North Wales Police (UK)
Gwynedd Division.

Repeat Address Calls

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PROFILE OF THE DIVISION

The mountainous heartland of Wales, and of the County of Gwynedd in particular has long been recognised as being of special significance because of its spectacular scenery and cultural traditions. Its dramatic beauty, however, is not - and has not been for many generations - completely natural, but is rather a blend of the forces of nature and the hand of man, both of which continue to shape its development. It is an area steeped in great history, but nevertheless subject of national contemporary socio-economic pressures, and the effects of a vibrant tourist industry.

Gwynedd covers by far the largest geographical area (629,000 acres) of the six Unitary Authorities in North Wales, and it extends from the City of Bangor in the North to the Dovey Bridge near Machynlleth in the South, and from Aberdaron near the tip of the Lleyn Peninsula in the west to Abergwyngregyn in the East. (The Gwynedd Police Divisional boundary is coterminous with the limits of the Gwynedd Council Unitary Authority area).

Gwynedd's neighbouring Unitary Authorities (and Police Divisions) are Anglesey to the North, and Conwy and Denbighshire to the East, whilst its Southern and South Eastern borders mark the boundary between the North Wales and Dyfed-Powys Police areas. The island of Anglesey is linked to Gwynedd at Bangor by the Telford-built Menai Suspension Bridge and Stephenson's Britannia Rail Bridge - over which a new road deck was constructed in the 1970's to carry the diverted A5 road which runs from London to Holyhead.

In terms of static population size the County of Gwynedd - with a resident population of 113,037 - stands in third place to the Unitary Authorities of Flintshire and Wrexham, which have resident population figures of 141,387 and 126,787 respectively. Gwynedd, however, attracts large numbers of tourists throughout the year, but particularly during the summer months, when its population levels are massively increased by the influx of tens of thousands of visitors and holidaymakers to this spectacularly beautiful and largely unspoilt region of Wales. An indication of the effects of tourism on the County's population levels is given by recorded increases in the population of the Dwyfor area alone in the summer period from a static figure of 27,000 to between 120,000 to 130,000. In the Southern part of the County, huge numbers of holidaymakers (mainly from the Midlands area) visit Meirionnydd, many of whom are drawn to the caravan/camping sites along the Cambrian Coast stretching from Harlech to Aberdovey.

The Starcoast Holiday World, located between Pwllheli and Criccieth and recently refurbished at a cost of £21 million, is major tourist centre - attracting in the order of 8,000 residents a week at the height of the season, and an average of 2,000 visitors on a daily basis throughout the summer; this holiday complex is also a significant source of local employment, with about 1,000 people on its payroll throughout the summer season, and a lesser number during the winter.

Most of the County's area lies within the Snowdonia National Park, which was designated in 1951, in recognition of the importance and special character of the area - the highest status of landscape possible within England and Wales. In addition to its outstanding aesthetic appeal, the Snowdonia National Park offers splendid outdoor pursuits opportunities and challenges to satisfy a wide range of interests. Mountaineering, climbing, hill-walking, fishing, pony trekking and cycling are just some of the activities which are widely enjoyed within the National Park and additionally, impressive water-sports facilities are available at such centres within Gwynedd as Pwllheli, Abersoch, Porthmadog, Barmouth, Aberdovey, Bala Lake and the River Treweryn.

The resident population is widely distributed throughout Gwynedd's mainly rural area, but with the City of Bangor, and the towns of Caernarfon, Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Bala, Dolgellau, Barmouth and Tywyn as relatively small urban communities comprising the main centres of population. Bangor is the main shopping and social centre for North West Wales, and the City is currently benefiting from the development of a number of large out-of-town sites for national retail outlets.

The County supports a limited but growing element of light industry. Local income, however, still remains very dependent on its traditional links with agriculture, tourism and Local Authority employment. There are relatively high rates of public unemployment in many areas of the County - due very largely to the contraction in the traditional rural and mining economies in recent years and the slow pace of growth of replacement industries. The Welsh Development Agency has invested heavily in the area's main population centres, with the result that small to medium sized factories are to be found employing numbers of people from as little as five to as many as two hundred. The slate quarrying industry, centred on Bethesda (Penrhyn), Blaenau Ffestiniog and Corris - though a shadow of its former self in employment capacity terms - continues to provide work for relatively large numbers of people in those particular areas. Such rural organisations as the Forestry Commission, the Rivers Authority and the Snowdonia National Park Authority also provide an appreciable number of jobs throughout the communities of Gwynedd. Most of the agriculture which continues is on a very modest scale, and sheep farming understandably tends to dominate, since much of the terrain is rugged and mountainous pasture.

