



THINK TWICE



Campaign 'Get Home Safe'

The Tilley Award 2003

*Community Safety Partnership Approach
to Reduce Alcohol Related Violence*



Project Title: 'Get Home Safe'

Category: Partnership

Force: Police Service of Northern Ireland

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SUMMARY

The Get Home Safe campaign was developed as a result of rising levels of alcohol related violence in South Belfast, Northern Ireland. Alcohol related crime was increasing by 40% over the previous year and accounted for almost 20% of the total crime in the area. At the same time, there was an upsurge in the number of licensed premises in the South Belfast area from 274 premises in January 2001 to 311 premises a year later. This in turn led to a rise in the number of people socialising in the same area – but whilst there had been an increase in venues, this was not matched by improved or additional transport provision.

By developing a partnership approach to tackling the problem, combined with strategic policing and a focused marketing and public information campaign, the Get Home Safe initiative prioritised action, targeting those most vulnerable to alcohol related crime and the fear of such crime.

A core group of partners comprising key organizations from the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors worked with South Belfast DCU to tackle the growing problem of alcohol related violence.

To coincide with the policing element of the campaign and the partner initiatives, a highly targeted advertising, youth marketing and media relations campaign was undertaken, aimed at 18 – 24 year olds, the group identified by Home Office research to be most at risk of alcohol related violence.

Independent evaluation prior to and following phases 1 and 2 of the campaign showed that the overall assault rate had reduced by 19.2%, serious assaults by 33% with a 20% reduction in the number of people with serious injuries seeking victim support. The marketing campaign created a high level of awareness amongst the target age group with 87% recall and 40% claiming that the campaign had positively changed their behaviour.

Home Office research estimates the cost of a serious assault to be £130,000 in terms of the cost to policing, hospital, courts and compensation. On this basis a potential savings of £10,000,000 has been achieved.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

Assessing the Local Situation

In 2001, assaults and anti-social behaviour amounted to 18% of South Belfast District crime, of which it was estimated that 80% was alcohol related. At the same time, South Belfast was experiencing an alarming 40% increase in the amount of assaults, compared to the previous year. This trend was accompanied by an expansion in the number of licensed premises in the area. In January 2001 South Belfast had 274 licensed premises and this figure had increased by 13.5% to 311 premises twelve months later. Crime pattern analysis was used to define the areas of greatest concern. These areas were all confined to a single Ward within Belfast city centre. Of the ten Wards in South Belfast this Ward experienced the highest levels of deprivation and ranks 14 out of the 566 wards in Northern Ireland on the scale of multiple deprivation.

The latest available statistics from the Home Office indicate that assaults cost the Health Service an estimated £34million per annum. Criminal Injury Compensation claims in Northern Ireland amounted to £47million last year. From April to December 2001 1917 assaults were recorded in South Belfast.

Local Strategy

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) polices its core priorities as dictated by the Annual Policing Plan, but there was no specific strategy for targeting and reducing alcohol related violence. The 'Get Home Safe' campaign was therefore specifically devised to address the issues of alcohol related violence, anti-social behaviour and their root causes.

The campaign was run over 2 pilot phases (traditionally periods of increased violence within the District) :

- Phase 1: 4th April to 30th June 2002
- Phase 2: 1st October to 31st December 2002 (Review phase)

The initial phase was used to develop partnerships, policing tactics and patrol strategies. This was essential to the success of phase 2. A tactical Marketing Programme was a central feature during the second phase of the campaign to consolidate actual policing and partnership deliverables. A detailed business plan was made to Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) to fund the marketing campaign and £198,750 was authorised in August 2002 by the Department of Social Development.



PROJECT AIMS

The Get Home Safe campaign was developed to have a direct impact on alcohol related violence and social need.

The project was designed:

- (A) To reduce the recorded assault crime rate in South Belfast.
- (B) To reduce residents perceptions in terms of the fear of crime
- (C) To increase residents perceptions in terms of confidence in the general safety of their area.
- (D) To improve both residents and visitors feeling of safety within the City Center.

The PSNI campaign prioritised action, targeting those most vulnerable to alcohol related crime and the fear of such crime.

Partnership Development

The overall purpose of the Get Home Safe campaign is to make Belfast City Centre a safe and inviting environment for everyone and in doing so to support the City's imaginative regeneration and image building initiatives at all levels. Led by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, it focused on a major behavioural and corporate responsibility issue - alcohol misuse / related violence among young people. Properly positioned and executed it could become a template initiative for key Northern Ireland hot spots acting as a deterrent and a strong example of Community Policing partnerships in action.

