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Community safety practice briefing

The Nacro guide to partnership working

by David Mullett

Nacro's community safety mailing and work

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The mailing is just one part of our work on community safety. Nacro works with local people, practitioners and inter-agency partnerships to reduce crime levels, lessen the fear of crime and regenerate communities.

Our research, our work with Government and our experience of delivering services at a local level give us an excellent national perspective on what works in community safety and how to adapt and apply this at a local level. Community safety practitioners from a range of community safety partnerships use this expertise at every stage of partnership development. More information is available from the address below.

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This guide to building and sustaining effective crime and disorder reduction partnerships covers:

- *Who? The statutory make-up of the partnership*
- *Why? The reasons for partnership working*
- *What? The building-blocks of an effective partnership*
- *How? The organisational processes required for effective partnership, team-building and maximising the effectiveness of individuals*

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Introduction

'No single organisation can hope to reduce the incidence of crime and tackle the underlying causes of criminal and anti-social behaviour. Local organisations need to work together to develop comprehensive solutions which achieve a permanent improvement to the community's quality of life.'¹

Crime and disorder reduction partnerships were established by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. They are currently drawing to the close of the first round of three-year crime reduction strategies and embarking on the development of their second strategies. This, therefore, seems an ideal opportunity to draw on the lessons that have been learnt by partnerships in the past few years and see how they might be applied over the next few years.

There are two parts to creating and sustaining an effective partnership:

- making sure that the organisational processes are right
- understanding and motivating individuals

This briefing covers both of these. First, however, it lists all the various agencies that may form the partnership, and examines why effective partnerships are necessary and how to recognise one when you see it.

The members of the partnership

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which set up statutory crime and disorder reduction partnerships, named 'responsible authorities' for the purposes of developing and producing crime and disorder reduction strategies for their areas. The Act, along with further statutory instruments and legislation, requires other agencies to cooperate with partnerships. These are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 *Responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998*²

	Councils	Other agencies
Responsible authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counties • Welsh unitaries • English districts • London boroughs • English unitaries • Metropolitan boroughs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police authorities
Required to cooperate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater London Authority • The National Assembly for Wales • Fire authorities • Joint Authorities • Norfolk Broads Authority • National Parks Authorities • Parish/town councils (England) • Parish meetings (England) • Community councils (Wales) • Community meetings (Wales) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probation service • Health authorities and NHS Trusts • Proprietors of independent schools • Governing bodies of institutions within the further education sector

In addition to the bodies mentioned in Table 1, others that must be invited to cooperate include:

- registered social landlords
- schools, further educational and tertiary colleges
- Learning and Skills Councils (insofar as they take on the statutory duties of TECs)
- the Youth Service
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Crown and Magistrates Courts
- Drug Action Teams
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Victim Support
- military police
- public transport providers
- fire service
- organisations representing special interests (which must include at least one of each of: groups established in the interests of women, young people, elderly people and disabled people; groups established in the furtherance of good race relations; groups established for the interests of lesbians and gay men; groups established for religious purposes)
- groups established for the interests of residents in the area
- bodies, one of whose purposes is the reduction of crime and disorder but which are not included above
- the business sector
- voluntary organisations providing assistance to young people through youth work or informal education
- trades' union organisations
- registered medical practitioners and bodies representing them
- British Transport Police
- universities

You may also want to involve the following bodies (although there is no statutory requirement to do so):

- the wider voluntary sector
- Regional Development Agencies

Partnership working: the reasons

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposed a statutory duty on the agencies listed in the previous section to form crime and disorder reduction partnerships.

Partnerships should not, however, be viewed as something that exist purely for the purposes of keeping the government happy. There are many good reasons for partnership working to reduce crime, including:

- It avoids unnecessary duplication, confusion and waste of resources.
- Partner agencies will consider the impact of their policies and actions on crime and disorder. The more agencies that are involved, the greater the potential impact on crime.
- Pooling resources maximises their effectiveness.
- It provides opportunities for sharing expertise and learning from others.
- No single agency can have expertise in every area of work that the partnership is involved in. Bringing together a range of agencies enables each agency to concentrate on its strengths and should ensure a depth of knowledge and experience can be brought to bear on all areas of the partnership's activities.