The County is predominantly Welsh speaking, and many Town and Community Councils within it conduct their business through the medium of the Welsh language. The delivery of any quality public service in tune with what the local people want, therefore, requires a sensitive appreciation by the relevant provider organisation of this important factor.

The continuing growth in the use and influence of the Welsh language, and the consequent increase in popularity of Welsh medium television and radio programmes, has resulted in Caemarfon Town developing into a recognised centre for the production of such electronic Welsh media programmes. The town of Caemarfon is also, of course, the administrative centre for the County of Gwynedd.

Some parts of the County have seen an influx of non-Welsh speaking people who have taken up local residence, particularly in and near to the City of Bangor, where a large student population at the University, and professional staff at both the Regional General Hospital and the University, represent a fairly cosmopolitan mix of people. To a lesser extent, other areas of the County have also seen an in-migration of people, particularly retired people who have previously visited and become attracted to the area.

During the winter months, the County has large numbers of unoccupied holiday homes and caravans used for holidays and weekend breaks, which all too frequently, when unattended, attract the unwanted attention of both local and travelling criminals.

The Division consists of seven smaller areas selected to correspond to natural communities and geographic areas of the Division, which are referred to as Policing Districts.
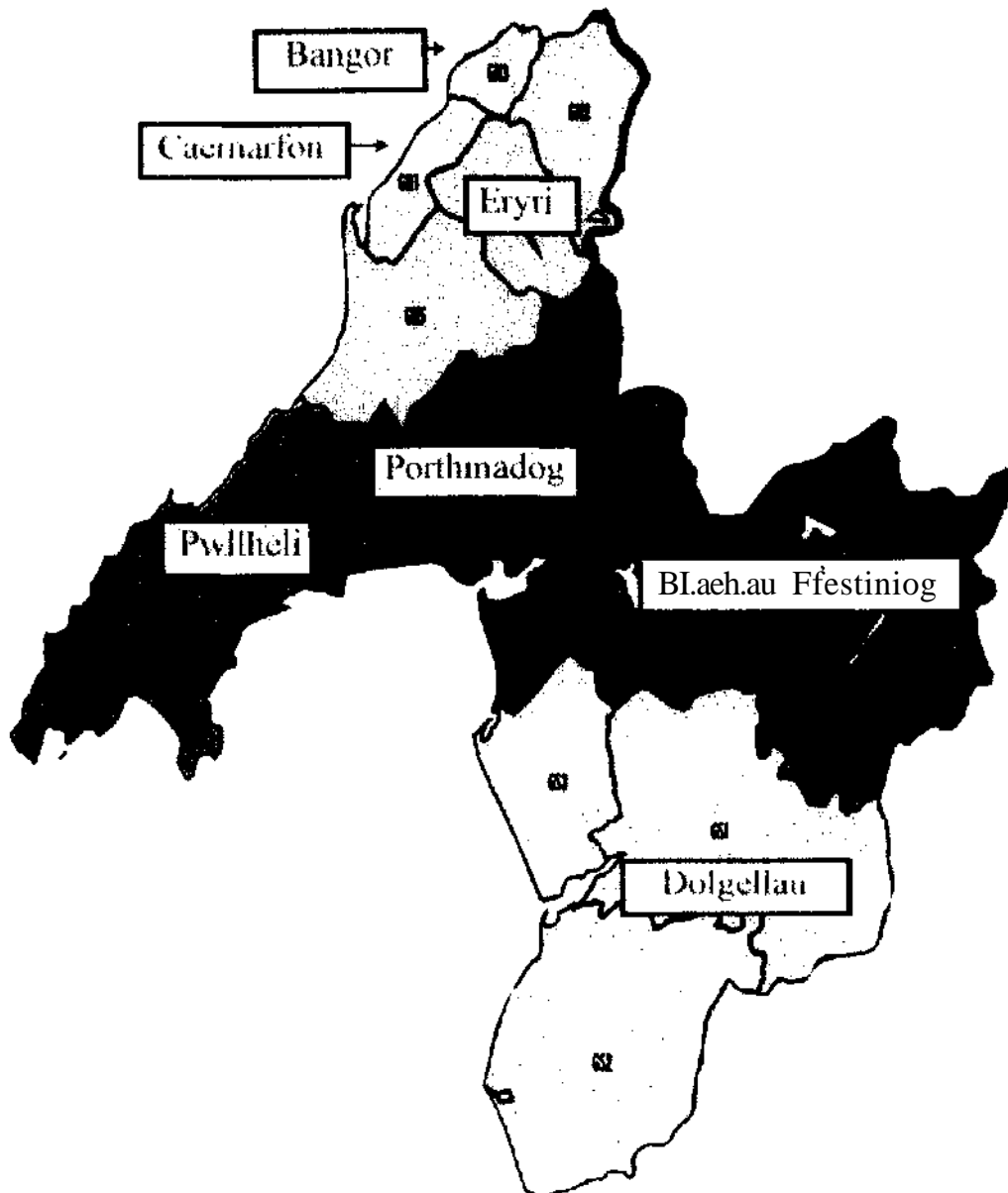
MISSION STATEMENT