The Get Home Safe campaign engaged in community partnerships with:

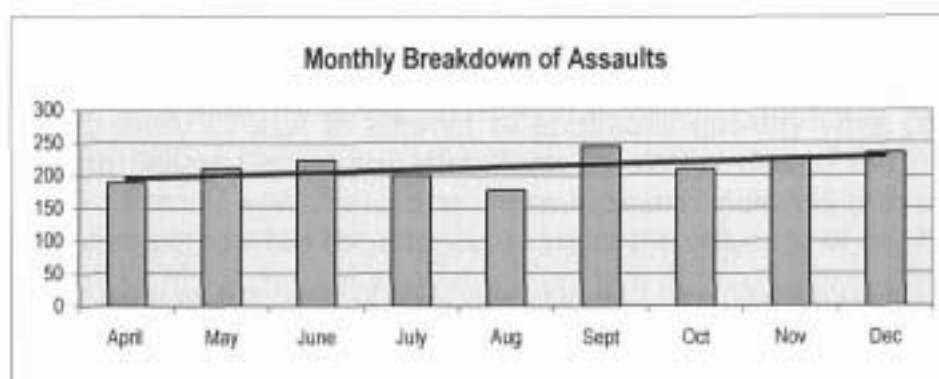
- (A) STATUTORY; Belfast Regeneration Office, South Belfast Partnership Board, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Office, Belfast City Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital, Queen's University, University of Ulster, South and East Belfast Substance Abuse Network, Belfast Magistrates, Northern Ireland Tourist Board.
- (B) PRIVATE SECTOR; Belfast City Centre Management Company, Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade, Belfast Vintners Association, Translink.
- (C) COMMUNITY SECTOR; , Stranmillis Traders Association, Stranmillis Residents Association, The Village Residents Forum, Donegall Pass Residents Forum.
- (D) VOLUNTARY; Victim Support.

The active delivery of key community safety initiatives was the responsibility of a core number of partners.

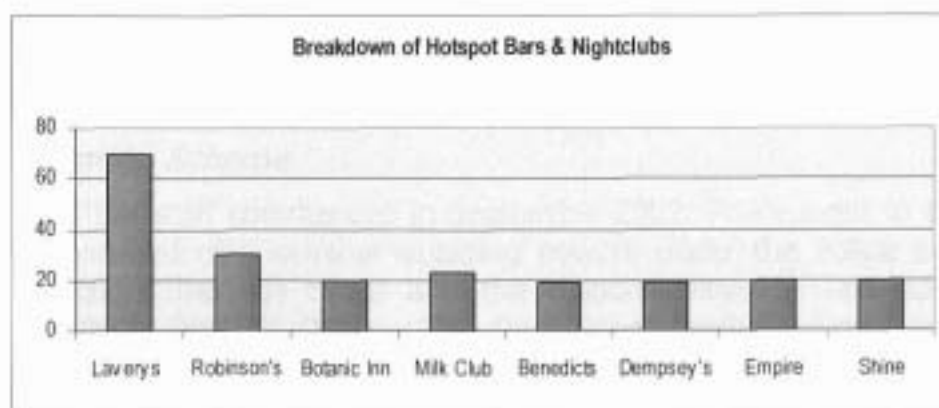
PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUES

A number of analytical techniques have been employed throughout the project, from the early planning stages through to the final review and evaluation. The first was to produce a Problem Profile (An analytical product recognised under the National Intelligence Model) which had the objectives of examining the current problem of alcohol related assaults within South Belfast, identify hotspot areas & peak problem times, establish any possible causes of the problem & to put forward problem solving solutions. The basis of this Profile was Crime Pattern Analysis (CPA). All resource deployment through the project was based on hotspots & trends identified through CPA.

The graph below provides a breakdown of the month-by-month trend for assaults across South Belfast District during 2001. It indicates that assaults were on an upward trend (shown by the black line), reaching a peak in September. It is also of note that there was a significant dip in the number of incidents during the summer months. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that students had returned home for the summer and thus there were fewer numbers of people socialising in the University area.



The main hotspots for these incidents of assaults have been bars and nightclubs across the District, with at least 25% of recorded assaults directly attributable to these locations.