The ingredients of a successful partnership

An effective crime and disorder reduction partnership is one where:

- There is a clear identity and role expectation for the partnership.
- There is a clear identity and role expectation for each partner.
- All partners have shared aims and objectives and work together to achieve them.
- The partnership process and outcomes are both effectively resourced.
- There is a developing degree of interrelationship between each agency and the partnership, and between agencies.
- There are clear links to other strategies for the

community and the partnership does not function in isolation.

- Services, strategies and policies are realigned to build safer communities.
- Sufficient time is given to partnership building.
- Adequate training is given, enabling all members of the partnership to contribute.
- Partners recognise that the partnership will bring together a number of organisational cultures, and ensure that this does not become an obstacle to effective partnership working.
- There is a supportive atmosphere where suggestions, ideas, conflicts and criticisms are aired, resolved and acted upon constructively.
- Strategies are carried through over an adequate period of time.
- Administrative support and resources are stable over the long term.
- There is clear, inclusive political and executive leadership.
- Outcomes are measured carefully and constructively.³

Conversely, ineffective partnerships are ones where:

- The agenda of one particular agency dominates.
- There is an unresolved culture clash between the various partner agencies.
- Partner agencies find that their work is

adversely affected by the partnership's policies and actions.

- The local community is not consulted or involved.
- The partnership structure is not formalised.
- The partnership focuses on short-term projects rather than long-term strategies.
- Differences between partners on the aims and objectives cannot be reconciled.
- Partners work in isolation rather than together.
- There is no clear accountability.
- Partners do not trust each other.⁴

Creating and sustaining an effective partnership

Effective partnerships do not just happen overnight. Creating them is a long-term process and they need constant maintenance. Table 2 outlines the steps in this process. This covers the organisational process; team-building and maximising the contribution of each individual are covered in the later section **Individuals in the partnership**.

It is always worthwhile building links with other local partnerships, whatever field they work in. Their experiences of partnership working will undoubtedly be useful - there is no point reinventing the wheel if you do not have to.

Table 2 *An outline plan for effective partnership working*

	Action for the partnership as a whole	Action for each partner agency
Establish a vision for the partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a clear vision of what the partnership should achieve and how. (You may find a mission statement useful.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that this vision is communicated to all staff.
Clarify roles and contribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know legislative framework. • Understand relationships between crime and the areas within which each agency works. • Agree framework between partners for taking issues forward. • Develop a list of key points and areas of action, with expected actions and outcomes for each partner agency. • Review areas of work undertaken by each agency. Consider how to reduce duplication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the agency's role is communicated to and understood by all staff. • Draw up a list of where existing policies and strategies link with crime reduction issues. • Develop a procedure for aligning internal policies with partnership policies. • Learn from the experience of other partners.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, carry out a Best Value review of community safety, incorporating every agency and the partnership as a whole; develop a Best Value plan; and conduct regular Best Value benchmarking against other partnerships. If the resources are not available for this, build links between the partnership cycle and local Best Value reviews. • In councils with 'cabinet-style government', has an elected councillor been designated to hold the crime reduction portfolio? • In other councils, have appropriate arrangements for involving elected members been set up? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include crime reduction in strategic framework.
Enable all agencies to make a contribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and implement a mechanism for co-ordination and agreement across all agencies. • Develop a framework for sharing information. • Offer appropriate training to staff at partner agencies who will be involved with the work of the partnership. • Offer training to elected councillors on the Crime and Disorder Act and its implications, particularly areas such as Section 17. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a person with lead responsibility for partnership membership and action. (This should be someone senior enough to take decisions.) • Produce a detailed continuous improvement plan.
Ensure that the partnership has adequate resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a budget to which all partners contribute. • Establish what resources (money, staff and equipment) are needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute appropriately to the partnership, in terms of money human resources and equipment.
Establish a partnership structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a clear structure, with full details (including contact names and details) in the public domain. • Set up management groups to lead on specific issues, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities agreed by the partnership as a whole. • Open partnership meetings to the press and public (unless confidential matters are discussed). • Establish clear lines of accountability. • Establish a clear decision-making procedure, in which decisions are made at the appropriate level. This should include an easily understood procedure for resolving disagreements between partner agencies with no delay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate partnership structure to all staff.