The Gwynedd Division's Mission Statement is:

TO EXTEND A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF
POLICING SERVICES, AVAILABLE AT ALL
TIMES, WHILST MAKING THE BEST POSSIBLE
USE OF OUR RESOURCES, TO PROVIDE THE
HIGHEST QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY TO
THE PUBLIC OF THE GWYNEDD DIVISION.

The Force Statement of Purpose

We, the North Wales Police, accept responsibility for policing our localities impartially, courteously and efficiently, and in so doing we will consult with our communities and seek to reflect their needs.

Our law enforcement policy will be professional, firm and fair.

Our aim is to provide assistance, reassurance and a true quality policing service to the public of North Wales.

The National Statement of Common Purpose and Practice

The purpose of the Police Service is to uphold the law fairly and firmly; to prevent crime; to pursue and bring to justice those who break the law, to keep the Queen's peace; to protect, help and reassure the community; and to be seen to do all this with integrity, common sense and sound judgement.

We must be compassionate, courteous and patient, acting without fear or favour or prejudice to the rights of others. We need to be professionals calm and restrained in the face of violence and apply only that force which is necessary to accomplish our lawful duty.

We must strive to reduce the fears of the public and, so far as we can, to reflect their priorities in the action we take. We must respond to well-founded criticism with a wilhngness to change.

Abstract

Repeat Address Calls P.O.P Initiative

Scanning: A large number of the calls made to the Division's Area Control Room were found to originate from common addresses; Operational Information System (O.I.S.) statistics revealed appreciable resources were being expended on the calls with very few positive end results. Although patterns suggested other crime problems were evident at these addresses, very little * follow up' to individual responses was being made, and resources continued to attend in a merely reactive way.

Analysis: The problem has existed for many years, but new information technology has been able to highlight to a better extent the seriousness that was evident in such calls of a repetitive nature. Traditional police responses had been used with mixed, but invariably temporary, results.
Based upon data accessed from the Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit (D.I.M.S.U.) and through the creation of databases to analyze the information quicker, a response plan was formulated.

Response: The overall response was based on the District Inspector setting a goal (under the P.O.P. criteria for success) at the initial stage, and then formulating an action around the problem address; the action would be dependent on the category into which most of the calls to that address naturally fell, eg domestic, noisy parties, alcohol related etc. The targeting of specific addresses and better training of officers involved in responding to calls at these addresses to take charge of what they found then better enabled the officers to work towards a solution.
At the same time, a number of legal and social changes - made possible by a strong and vibrant police liaison with other local social-care agencies would be effected if it was appropriate to do so.

Assessment: Positive feedback and a complete and thorough assessment of each actioned problem package in turn within the D.I.M.S.U started to show clear improvements in certain areas very quickly. Reductions in calls for service to the addresses targeted were very evident and in many cases the statistics indicated a 100% success rate achieved within Districts in doing away with problems at many addresses.

Description

Repeat Address Calls P.O.P Initiative

A. Scanning:

1. What was the nature of the problem?

A large number of resource-demand calls emanating from the same addresses were being received within the districts of the Division.
Many calls originated from the addresses in question or from the public living nearby. An initial scan of 10 of the first 12 target addresses revealed approximately 264 service calls had been made to them during a 4 month period.