The priority problem locations are clearly shown in the above graph.



In terms of more general areas of patrolling, the priorities for resource deployment were dictated by the results of CPA. Five key areas were identified within the city centre.

Analysis of Contributory Factors

Alcohol would appear to be the central factor in the problem of assaults/disorder. Obviously there are incidents where this is not the case, but the volume of licensed premises within the District mean that these incidents are the exception. This premise is based on a number of factors:

- The main hotspots are bars/nightclubs and the areas immediately surrounding them.
- The majority of incidents are taking place around closing time when patrons are most likely to be under the influence of alcohol.
- Many of the victims and the culprits have been reported as under the influence of alcohol when the Investigating Officer attended the incident.
- Current Home Office Research indicating a proven link between alcohol and violent crime.

It would be extremely difficult to attempt to accurately quantify what proportion of assaults in South Belfast District are attributable to alcohol due to the limitations of the information currently available. Home Office Research indicates that around 76% of assaults are committed while the offender is under the influence of alcohol.

This Profile was used as the basis of the Campaign and the information was monitored & updated on a weekly and monthly basis. When the 3 month duration of the Campaign was completed, a Results Analysis was carried out in order to review & evaluate its success and identify any areas of improvement for future phases.

PROBLEM SOLUTIONS

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Door Registration Scheme

The training of bar staff commenced in September 2002. Police input to this training programme consisted of a seminar outlining powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order and the responsibilities as laid down by the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order. The Door Supervisor's scheme has become a condition of the entertainment license from September 2002. By the end of the 2nd phase of the campaign 149 door staff have been trained and the Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade has organised one course per month from January 2003. It is



estimated that 300-350 bar staff working in over 50 bars in the District still require training so further development of this scheme is required.

Responsible Bar Practices

Responsible bar tendering practices are critical to the effort to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder. All licensees within the District have received correspondence on this issue from the Federation of Retail Licensing trade (FRLT). The FRLT is currently progressing an education package for the training of managers and service employees.

Byelaws

There has been strict enforcement of existing City byelaws relating to drinking alcohol in the street. Belfast City Council (BCC) are now actively considering extending these powers to make it an offence to carry alcohol in open bottles or glasses in designated public areas, and to enable the police to confiscate glasses, open bottles, cans and glasses containing alcohol etc. It is evident since the enforcement of the byelaws that door supervisors are now preventing patrons removing bottles/glasses from premises. This has reduced considerably both the incidents where such items are being used as offensive weapons and the serious injury sustained by victims.

Radio Link 'Pub watch'

In partnership with Belfast City Centre Management Company and Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce an evening economy radio link was developed with City Centre door supervisors.

This scheme creates an effective measure for keeping troublemakers from licensed premises. The scheme involves a partnership between pubs and clubs within the City Center and is monitored by officers on patrol and in the CCTV control room at Musgrave Street police station. This provides an early warning system of the presence of individuals or groups likely to cause trouble.

Premises join this scheme on a voluntary basis and at personal expense. As a result of the scheme, 37 City Centre premises, including many of the main licensed franchises, are now connected via the radio link system.

During the 2nd phase door supervisors used this communication means to alert police on incidents ranging from the supply of cocaine to minor disorder. The primary success of this initiative is however the increased communication between door supervisors alerting each other to the threat from potential troublemakers. This system has been very successful and will continue to be developed within the District.

Toughened Glasses

Agreement has been reached between police, breweries and FRLT on the introduction of toughened drinking glasses to all pubs and clubs within the District. In addition there is now a greater use of plastic "glasses" in many pubs and clubs. The use of toughened glass can greatly reduce the amount of serious injuries sustained by the use of broken glass as a weapon of offence. This type of glass is difficult to break and if it does shatter it will break into tiny pieces that are unable to cause serious injury.



FRLT has informed the project team that 70% of all licensed premises within the District will be using toughened glass by the end of the 2002/03 financial year.

Illegal Street Trading

Late night dispersal of customers was a significant concern for police. In particular the congregation around illegal food vendors, who operated outside many licensed premises following closing times - 1.30am - 3.00am. Assault trends indicated the majority of serious assaults were occurring at around these times and locations. It was therefore imperative to target illegal street trading. Operations with Belfast City Council to ensure rigid enforcement of street trading outside licensed premises were conducted. Equipment was seized from nine traders during the 1st phase. There are now no illegal street traders operating during the evening economy within the District.

