

THE TILLEY AWARD 2001

TITLE: PROJECT PINPOINT

Category: Organisational Support

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2001

PROJECT PINPOINT

Dedicated to Improving 999 Response Times

April 2001

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SUMMARY

TITLE: PROJECT PINPOINT

The campaign 'Project Pinpoint' is a County Wide Multi-Agency Initiative borne out of a sub-divisional campaign entitled 'Emergency Countdown' which aimed to make people aware of the importance of having a house or property name in a prominent location that can easily be seen, recognised and read day or night.

The sub-divisional campaign came into being when a Rural Beat Officer approached the Community Safety Officer with concerns over responding to Emergency Incidents and not being able to readily identify properties to ensure a prompt time of arrival.

The County Crime & Disorder Practitioners Group asked that a sub-group be formed to address the issue of failing to reach targets in relation to Business Plan Performance Indicators such as

- a) Responding promptly to calls
- b) Reducing crime and the fear of crime

To evidence (a) research produced a breakdown of calls received and whether the response times were met.

To evidence (b) which is difficult as it is mainly dealing with perceptions, involved surveying a group of people who had taken part in the 'Emergency Countdown' campaign and asking them if their fear of crime had been reduced now that their properties were clearly marked and visible. The survey also highlighted other community safety issues, such as providing a 'feel safe' confidence in remote areas and to the elderly and vulnerable and the promotion of the historically accepted need for the public to bear some of the responsibility personally in protecting themselves, their property and kin.

The Practitioners sub-group was formed with the intention of making the 'Emergency Countdown' campaign into a countywide response to the problem of identification of properties, especially in rural areas, as experienced by emergency and essential services. At this time it was decided to move away from the use of the word 'countdown' as it coincided with the many 'Countdown to the Millennium' issues and as a result 'Project Pinpoint' came into being.

Although the full impact of the campaign will take time to emerge, as it is developing all the time and ongoing, the facts are measured by target percentages in relation to response to call times, surveys of those attempting the targets and public feedback.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

This project is one example of how a multi-agency approach to support front line problem oriented policing can significantly impact on community safety related issues such as reducing fears and raising confidence, not just in relation to the public, but also instilling the same factors into the Officers who serve the community and who constantly strive to provide service to the highest standards. As can be shown throughout the development of this paper, by systematically progressing through different avenues of tackling the problem, some of those avenues being more difficult than others, a strategy with short, medium and long term goals emerges and therefore, overall, the project will continue ongoing as it expands but still achieve the objectives along the way.

The sub-group formed to devise and implement the strategy is made up of representatives from the different agencies who have a role to play in the community safety arena. Although from the Police perspective the initiative has been adopted at a County level and will therefore have an impact on all ranks and support staff alike, it was felt Police representation on the group should be as minimal as those representing the other key agencies on the group, therefore making ownership of the problem being addressed an equal joint one. The group consists of the Police Community Safety Officer, Architectural Liaison Officer, Fire Station Officer, Ambulance Manager, Local Authority Community Safety Officer and Planning Officer.

Once formed the group had to look at the problem to be addressed and then decide on the way forward.

The Problem

Delayed response times to calls from the public may not only cause a lack in public confidence or raise fear but also endangers lives. However, whilst the responsibility for meeting response time targets is owned by the relevant service providers, there is still the historical need for members of the public to take a degree of responsibility themselves.

The public need to be made aware that response times can be significantly enhanced if the identity of their properties is clearly visible from the road day or night.

Research into the Immediate Response Performance for CVR (Congleton & Vale Royal being the author's Divisional Base) and the Cheshire Police Force (See Appendix 1) was undertaken from the beginning of January 1997 to the end of January 2001.

Whilst there are a number of factors which contribute to the percentages shown i.e. changes to call management and deployment of operational officers, it can be seen that after remaining fairly steady over a twenty month period the Force declined to an all time low in February 2000. From February 2000 to date can be seen a gradual but

definite improvement in Immediate Response Performance. An ongoing commitment such as this project should see the performance indicators continue to rise favourably.

There are 10 Policing objectives for Cheshire in 2001/2002 and 'Project Pinpoint' must apply itself to at least three.

1. Policing Objective 1.

To respond promptly and deal effectively with calls from the public (a target of 90% has been set for immediate incidents attended within 15 minutes — January 2001 @ appendix 1 shows an 8% shortfall.