Calls from 10 of the first 12 P.O.P.Packages Scanned in Division
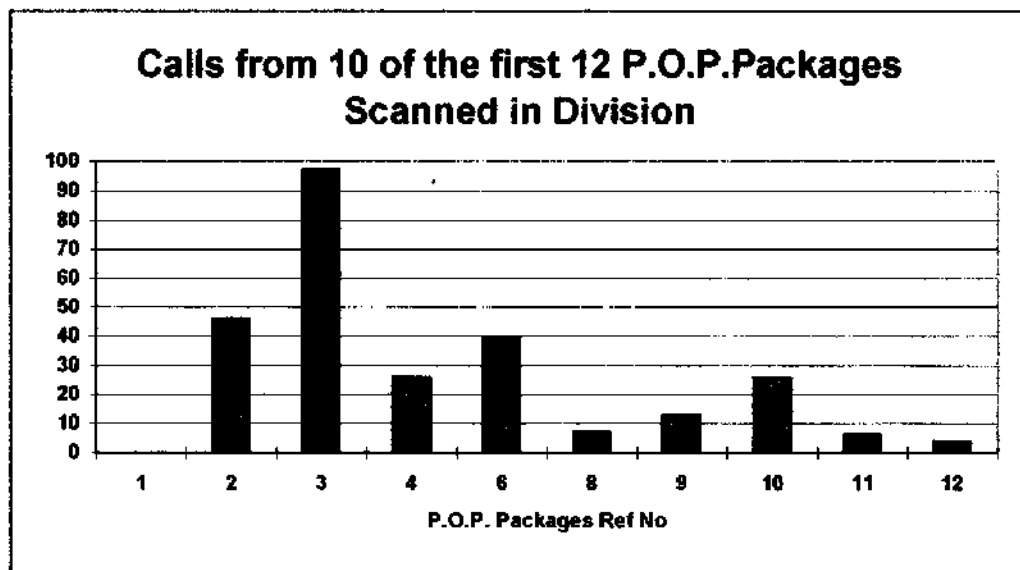
2. How was the problem identified?

Although the problems had been in existence for many years, recently acquired new information technology in the Gwynedd Division enabled mapping of calls from the general public to be effected much quicker than had previously been the case; patterns were clearly identified and these could then be acted upon in a more positive way.

Complaints from Beat Officers and police reports regarding the amount of time and resources expended on the same old problems provided valuable intelligence information; complaints from the public identified some premises as significant problems.

3. Who identified the problem?

The Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit (D.I.M.S.U.) personnel were specifically tasked with scanning problems throughout the Division.
It was then a matter of discretion and professional judgment by the Inspector in charge of the D.I.M.S.U. who had been appointed to the position with a specific brief to develop the concept of Problem Oriented Policing, to target the problems that were identified and to formulate Information or P.O.P. packages to combat the same.

4. Far more problems are identified than can be explored adequately. How and why was the problem selected among others?

This repeat calls/ demand problem had a much larger impact upon the police than many other tasking problems, in that it was continually stretching police resources.
Added to this were the 'Quality of Life[1] issues that arose for many living near the problem addresses and in some cases those people actually living at the addresses themselves. Action had to be taken.

Each problem was invariably unique in nature; each however had offender(s), victim(s) and place(s) and time(s) where they came together at the one home.

The problems were varied in nature - ranging from, domestic violence, anti - social behavior to drink or drugs; this allowed for a good cross section of initiatives to be tried and tested with many people within the P.O.P. concept.

5. What was the initial level of diagnosis/unit of analysis (e-g crime type, neighborhood, specific premise, specific offender group, etc)?

Clearly there were a significant number of peripheral factors/activities that accompanied the calls, as described under heading 4.

There were also some environmental issues that contributed to the problems; many of them required legal issues to be resolved/implemented in line with provisions contained in housing policies adopted by the local authorities and housing associations within the Gwynedd Division.
Once in place these became valuable weapons in the armoury to tackle the problems that existed.

6. Analysis:

I .What methods, data and information sources were used to analyze the problem.

The Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit (D.I.M.S.U.) were tasked with researching and analysing each problem.

The unit is staffed by a Sergeant, 3 Crime Input Operatives, a Local Intelligence Officer (L.I.O.), a Crime Prevention Officer (C.P.O.) and a Drugs Prevention Officer (D.P.O.).