The success of this initiative has resulted in a more rapid dispersal of customers from licensed premises in several hot spot areas.

University/Student Union Support

Queen's University (QUB), an active partner, produced and distributed Get Home Safe literature in welcome packs to 8000 prospective students for the 2002/3 academic year. Similar information was also included in the university prospectus which was distributed to 6000 'A' level students throughout Northern Ireland. The University of Ulster, Jordanstown have distributed similar literature to 2000 of their students living in the South Belfast area.

Queen's University Student's Union are now providing a free night-time bus service for students to ensure they get home safely at the end of the evening.

3000 personal attack alarms have been issued to QUB students. The alarms have been funded by QUB and issued to all students who feel vulnerable traveling home from the University or Students' Union.

Transport - Churches

A group of inter-denominational churches (5 churches to date), inspired by the Get Home Safe campaign have jointly sponsored a free bus service for night-time revelers. The service has a 2-3 mile radius and includes the majority of student residential areas within the City Centre. Limited funding means this service can only be provided one night per week. This group is intending to develop into a community trust, charity or company with the intention of securing funding or sponsorship to expand the service offered.

Data Collection

An important element of the project was the development of a comprehensive database using information from a variety of sources. Data collection and analysis was taken from both PSNI / Belfast City Hospital sources. The data was calculated over the lifetime of the project and used to measure trends on a variety of scales. This was particularly useful for identifying changes in violence and disorder at highly localised levels following targeted interventions.



The data collected from hospitals was very useful in this regard. Police analysts explored the use of the additional information and provided significant insights in relation to victim profiles, much of which validates Home Office research.

Victim Support

All victims of assault attending Belfast City Hospital received literature from nursing staff on the Victim Support scheme. This enhances the current PSNI policy of providing victim support referrals by ensuring that those not reporting crime to police are equally captured.

CCTV

3 new CCTV sites were integrated into the South Belfast system during the campaign. The three sites are all within crime and public order hot spots. Local traders and licensees raised £57,000 to finance the sites. These cameras have the latest digital technology and have contributed significantly in the allocation of resources during the Get Home Safe campaign.

As a result of increasing assaults and disorder within Belfast City Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, 17 cameras both inside and outside the Hospital have been fully integrated into the South Belfast CCTV system based at Musgrave Street Police station at a cost of £35,000.

To support these initiatives Belfast City Hospital security staff, traders and licensees in the vicinity of the camera sites are now connected via a radio link monitored within the CCTV control room.

Alcohol Referral Scheme

Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs) based at Musgrave Street custody suite counseled 57 persons arrested for assault during the first 1st phase of the campaign. The aim of this partner initiative was to identify and prevent persons with an alcohol abuse problem from re-offending.

- The 2nd phase witnessed more in depth counseling. The CPNs provided counseling to 26 individuals with alcohol problems. These individuals were offered motivational interview, education, advice and support on issues of alcohol abuse, information on the availability of services and referral where appropriate to a relevant agency.

Of the 83 detained people who were provided with counseling only five re-offended. This is a significant result and is worth considering that the CPNs were provided with little support and operated outside the other government agencies and networks dedicated to providing interventionist support for alcohol and substance abuse.

Licensed Premises Inspections

'Get Home Safe' explored whether more could be done to support those in the licensing trade to adopt good practice in preventing alcohol-related problems. A programme of inspections was introduced. For the majority of these inspections Belfast City Council (BCC) environmental health staff accompanied police in a scheme of joint inspections.



Frequent dialogue was established with pub/club staff and management keeping them informed of developments throughout the operation. During the 2nd phase licensing inspection teams, both covert and overt, concentrated on premises highlighted by police analysts. These premises were often in areas where assaults were taking place or as a result of trend analysis establishing a pattern of offences. The instances of licensees operating outside permitted hours was significantly curtailed during this period, exposing a small core group of offenders resulting in multiple reports for prosecution against individual premises.

It is apparent from the inspections that there is in fact a large market/demand for this late night/early morning entertainment and this area requires further debate involving all interested parties. The creation of a safer environment within which entertainment facilities can operation is a pre-requisite to their continued development.

POLICE OPERATION

Police analysts identified areas with a high incidence of alcohol-related crime and disorder. Police hot spot analysis was assisted greatly by the collation of weekly data from Belfast City Hospital.