2. Policing Objective 8.

To encourage wider community involvement in support of Policing.

3. Policing Objective 10.

To provide greater public reassurance through improved communication, consultation and exchange of information.

Objectives

- a) To promote the need for property owners to clearly identify their property.
- b) To provide a solution by use of logical specification.
- c) To explore regulating the specifications and enforcement.
- d) To offer support material in the use of Digital Mapping.

Objective Breakdown

- A) An explanatory booklet (see Appendix 2 Sample Booklet) was already in existence from the 'Emergency Countdown' campaign and has been distributed from various outlets together with verbal promotion which always links the booklet to the 'Project Pinpoint' Initiative. The cost factor was the main reason for using the existing booklets and they contained the necessary information thus negating the need to reproduce.

In the main the outlets used were open days at various County Shows.

For display purposes a poster (see Appendix 3) advertising the Initiative was devised and initially funding for the posters was met by the Press Office. With a need to expand circulation the three Agencies (Police, Fire and Ambulance) who currently feature in the Initiative are sharing the costs whilst applying to local community Money Pots for support.

- B) In asking the public to co-operate in the Initiative we had to have a standard and effective specification to offer in advice.

An ideal solution was the regulations, which govern the display of Registration Marks on Motor Vehicles, and eyesight requirements for passing a driving test. The logic being that any person responding to call would have had to pass the test to be competent enough to drive there in the first place!

Therefore, the standard was set at number/letters being reflective 89mm (3 ½") high, width 64mm (2 ½"), with a stroke width 16mm (5/8") and should be positioned no further than 205m (67 ft) in distance from the road.

- C) With the assistance of the local Planning Officer and the Architectural Liaison Officer we explored and continue to strive for existing legislation to be amended/progressed with the standard as set at (B) becoming a part of the mandatory specifications already adhered to.

It is a fact that in America there is legislation, which dictates how a property should be properly identified and this area is, Policed to ensure this section of the law is upheld.

However, here in Great Britain can be found Section 65 of the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847.

"Numbers of houses to be renewed by occupiers. The occupiers of houses and other buildings in the streets shall mark their houses with such numbers as the commissioners approve of and shall renew such numbers as often as they become obliterated or defaced; and every such occupier who fails, within one week after notice for that purpose from the commissioners, to mark his house with a number approved of by the commissioners, or to renew such number when obliterated, shall be liable to a penalty, and the commissioners shall cause such numbers to be marked or to be renewed, as the case may require, and the expense thereof shall be repaid to them by such occupier, and shall be recoverable as damages."

Whilst this has not been repealed it would possibly be deemed somewhat Draconian, would be mammoth to Police and costly to enforce.

It seems a very difficult task to look at and deal with the problem retrospectively and appears unrealistic and impractical to pursue down this avenue of enforcement.

Section 64 of the Town Improvements Act 1847, which has also not been repealed, does however offer an opportunity to address the problem when developers apply for planning permission. There is already in existence specifications which have to be complied with, with regards to street names and it is hopeful that similar provisions could be made for house numbers through Local Authority Acts as advised by the Department of Transport Road Circulars.

The Department of Transport Circular Roads 3/93 states "Unlike street name plates there is no legal requirement for the numbers of premises when displayed to be conspicuous except where authorities have taken special powers in local Acts".

It goes on to say, however, that every effort should be taken to persuade owners and tenants to ensure that properties are clearly numbered, preferably with a minimum size of numerals 62.5mm and their numbers should be displayed so as to be in a clearly readable position facing the road. Mounting may be on gates, gate posts, doors or walls as appropriate, but ensuring that there is a good colour contrast between the numerals and the background to which they are fixed.

The circular also states "All authorities are reminded of the continuing need to maintain a good standard of street name plates and property numbering schemes and to improve existing standards where necessary. Both are essential for the efficient functioning of the Postal and Emergency Services as well as for the convenience and safety of the general public. It should be remembered that street names need to be legible by night as by day.*"

* We hope to argue the case for the house numbers needing to be legible by night as by day too.

Section 64 of The Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 gives Local Authorities power "*to cause the houses and buildings in all or any of the streets to be marked with numbers as they think fit*".

---OOO---

SECURE BY DESIGN (New Home Security Scheme) is a Police initiative which was launched in 1989 and has the full backing of the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit.