As each address was identified on the * Operational Information System (O.I.S.) , as being a 'repeat address' further data was sought from the following:

• Crime and Incident Management System (C.R.I.M.E.S.)

• Integrated Crime Recording and Intelligence System (I.C.R.I.S.)

• Custody Computer

• Computerised Drug Information Databases.

• O.I.S. is a system which affords 'command and control' facilities.

The information continued to foe gathered not only during the analysis stage, but throughout the duration that each problem was being targeted; this meant that available information was current and still relevant.

It was important to identify who were the key players, so to speak, in relation to the problems.

• Who specifically is harmed?
  Within a family this has wider ranging implications than just the injured party; any direct harm to a wife, for example can dramatically affect her children.

• Who is inflicting the harm?
  Perhaps the offender(s) cannot be readily identified. The absence of answers points to the need for yet further analysis; if those questions cannot be answered in a specific way, it will be difficult to develop a response.

• What do we know about the incidents?
• What are the physical settings?
• What are the characteristics within the household?

All this information is required and considered very important if solutions are to be found.

2. History: How often and for how long has it been a problem?

Whilst the problem of repeat address calls has existed for many years, and will no doubt continue to be a cause for concern, the difference brought about by the P.O.P. methodology is that the root cause of each problem is now being tackled and in many cases resolved completely with multi - agency help.

3. Who was involved in the problem (offenders, victims, others) and
   what were their respective motivations, gains and losses?

The most easily identified offenders or victims were the house occupants
themselves. In many cases the problems that arose within households had
become quite normal features of the lives of the occupant(s).

Most incidents produce some type of reaction from the community or
other agencies affected by them. These reactions are important in
understanding the problem, because they help define the problem's
perceived seriousness and this may directly affect the problem itself.

The sort of questions which were asked regarding reactions were:

• What are the reactions and attitudes within the immediate District?
• What are the opinions of people normally outside the District, eg
  tourists.?
• How seriously is the problem regarded by the public aware of it?

These questions were not easily answered in many cases. We are all
familiar with the old adage, *'An Englishman's home is his castte* **The**
initial difficulty the police had was breaching the 'castle walls' to discover
what was occurring inside; once this was done, it was often then found
that family issues were clouded in secrecy; as is the case with most
families, nobody likes to admit problems exist within the home.

4. What harms resulted from the problem?

Foremost were the crimes of violence happening within the home, but
whereas physical abuse to a victim is easily normally identified, mental
abuse on the other hand is not always so evident.

The Police were expending already scarce resources in handling calls for
service in the areas. Valuable time was spent dealing with what appeared
to be the same recurring problems. Officers saw little or no end results in
terms of permanent resolutions.

Repeat calls were resulting in repeated verbal admonishments on most
occasions , which was a frustrating and demoralising experience for the
officers concerned. It hardly provided them with a good level of job
satisfaction.

5. How was the problem being addressed before the problem solving project? What were the results of those responses?

In past years, traditional , direct enforcement techniques were the order of the day, with no follow up measures and no means by which to evaluate success.

This resulted in different police officers visiting 'repeat addresses' dealing with the same old problems but no coordinated collation of information was taking place to identify underlying causes for repeat attendance at those addresses.

6. What did the analysis reveal about the causes and underlying conditions that precipitated the problem?

Clearly the traditional techniques alone, would not bring about the long term changes desired to remove root causes of the problem(s).
Reluctance by partners to a marriage to sustain complaints about assaults committed against them meant offenders arrested were not reaching court in the majority of cases. The fact that most partners were reluctant to pursue a prosecution was a serious aspect of repeat incidents involving personal violence.

7. What did the analysis reveal about the nature and extent of the problem?

The information provided by the Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit revealed an even greater number of calls than operational officers believed to relate to many addresses

8. What situational information was needed to better understand the problem (e.g. time of occurrence, location, other particulars of the environment, etc)

See foregoing questions and answer.

9. Was there open discussion with the community about the
   problem?

A series of meetings with representatives of various agencies identified as having some area of responsibility affecting the problem address or victims that could help impact positively on the problems their causes were held.

We provided statistical data which helped identify and define the problem(s) We provided an outline of our planned response and sought input into solutions and identified areas of responsibility by each agency which had a part to play.

