reduction in retail theft in the town centre, commercial burglary was reduced by 15.6%, and retailers reported stock-losses below targets and company averages. One national retailer even reported a reduction in shrinkage from 3.4% to 0.9% in the first year.

The success of the BCRP, which today boasts over 140 Members, across seven individual shop- and pubwatch schemes, has been based on the participation of the member-businesses themselves – but also on the support from the local authority in pulling the partnership together.

Getting swift, relevant and up-to-date information to all Members is key to tackling crime across the towns, and Mike acknowledges that the ever-expanding network of Members and towns has inevitably created extra workload. That's where DISC comes in.

"Where the scheme has grown and expanded into more and more towns, it has got harder for me. When I started I was able to meet all of the Members in Aberdare at least once a week. Now I will be lucky to see them once a month. DISC is so good because Members can now see everything that's going on

instantly. Before DISC they were lucky if they were informed of incidents, scams or new offenders within a week, let alone on the day it occurs.

"Now Members have access to up-to-date news of who's on the galleries, who's committing crime and what crimes they are committing. Members have up-to-date photos in their galleries at the touch of a button", says Mike. "Someone can take a photo and it can be uploaded straight away.

"Before, I was only getting incident reports from retailers once a month. I would go in and pick up a wad of paper-based incident reports. Now I get the reports delivered to me directly the incident happens.

"There are two things that a business crime reduction partnership needs in order to succeed: one is a radio network and the other is DISC.

"There are twenty-two councils in Wales and I would love it if every one of them had DISC. We could then work together, and with the information available chase business crime not just out of our towns but out of Wales. It would be fantastic!"

Wandsworth Behave or be Banned

Steve Miles, 14 years in 'The Met', works on Safer Neighbourhoods policing across the London Borough of Wandsworth. His responsibilities include community engagement, proactive problem-solving and undertaking the investigation of all low-level crime.



Steve Miles

When news of a new and successful crime reduction project – Behave Or Be Banned – reached him from the adjacent borough of Sutton, he investigated. "We look to each other for best practice, and the Sutton scheme seemed well-suited to us," says Steve.

Today he and his team use DISC to coordinate Wandsworth BOBB, which is currently used to support shopwatches and pubwatches in five separate areas throughout the Borough: Clapham Common, Balham, Tooting, Putney and Wandsworth itself.

Steve says that DISC has allowed him to make welcome changes to his own *Modus Operandi*: "Before we had DISC we would put together a photo album of the most common offenders and bring the albums to pubwatch meetings. Members would then have to sign for them, and then keep hold of them until the next meeting, where we would have prepared new up-to-date photos and hopefully take the old ones back.

"This was particularly cumbersome, but also a huge risk in terms of Data Protection as someone could lose the album. We wouldn't want that information getting into the public domain. Security is a big issue for me and it was a great relief to be able to get this information across using DISC. It's saved us an awful lot of time and paper."

Steve is keen to sign up security sTaf onto the system, and welcomes the communications tools that are an important part of DISC: "DISC allows [security sTaf] to know who to look out for, and to remain one step ahead. This is great as security teams or doormen can access the DISC App on their Smartphones, view the galleries and identify potential offenders."

"As neighbourhood officers we have to be much more efficient with our time and we need something that we can manage effectively without having to dedicate a huge time resource to it, so a facility like DISC really does help."

Although DISC is new technology, it is perfectly aligned with some important old values: "We need to make sure we are doing what the public want," says Steve, "which is to be out there, stopping people, arresting people and preventing crime rather than sitting in an office administering something."

South Somerset District

The origins of the Yeovil Crime Reduction Partnership go back more than 20 years, when a local Chamber of Commerce-led initiative was set up to reduce shoplifting within Yeovil town centre.

Today the partnership is a very different beast. While still called the Yeovil Crime Reduction Partnership, it is an 'Umbrella BCRP' covering not only Yeovil shopwatch but also the pubwatch, as well as the shopwatch and pubwatch in Sherborn, and shopwatches in Chard, Crewkern and Somerton.



Derek Yeomans

Says Derek Yeomans, General Manager of the partnership: "DISC has played an important part in making that transition beyond our original focus. However Yeovil is the hub of it all, and where our office is."

But while new groups have come under the Yeovil umbrella, each individual group retains its own identity. Says Derek: "They don't call themselves the 'Yeovil Crime Reduction Team': they use their own names; everyone is equal, and all groups are invited and encouraged to attend each other's meetings".

So what's in it for the individual businesses Members of the participating Watch Groups? "Well they get me for a start!" says Derek. "An identifiable individual who can respond to their needs and problems. They get access to our radio network and our data control and all that they need to operate. It's a 'cooperative' I suppose. If each group set up their own infrastructure themselves it would all prove far too costly".

The Yeovil team have used DISC since 2013 and Derek feels that access to the system by the Members is a major benefit to all. "Every one of the Groups has its own individual monthly meetings which I attend. I take the minutes and send them out to everyone, I will also send out all the individual banning notices. I generally manage and run the show. It means the Members do not have to worry about sorting it out themselves."

And DISC, says Derek, has proved invaluable in supporting this work. Its introduction has made a real difference to the speed and cost with which important messages and communications can be dispatched. Thanks to DISC, says Derek, he can provide a much more efficient service for his team and his Members.

"Previously I would only have been able to send minutes out from meetings to individual Groups. We were sending individual photocopies out, as well as colour photograph sheets, so it would have been prohibitive through cost and logistics to give everyone a copy.

"When I first saw DISC I thought that's great, this can link up all the Groups directly, and that is exactly what has happened. The benefit now is that at the click of a button every Member of every Group can see every set of minutes, every banning notice and every incident report throughout the whole region"

Over the years the number of Members joining the Yeovil Crime Reduction Partnership has steadily increased. Derek sees this increase in Member numbers, now standing at over 200, as a key measure of success: "Word is often spread through the police, who are users of DISC, and they love it".

DISC has helped in the more efficient and timely distribution of information to Members, but for Derek this benefit is two-fold: "On the one hand DISC undoubtedly saves us time and money; on the other hand it enables people like me to spend more time out on the streets rather than sitting in an office producing all sorts of paperwork.

"I would wholeheartedly recommend DISC to other partnerships" says Derek Yeomans. "For me it's all about three things: communication, communication and communication!"

Full case studies

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Business Crime Reduction Partnership: click [here](#)
- Wandsworth Behave or Be Banned: click [here](#)
- Yeovil Business Crime Partnership: click [here](#)

For more information about DISC

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