<p>Establish appropriate partnership processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange regular meetings on dates that are convenient for all partners and advertised well in advance. • Agree and publish a comprehensive workplan that includes timescales and responsible officers. • Ensure that minutes are taken and circulated promptly; and that action points are reviewed. • Agree a strategy for sharing anonymised and personalised information. (This must comply with data protection rules.) • Apply the principles of project management to the partnership's work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to sending a representative to every meeting. • Designate a lead officer for information sharing with the partnership.
<p>Establish a culture for the partnership and enable it to deliver on its targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the production of joint information and training strategies and protocols. • Ensure that the decision-making frameworks in all agencies take crime and disorder into account. • Ensure a diversity of professions is represented on the working group to produce an holistic response to crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use staff training and information systems to reinforce the message of partnership working to reduce crime.
<p>Minimise culture clash.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that different partners will have different cultures and set aside time (preferably at an awayday) to get to understand each other's organisational cultures. • Ensure that the partnership framework outlined above is implemented clearly and firmly. • Find a way of working that takes elements of best practice from all partners, rather than basing it on the culture of only one partner. • Establish a 'common language' that all partners can understand and feel comfortable with. • The chair of the partnership should view reconciling differences as one of her/his primary tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the time to understand the culture of each of the other partners and the reasons behind these different cultures. Think about what impact they may have on the working of the partnership as a whole.
<p>Set up communications channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a corporate identity for the partnership and use it consistently. • Agree and implement an external communications strategy, with a designated lead officer. This should cover both media relations and direct communication to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit press/PR and publications resources to the partnership. • Designate someone with responsibility to comment on and sign off partnership communications within agreed deadlines.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all communications material is produced in appropriate community languages, in large print and Braille, on audiotape, etc; and that all appropriate media are used. • Agree and implement a system for gaining the approval of all partners for all communications from the partnership. • Agree a protocol for commenting to the Press, to ensure a unified, positive message. • Develop and implement an internal communications strategy for communicating to all partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an internal communications strategy for communicating partnership decisions and actions to all staff.
<p>Implement a system of annual reviews.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an annual review within a specified timescale. • Incorporate recommendations of the review in future plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the annual review, keeping to agreed deadlines.

Other tasks

There are other partnership tasks that, while not strictly part of partnership development, are closely related to it:

- auditing
- community involvement
- involving specific agencies
- strategy development and implementation
- measuring effectiveness

It is not possible to cover these in any detail here. Nacro does, however, publish briefings on all these subjects; see page 12 for more details.

Team-building

The individuals you need

Any partnership is only as good as the individuals who form it. People, not processes, actually get things done. If individual partners are committed to the aims and objectives of the partnership, the partnership as a whole will achieve more and be more effective.

To motivate an individual, you need to understand the way s/he works and the reasons for this. People are unlikely radically to change they way they think and work. Each individual should be honest about the way in which s/he works and take on those pieces of work to which s/he is best suited.⁵ Each individual will have a different motivation for participating in the partnership. Understanding these motivations will enable each partner to take on the most appropriate role.

Any partnership needs a mix of different personality types, because it has a mix of different jobs to be done and roles to be filled. Table 3 shows the variety of roles present in every partnership and the type of people who should fill them. This Table is based on work with a variety of organisations, both public-and private-sector; it describes roles rather than specific job titles.

Building your team

The following guidelines should ensure that individuals are positive about the partnerships and therefore that the partnership performs effectively:

- There should be clear leadership and management, with all partners involved in decision-making.
- Those partners with lead and management responsibility should be accountable to all.
- Each partner should have a clearly defined role with clearly defined limits.
- The partnership should offer support, not criticism, to those partners who need it.
- Difference and diversity should be seen as strengths, not weaknesses.
- Offer training in teamwork and undertake team-building exercises.