C. Response:

1. What possible response alternatives were considered to
   deal with the problem?

There were no response alternatives to P.O.P. methods discussed. The concept was new within the Gwynedd Division and there was an enthusiasm to test it out. It was, therefore, felt that the key to all our P.O.P. response efforts was to remain flexible and to be prepared to change direction with each address when assessments of results were not favorable.

Tasks were clearly listed to carry out a chosen response. The Inspectors in charge of Districts were natural choices as managers (or coordinators) for the response. Time scales for accomplishing tasks were set initially at 1 month, with extension provisions if required.

All responses were collated on a database designed around the forms that made up the P.O.P. package. This enabled good working practices to be identified, and also had the effect of improving response methods each time a problem was addressed.

2. What responses did you use to address the problem?

A procedure was established within the Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit, whereby once a problem had been identified by the scanning processes, a complete analysis was carried out and data was collated. This invariably identified the underlying cause(s) of the problem(s), which had a bearing on the agencies called upon to assist in the solutions to those particular problems.

Listed below are some of the agencies that have assisted us to date; this list, although not comprehensive at this stage, is in the throes of growing as more problems of a differing nature are reported or identified.

• Local Authority Housing Department

• Tai Eryri Housing Department

• Social Services

• Age Concern

• M.A.N.W.E.B. (Electricity Supplier)

• Local Authority Crime Prevention Officer.

3. How did you develop a response as a result of your analysis?

Responses were tailored in line with the results of examination of the operational information data; this showed the type/incidence of calls being received and the type of problem(s) arising. These factors were then taken into account in selecting from several of the alternatives available to respond to that particular problem. The issues considered were:

- The likelihood that the response will reduce or otherwise affect the problem positively.

- The effect the response would have on the problem's most serious features.

- The response's ability to prevent repetition.

- The cost of the response (budget constraints).

- The availability of legal redress (policy) and the ease of implementing it.

4. What evaluation criteria were most important to the department before implementation of the response alternatives?

Legality, effectiveness and cost implications were deemed very important as evaluation criteria. Budget constraints had to be considered. Availability of resources within the Division was also a crucial aspect of evaluation criteria. Appropriate housing policies which provided an effective means to control nuisances or other criminal offences occurring in the home were also important evaluation criteria considerations.

5. What did you intend to accomplish with your response plan (i.e project goal and corresponding measurable objectives)?

The overall goal was to reduce the incidence of calls for police attendance to the target addresses, by resolving the problems that were occurring.

The objectives and solutions were set by the Inspectors responsible for the District in which the addresses were located. Amongst the objectives was the education of local officers in alternative long-term approaches to recurring problems and the creation of a better sense of responsibility for/ ownership of the problem.

There was also an aim to encourage inputs from officers regarding other agencies to involve and to consult with towards holistic and permanent solutions.

6. What resources were available to help solve the problem?

The resources were primarily those of the District in which the problem(s) were occurring but depending on the size of the problem(s) identified, other resources could be called upon from outside the relevant District but still from within the Gwynedd Division's resources.

Most problems were initially addressed by uniform officers - with support being available from the Criminal Investigation Department, Drug Squad and the Inter-Agency Unit if it was required.

7. What was done before you implemented your response plan?

Refer to 'Scanning' and 'Analysis' sections.

8. What difficulties were encountered during response implementation?

Difficulties were fairly minimal and in the main tended to concern the administration side rather than the problem actually encountered. The difficulties included a lack of a good understanding of the concept of Problem Oriented Policing by a few officers and consequently their failure to identify criteria for success as the goat at the outset; this however was quickly addressed with those individuals concerned; it was identified very early on when only one District was used as a testing area.

Once minor set backs had been addressed, the concept was opened up to all of Gwynedd North (consisting of Caernarvon, Bangor and Eryri Districts) Ranks from Inspector down to police Constable were thoroughly briefed on the concept of P.O.P.

Time lines of events and determination/availability of policy, was also an issue, as although the P.O.P. packages were being generated to Districts, Force Policy and Local Housing Policy issues were still being formulated.

9. Who was involved in the response to your problem?

This was determined by the nature of the problem(s) identified as originating from any given repeat address; most differed considerably.

Police Officers based in Gwynedd North had a presentation and talk on Problem Oriented Policing, and were invited to be imaginative in tackling the causes of problems some officers grasped the concept much quicker than others; this again was expected during the planning stage.

Each package was formulated in such a way that it mattered not what approach had been made, or was being made, to a given problem, as all methods were recorded for future evaluation.