The areas identified by the analysts were grouped into six key hot spot locations. Resources were then dedicated to these locations on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Hot spots were prioritised to ensure that the top three would receive continued police attention despite crews being removed to deal with arrests. Weekly monitoring of these locations was conducted to provide assurance that the six key areas had not changed, requiring a reciprocal change in police deployments. This ensured that police were dedicated to areas where assault trends indicated corrective action was required.

- A focused policing operation lasted for 12 weeks between April and June 2002 and 13 weeks between October and December 2002 on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The operation combined an advisory approach and a proactive attitude towards licensees breaching legislation. High profile policing involved the deployment of additional police officers at selected street locations in hot spot areas. All inappropriate behaviour was challenged by police who responded by advice, issuing warnings, summonses or arrests.

Detailed maps were produced displaying the key hot spot areas and licensed premises. Operational orders and detailed briefing notes were used to brief all personnel including Tactical Support Groups (TSGs) on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. All crews completed an operational de-brief prior to termination of duty. All these documents were subject to a review conducted on a weekly basis by a dedicated project team.

Throughout both phases hot spot patrolling was an endemic feature. Much greater emphasis was placed on foot patrolling, ensuring fast and positive contact with those individuals who sought to cause disruption and commit criminal acts. Policing was now directly 'in the face' of those intent on causing trouble.



MARKETING CAMPAIGN

An important aspect to the 2nd phase of the campaign was the development and implementation of a strategic marketing approach. To assist with the marketing element of the campaign, the Belfast Regeneration Office made available a grant of £198,750 and PR agency, Weber Shandwick was secured to develop, implement and manage this aspect of the campaign. The aim was to develop a public information campaign that would address the following primary communication objective:

- To reduce the incidence of alcohol related crime by promoting the 'Get Home Safe' message amongst 18 – 24 year olds on the Belfast social scene between October and December 2002.

As well as supporting the secondary objectives of:

- Promoting the concept of sensible drinking amongst 18 – 24 year olds on the Belfast social scene between October and December 2002.
- Positioning drunken assaults as unacceptable behaviour
- Highlighting the consequences of such behaviour
- Developing awareness and greater community ownership of the problem by involving partners in all stages of the marketing campaign.

Marketing Strategy

1. The development of the strapline 'Get Home Safe' to drive the campaign.

The 'Get Home Safe' message encouraged young people to think twice and plan ahead, how they would get home at the end of the evening – this was particularly relevant, given that most violence occurs around closing time.

2. The development of a strong set of visuals

These were clearly aimed at the victims of crime, perpetrators and illustrated the consequences of foolish and thoughtless activities. Careful consideration was given to ensuring that the imagery used and people depicted struck a chord with the target age group. Whilst three images were developed for the public information campaign, the core message of 'Think twice – Get Home Safe' and the Get Home Safe logo appear on all visuals along with partner logos – clearly demonstrating the partnership approach adopted to address the problem. The visuals produced were used in the advertising campaign.

3. Advertising Campaign

The radio advertising campaign reflected the visuals and followed the three themes of victim, perpetrator and consequences with three separate adverts recorded.

Other advertising methods included 48 Sheet Posters, Adshel Posters, Washroom Posters, Bus Rear Advertising, Press Adverts and City TV/Scannervision



4. Youth Marketing Campaign

A creative information campaign was developed to reach the target audience both before and during their 'night out', ensuring that context, content and tone of message was appropriate. The campaign included branded beer mats, heat sensitive urinal stickers, Z-cards (Pocket sized information leaflets), Information Stands. Promotional Teams in 'Get Home Safe' branded fleeces, hats and bags took to the streets of South Belfast every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights distributing pens, lollies and z-cards to pubbers and clubbers heading out during the busy Christmas party season. A dedicated 'Get Home Safe' website was produced providing further information on the campaign and updates on partner initiatives. Get Home Safe branded giveaways in the form of pens and lollies were produced to raise awareness of the campaign. These items were distributed by the promotional teams outside pubs and clubs as well as being distributed at the Information stands.

5. Media Relations Campaign

A drip-feed media relations campaign was developed to complement the advertising and youth marketing activities. Targeting dailies, weeklies, entertainment magazines, licensed trade magazines, radio and television the media relations campaign aimed to further highlight the campaign messages, promote partner initiatives and provide an update on the success of the campaign.