The objective of 'Secure by Design' is to encourage the building industry to adopt recommended crime prevention guidelines in both house and estate design and thus gain approval.

In Section 1 of the SBD New Homes Application 'The Development', paragraph 5.1 stipulates

"Clear naming and numbering of properties is essential to assist both residents and the attendance of Emergency Services. Consideration should be given to the provision of vandal resistant location maps at convenient points".

In co-operation with the Local Authority Planning *Officers* and those Architectural Liaison Officers who review and update the Secure by Design concept, it is hoped to seek approval of our standard outlined in objective (B) and to have that standard applied to both the obligations under the Town

Improvements Act 1847 Section 64 and as a condition of the 'Secure by Design' criteria.

- (D) Support material in the use of digital mapping is a '999' card devised by the group (see Appendix 4) which contains a blank box to enable the public to append concise directions to their property and a map reference.

The intention is for the person to keep the card, once filled in, by their telephone so as to be able to provide explicit directions under stressful conditions.

The map reference procedure differs with the different mapping systems but use of the six figure Ordnance Survey reference as a minimum standard can provide a starting point for the Systems Operator together with the directional information read to them by the card holder.

The Launch

The launch of the project took place in June 2000 at the Cheshire Show, an annual prestigious event which actually not only attracts people from around the county but from up and down the country and although selective in encouraging Cheshire people to utilise the '999' cards, others were appraised of the concept to take as a message home with them.

Media interest was high with press and radio interviews being given throughout the two day period.

Public interest throughout the course of the event was, at times, overwhelming as it appeared to be fact, those who had thought themselves vulnerable because of lack of house identity were a very rare item. There is no written feedback of public response during the event only the verbal comments made to the Officers promoting the project (see later in 'De Brief of Launch').

All three emergency services were represented and an electronic mapping system made available by the Fire Brigade. Also available, as well as the promotional posters, were the actual 999 cards and the explanatory booklets. Assistance was also sought and given from the show organisers who put regular bulletins out into the showground advising people of the problem and where to present themselves for a possible solution.

De Brief of Launch

When arriving at the showground it was found that although the Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service were sited together, the Police Force displays had been located on the opposite side of the very large show area. Not to be daunted this was very quickly rectified with Police 'Project Pinpoint' promoters breaking away from their colleagues to work with the other two emergency services in their location.

NB It was intended at the 2001 event, by the show organisers, to locate the three emergency services in one encampment. This would have been an area of operational

and promotional officers. However, the outbreak of Foot and Mouth has since caused the show to be cancelled.

Feedback from the media interviews came very much after the event with enquiries from organisations such as Carers for the Elderly and Home Watch Co-ordinators, who always seek further information on any concept which will reduce crime or the fear of crime. Knowing that if needed, the Police will be able to find them raises public confidence (as it does should they require the other emergency or essential services).

Feedback at the event as already briefly mentioned was only verbal and it would even be difficult to use the amount of '999' cards distributed, as an indicator of the success as many people asked for the cards to give to family and friends.

The electronic mapping system attracted a lot of interest and encouraging the children of the families to help in locating their homes proved successful as not only were we able to sow the seeds of the concept to the householders of tomorrow but it also gave the promoters the opportunity to raise awareness in their parents as well. (Many Dads had to have a go too, just to help their children you understand!).

It has been mentioned that public interest was, at times, overwhelming, this was at times when the mapping system was surrounded and a queue formed. However, the provision of the explanatory booklet played its part if time was limited, to enable the '999' cards to be first priority and the booklet of explanation to be read at the recipient's leisure.

The Continued Promotion

Throughout the ensuing summer season, various annual events were attended by the sub-group in an effort to 'sell' the concept to the community before embarking on a saturation leg of the campaign (see later in Present Priorities).

One of the events attended was arguably, although certainly new to the county, as similar in stature to that of the Cheshire Show, namely The Royal Horticultural Show.

This event enabled a new slant to be cast on 'Project Pinpoint' in the guise of the already established Police County Campaign 'Security starts at the Garden Gate'.

Briefly 'Security starts at the Garden Gate' works around Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and the Designing Out Crime Principals by designing gardens of dwellings in such a way that strategic planting of certain shrubs can become a natural defence barrier to would be intruders. There are other aspects but not for the purposes of this paper.