Team-building, like every aspect of partnership development, is an ongoing process. If the partnership is to work effectively as a team, you will need to undertake team-building exercises, preferably on an away-day. The **Resources** section lists several books on this subject that you may find useful. You may find it useful to use an external consultant to analyse your team and facilitate your awayday.

Table 3 *Team roles*⁶

Person	Role	Characteristics
<i>Chair</i>	Leads the partnership and helps to engineer consensus and agreement.	Calm, confident, trusted, enthusiastic, positive and reasonably extrovert.
<i>Shaper</i>	Drives the partnership on by demanding progress.	Outgoing, dynamic and impatient.
<i>Plant</i>	Provides the expertise needed to make good decisions.	Individualistic, intellectual and knowledgeable.
<i>Resource investigator</i>	Investigates what resources are needed.	Versatile, curious, communicative, social and able.
<i>Company worker</i>	Does the actual work.	Disciplined, practical and conscientious.
<i>Team worker</i>	The glue that binds the partnership together.	Responsive, sensitive and with good social skills.
<i>Monitor-evaluator</i>	Checks the group's progress.	Clever, unemotional and hard-headed.
<i>Completer-finisher</i>	Ensures that tasks are completed.	Perseveres, perfectionist, conscientious and pays attention to detail.

Checklist for an effective partnership

- Do you have a clear vision for what the partnership will achieve?
- Does the partnership have a clear mission, aims and objectives?
- Does each partner have a clear mission, aims and objectives?
- Does the partnership have an effective secretariat and support mechanisms?
- Are there effective reporting arrangements within the partnership, especially within sub-groups?
- Are there effective reporting arrangements back to each partner?
- Does the partnership have pooled resources (human resources, finance, skills, and equipment such as IT equipment and software for the audit)?
- Does the partnership have an effective performance management system?
- Does each partner have the political will to contribute both financial and non-financial resources?
- Is there a contingency plan for sudden changes in workplan, annual reviews, problems with the audit and strategy, etc?
- Does the partnership have a risk management plan?
- Are there protocols for crisis management, publicity, relationships with other multi-agency partnerships, information-sharing, etc?
- Are there effective systems for communicating to interested stakeholders?

Footnotes

- 1 Audit Commission (undated)
- 2 Based on McManus (2001), p3
- 3 Afzal *et al.* (unpublished); Carsley *et al.* (2000); Edwards *et al.* (1999); Lusthaus *et al.* (1999); Robinson *et al.* (1998)
- 4 Carsley *et al.* (2000); Crawford (1998); Edwards *et al.* (1999); Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994a, b & c); Pearson *et al.* (1992)
- 5 George and Jones (1996)
- 6 Based on Belbin (1996). A similar breakdown of team roles is available from the MTR-i website:
www.teamtechnology.co.uk/poster.html

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Other Nacro guides

This guide is one of a series of four that have been written to help crime and disorder reduction partnerships with the strategy cycle. The others are:

- *The Nacro guide to crime audits*
- *The Nacro guide to developing and implementing crime reduction strategies*
- *The Nacro guide to monitoring and evaluation*

Nacro produces a whole range of briefings for community safety practitioners and members of partnerships. Some of the ones most relevant to effective partnership working are:

- ***Safe and healthy:*** partnership between health authorities and community safety partnerships
- ***Better health, lower crime:*** why and how health agencies should become involved in crime reduction
- ***Without prejudice:*** meeting the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities
- ***Putting the community into community safety:*** community involvement (to be published at the end of Summer 2001)
- ***Making it our business:*** auditing business crime and consulting the business sector
- ***Open for business:*** how community safety partnerships and business can work together

Publications to be published during the remainder of 2001 include:

- engaging faith communities
- working with local authority planning departments
- working with local authority arts and leisure departments
- working with the voluntary sector

To order any of the above, contact: Cynthia Sutherland, Nacro Publications, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU; t 020 7840 6427; f 020 7735 4666; e cynthia.sutherland@nacro.org.uk

Nacro has also produced ***Working together better: community safety in multi-tier areas*** as part of its work on the Home Office-funded Partnership Support programme. To obtain a free copy, phone Amy Reeves on 01793 863518.