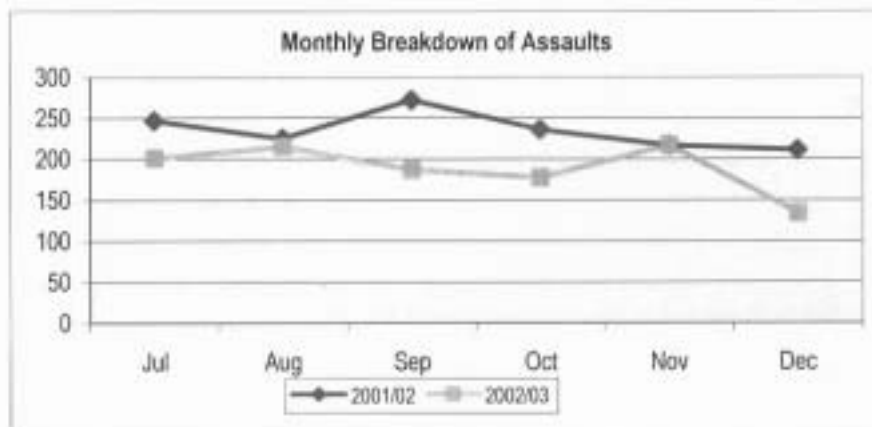
6. Media Launch

A launch event was held on 2nd October 2002 to provide a focal point for the 2nd phase of the campaign, unveil the planned advertising programme and profile partner involvement. The event was extremely well attended, attracting more than 70 key opinion influencers including the campaign partners, community groups, representatives from local universities, the Policing Board, and local councillors. Media relations undertaken at the launch event ensured blanket coverage in press and broadcast media.



RESULTS

During 1st October to 31st December 2002 (evaluation period) there have been 535 assaults within South Belfast compared to 654 assaults during the same 3-month period in 2001. This indicates a 19.2% decrease in the total volume of assaults, relative to the previous year, and shows that the initiative has had considerable success in tackling the problem. The rate of increase in assaults stood at 22% in April 2002. If this rate of increase was projected over the 2nd phase of the Get Home Safe campaign, then 798 assaults would have been predicted. This equates to 263 less assaults, given the trend at the beginning of the financial year.



The increase in the incidence of assaults during November was due to a single incident on Halloween night.

The reduction in the number of serious assaults i.e. those assaults causing injuries such as broken noses, fractures and concussion, have been even more significant over this period. 236 such incidents were reported during the same period in 2001, 158 were reported during this phase, equating to a 33% reduction. This figure for serious assault should be considered alongside the 40% reduction in sexual assaults (14 during Oct - Dec 2002, compared to 23 during Oct - Dec 2001).

This equates to a potential saving of £10,140,000 (The Home Office estimates a serious assault, in terms of costs to police, hospitals, courts and compensation agency to be £130,000). The Victim Support Agency report a 20% reduction in number of persons with serious injuries seeking their assistance.



Partner Initiatives

- Development of the Alcohol Referral Scheme.
- Development of the Door Registration Scheme and subsequent legislative requirement to have door supervisors trained as a condition to the grant of an entertainments license.
- Training for bar staff sponsored by the Federation of the Retail Licensed Trade and Belfast Vintners.
- Introduction of toughened drinking glass in 70% of licensed premises.
- Personal attack alarms distributed to 3000 QUB students.
- The 'pub watch' Radio Link used by 37 premises.
- Joint BCC/PSNI licensed premises inspection teams.
- Free bus service provided by QUB Students' Union and the interdenominational Church Group.

Marketing Activity

- In terms of call to action 40% of the sample (pubbers/clubbers) stated that the campaign had positively influenced them to change their behaviour.
- The 'Get Home Safe' message was the most highly recalled.
- 87% of the sample could remember something about the campaign.
- 48 sheet posters, radio advertising and material in pubs/clubs worked best in communicating campaign messages/had the highest recall.
- The feeling that nothing has been done about alcohol related violence has gone down from 55% pre-campaign to 33% post.

Other Achievements

- Illegal Street Trading eradicated from night time economy.
- Police Operational template (using hot spot analysis) employed successfully in other campaigns e.g. City Centre Christmas campaign.
- 3 new CCTV sites as a result of private funding.
- Belfast City Hospital linking 17 hospital cameras to PSNI CCTV system.
- Clear victim profiles as a result of police and hospital assault questionnaires.
- Greater understanding of the 'grey area' of unreported crime.