The 'Project Pinpoint' poster (refer to Appendix 3) shows a house name plaque virtually concealed by leaves and this enabled the two campaigns to link as advice/awareness was promoted in using shrubbery to protect but also for the gardener to think of the consequences throughout the seasons should they allow shrubbery to obliterate their house identity and thus make themselves vulnerable

As the summer drew to a close and events ceased, there still seemed a long way to go in raising public awareness.

Once again the media were asked for their help in putting a winter outlook on 'The Problem' similar to that experienced by the Emergency and Essential Services at night.

The days were shorter, dull and misty, with the elements having an impact on vision and the public were urged to look at their house numbers to ensure adequate identification in the circumstances.

This message was also passed at Community Meetings such as Homewatch, Residents Associations, Community Trusts and similar forums.

Present Priorities

1. The sub-group is now looking at in-house awareness so that each Officer has knowledge of and support from the campaign.

Each agency has differing avenues to explore to achieve this and the Police avenues are now detailed.

- a) Each Division requires at least one Co-ordinator, maybe two, to actively promote the project within their sectors of responsibility. It has been decided through the County Police Community Safety Group that the nominated Co-ordinators will be the Divisional Community Safety/Crime Prevention Officers.

They will not only be responsible for 'selling' the concept to the public in their sectors but also for overseeing distribution of explanatory literature and the '999' cards.

Experience from the 'Emergency Countdown' pilot showed that an impactful one stop package was achieved in asking the Special Constabulary to carry out a high profile delivery on local housing estates. Their presence in uniform generated a lot of interest as they called door to door and enabled a line of communication to be opened to further press the point.

Hopefully the Co-ordinators will be able to again utilise the Special Constabulary and also request that regular Officers will endeavour to communicate the message whenever the opportunity arises during the normal course of their patrol.

All Officers will also have the support of the campaign to enable them to highlight to the householder any problem property they encounter on an incident at, during or around the time they respond, in a non-confrontational but effective and professional way.

- b) The co-operation of Divisional Management Teams and Supervisors will be required and this will either be sought via the Police Community Safety Group and/or the County Community Safety Practitioners Group who will request a commitment to the project.

As can be seen from the Immediate Response Performance Chart (Appendix 1) the County as a whole can improve on meeting response times. From verbal feedback it has to be acknowledged that Officers responding to incidents encounter problems with house identities both in rural locations **and** in built-up areas where some housing estates no longer benefit from the 2,4, 6, 8 -1, 3, 5, 7 numbering schemes.

When canvassing officers in the **South** Cheshire area of the County it became apparent that yes houses isolated and in rural areas were difficult to 'Pinpoint'. However, similar difficulties were encountered when responding to incidents in town centres (Congleton), village 'A' roads (Prestbury) and large housing estates (Crewe). The towns mentioned above are just examples as highlighted during the general canvassing and will no doubt prove to be the tip of the iceberg.

Consequently, the co-operation of Divisional Management teams would be imperative and instrumental in tasking research at Divisional level to reveal the true extent of the problem, whether the Division be predominantly rural, urban, sub-urban or a mixture.

Supervisors would be required to ensure that the concept is ever in the minds of Operational Officers and generate motivational, professional and innovative approaches at every opportunity. However, experience shows the frustration and concerns of the Officers themselves in being unable to locate a property because it has no or poor identification, provides the needed rationale for self motivation etc. in this respect.

- c) An article in the Police Cordon magazine will ensure that awareness is raised not only in those Officers who are involved in front line policing, but in support staff and retired Police Officers.

It is hoped that all readers of the magazine will take on board the concept and look at the identity of their own homes and also pass on the message to family and friends.

Retired Police Officers especially should be in a position to empathise. This is not a new problem but an old chestnut which has apparently been much talked about but never been grasped with a view to doing something positive and proactive about it.

- d) Computers are now a big part of any establishment's way of life, not least the Police Force and this is another medium that can be used to disseminate information, not only about the campaign but to make everyone aware of the support it can offer and of any progress being made from the enforcement angle.

This can be cascaded through e-mails, Divisional Bulletins, Force Weekly Orders or even by creating a Database for Officers to visit to ascertain where the campaign is currently standing.

The creation of the Database would also facilitate opportunities for the managers of it to share good and bad practice based on feedback received from those policing the community. This could prove to be an ideal measure when the campaign has to be reviewed and evaluated.

The Cheshire Police website already makes mention of the 'Emergency Countdown' initiative and requires updating.