At assessment stage, the method was specifically considered and if it was believed to have contributed to resolving a problem, the solution was recorded on the database to be considered again in any other similar reported problem.

D. Assessment:

1. What were the results? What degree of impact did the response plan have on this problem?

The results were immediate in some cases. Each address was assessed after each response had been carried out and in the majority of cases there was evidence that service calls had reduced quite dramatically.

Of the 74 P.O.P. Packages created and distributed to date, 46 have been filed. 40 of these achieved the goal set by the District Inspectors, which invariably was to reduce the number of calls in order to reduce the commitment of resources.

The majority of these packages actually resulted in 100% success - in that the problems that existed in the homes were completely resolved and all calls stopped.

The 6 that initially failed to achieve their goal originated early in the program. On reflection, it may be the case that the packages were a little too adventurous in trying to tackle many addresses or problems at the same time instead of breaking each down to a manageable size, which is what eventually occurred.

The remaining 28 packages are still pending and the problems continue to be dealt with.

2. What were your methods of evaluation and for how long was the effectiveness of the problem solving effort evaluated?

Methods of evaluation consisted of (i) statistics provided by the Divisional Information Unit regarding calls for service, (ii) crime analysis and (iii) personal observations of the beat officers assigned to the problems.

As each address was targeted and the problems improved upon or, in many cases, eliminated, further target addresses were added to the list.

The project's effectiveness continues to be evaluated and this will be the case within Districts of the Gwynedd Division for some time into the future.

3. Who was involved in the evaluation?

A complete and thorough evaluation was carried out into each problem address (on similar lines to that carried out at analysis stage,) within the Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit.

4. Were there problems in implementing the response plan?

See question 8 under Response, no major problems other than those indicated arose.

5. If there was no improvement in the problem, were other systemic efforts considered to handle the problem?

N/A

6. What response goals were accomplished?

Assessment indicates all goals set within the Districts were achieved in 40 of the 46 P.O.P. Packages to date.

7. How did you measure the results?

The results were measured by accessing the data, collated on the Operational Information System over a similar period to that carried out at the scanning and analysis stage.

One of the sample packages enclosed (Information Package Ref No 3/97) was first scanned - taking all data over a 7 month period, in relation to the addresses targeted, namely numbers 15. 26. 50. 77 and 88. This showed that 25 calls had been collectively made from these properties; this amounted to approximately 3.5% calls per month and the calls were still continuing.

The District Inspector set his goal at a 30% reduction in calls. After the package had been responded to and was subsequently submitted, it was found at the assessment stage that the addresses were still showing problems; although there had been a reduction, it only amounted to a 2% improvement and at that stage was classed as a failure

Further meetings took place between police and the local authority, who then took a more positive approach. As a result of some troublesome people having to move on, and in some cases to be evicted from their homes, matters were much improved.

A further assessment subsequently carried out showed that the District achieved more than its goal by reducing the number of calls by 66.6% The criteria for success had been met and the information gleaned was placed onto the database before the package was filed.

8. What data supported your conclusions.

As previously mentioned, a thorough assessment was carried out by all the officers within the Divisional Information Management and Strategy Unit. The data collated at the assessment stage was measured against that gathered when the analysis was carried out. Reductions in calls were very apparent and from there the actual figures showing percentage improvements could be measured against the criteria for success set at District level. (see Appendix D. Graph's)

9. How could you have made the response more effective?

More personnel might have helped. Another officer within the department was trained to assist with the Problem Oriented Policing concept, but due to manpower shortages moved department prior to it starting and his replacement was not available. This set back the presentation and training slightly. Further, we could have increased awareness and communication amongst police officers by utilising him as a field type officer - available to provide potential response tactics as well as in a liaison role with other agencies; he was in the process of cultivating relationships at the time of his move.

10. Was there concern about displacement?

Displacement was of no concern regarding the problems being addressed because of the very localised nature.

11. Will your response require continued monitoring or a continuing effort to maintain your results?

The databases are up and running effectively within the Divisional Information Unit. Problems will continue to be scanned both within that unit and via the information technology being more widely distributed across the Division.

District Inspectors will soon be in a position to Scan, Analyze, Respond and Assess all problems that arise in their particular areas of responsibility via their own local computer systems offering access to the various Force systems. As the long - term improvements and changes take hold within the division, the concept of Problem Oriented Policing can only grow in stature.