2. Multi-Agency Approach

The campaign still remains very much a showcase for justifying to the public commitment to the ethos of agencies working together. Whether those agencies are mandatory (Emergency Services, Local Authorities etc) or voluntary (Special Constabulary, Rotary, Crime Prevention Panels, Home Watch etc) since the advent of the Crime and Disorder Act and the forming of Community Safety Partnerships more than ever we remain answerable and responsible for reducing fear and enhancing quality of life issues.

The sub-group are intent on continuing to work together although, as previously mentioned, the unforeseen and unthought of outbreak of Foot and Mouth has seriously curtailed the willingness to promote the campaign as a partnership approach by going out into the community with a series of road shows.

We have created contingency plans which will mean requesting ongoing media coverage to keep the importance of public response to the campaign firmly in the minds of the people whether they live in a rural, sub-urban or urban community.

Venues in unrestricted areas for the road shows are being actively sought.

3. The Promotional Poster

To ensure promotional material was available for the launch, the group gratefully accepted the Police Press Officer's offer to create a poster (refer to Appendix 3) at the eleventh hour and with someone always being available to explain the message it intended to convey, was an asset to the campaign and its springboard at the Cheshire Show and ensuing events.

However, mindful of the fact that we are to ask for promotional space in Libraries, Civic Centres, Leisure Centres and any other public buildings or establishments to which the public have access, without someone present to explain, the decision was made to re-design it.

Although it contained nearly all the ingredients, they needed re-arranging so that the message was apparent without the need for someone to be present to explain.

The enhanced poster (see Appendix 5) as can be seen, now shows:-

- a) 'Project Pinpoint' 'Dedicated to Improving 999 Response Times' in larger print which jumps out at the reader rather than in small print somewhere in the middle.
- b) Also, the County Fire Brigade agreed to drop a logo, as in the old poster it appeared we had acquired a 4th emergency service!
- c) The use of an unobstructed number plaque creates a contrast with the plaque which is nearly concealed, again portraying a clearer indication of the message.

The bullet points remain the same. As intended, they are short, snappy one liners which will be absorbed when read.

4. Notifications of Newly Allocated Postal Addresses

The Community Safety Partnerships now have information exchange protocols and/or Memorandums of Understanding in place. Also communications between the different partners are improving all the time.

As a result we have linked into the Councils Department which deals with newly allocated postal addresses and have arranged that a copy of the notification, which the emergency services receive as a matter of course, be sent to the Fire Officer on the sub-group who will make written contact with the occupiers. This is, at the moment, a localised arrangement.

5. Funding

Our immediate funding requirements are for adequate posters and '999' cards to saturate the whole County with the cards and to provide each service with enough posters to promote the campaign.

We are looking for 'Money Pots' externally to assist, even if it should require some form of matched funding. However, should this not be forthcoming then the individual services will look to their own budgets independent of each other.

CONCLUSION

The Future

This is an ongoing campaign which will endeavour to not only change legislation but also turn around a culture which appears to believe that the problem lies with the

Emergency and Essential Services. Some ownership has to be **taken** by placing some onus on the community to assist us in assisting them.

The ultimate Aims:

- Reduce Delayed Response Time.
- Reduce Crime/Fear of Crime.
- Enhance Quality of Lives.
- Instill Public Confidence.

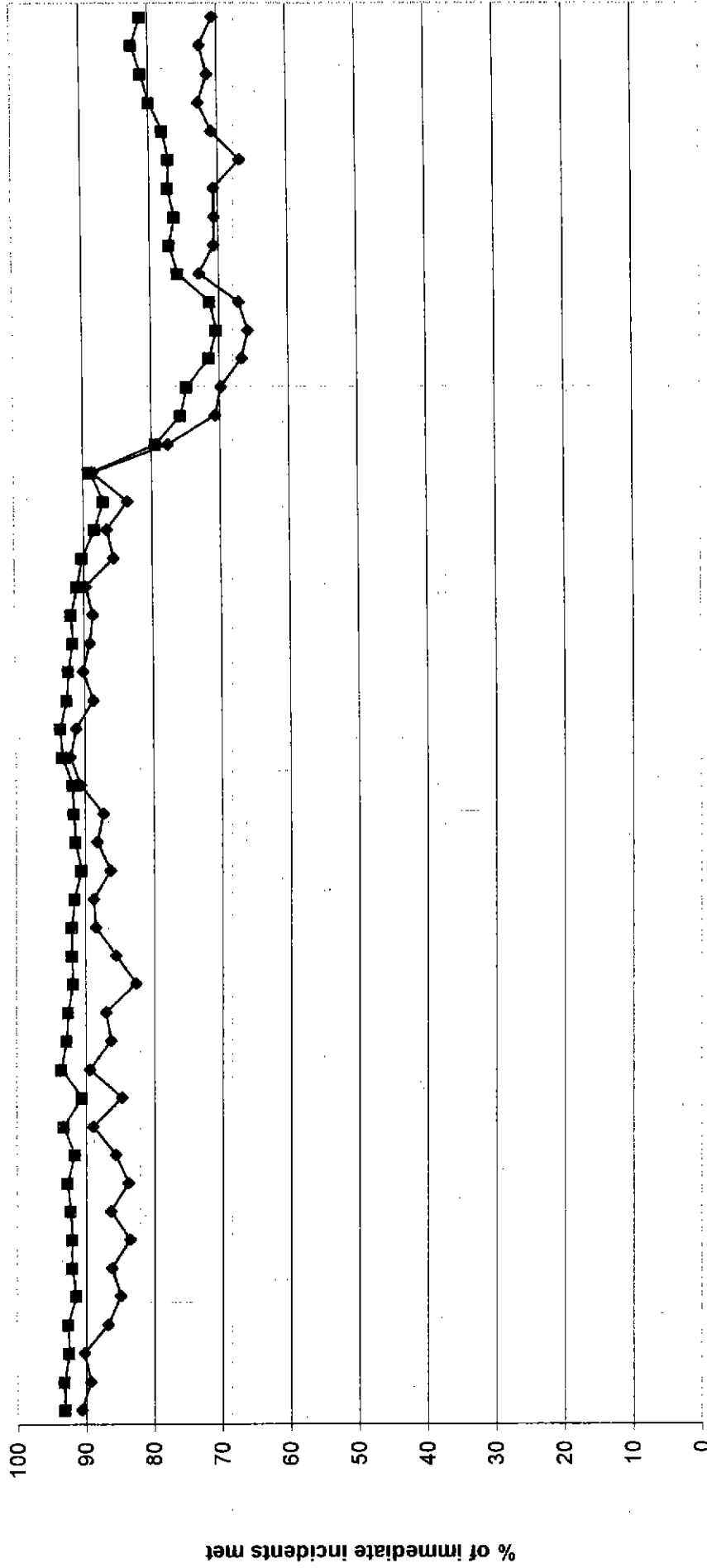
- a) Together with Local and Unitarian authorities and ACPO we will continue to progress enforcement and standardisation.
- b) For reviews and evaluations we will need to see funding for public surveys, obtaining data and analysis etc.
- c) Seek to provide a service to the elderly and vulnerable whereby a pool of trades people would be able to supply, erect and maintain standardised identity plaques.
- d) Explore the possibility of working together with the essential services in promoting the concept and continually repeating the message.
- e) The `Emergency Countdown' project is already noted in the Home Office Crime Reduction Digest and it is hoped to submit the `Project Pinpoint' campaign for publication in that or like supplements to enable cross border and countrywide interaction in what must be a national problem.

"Project Pinpoint" - Dedicated to Improving 999 Response Times.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1		Immediate Response Performance Chart
Appendix 2	-	Sample Booklet
Appendix 3	-	Sample Poster (1)
Appendix 4	-	Sample '999' Card
Appendix 5	-	Sample Poster (2)

Immediate Response Performance CVR and Force



	Jan-97	Mar-97	May-97	Jul-97	Sep-97	Nov-97	Jan-98	Feb-98	Apr-98	Jun-98	Aug-98	Oct-98	Dec-98	Feb-99	Apr-99	Jun-99	Aug-99	Oct-99	Dec-99	Feb-00	Mar-00	May-00	Jul-00	Sep-00	Nov-00	Jan-01	
—◆— CVR	91	90	85	84	84	89	89	86	83	88	86	87	92	89	89	90	87	89	71	67	66	73	71	67	73	70	72
—■— Force	93	92	91	92	93	93	94	93	92	92	91	92	93	93	92	91	88	89	76	71	70	76	76	77	80	82	