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Wigan & Leigh Community Safety Partnership: Data Sharing



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Summary

Data sharing is vital for success in delivering Crime and Disorder Reduction strategies. In Wigan and Leigh, partners have overcome significant barriers and developed a high level of data sharing for strategic and operational purposes. They have an Information Sharing Protocol and take full advantage of the GMAC (Greater Manchester Against Crime) system for managing crime data. They have used shared data in analysing neighbourhood patterns (eg, using the Vulnerable Localities Index) and hotspots for crime anti-social behaviour (eg, using Hotspot Detective software), and in managing performance (using the Performance Plus system).

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<p><i>Data sharing is critical for reducing crime and disorder - but many issues need to be addressed in making it happen</i></p>	<h3>Aims/Objectives</h3> <p>Success in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour requires multi-agency action: it is not something for the Police alone. It is essential that partners are able to share data about individuals (victims, offenders and potential offenders), places, and wider socio-economic information. In turn they need to be able to use this effectively in building the evidence base, developing strategies and delivering services which have more of an impact in reducing crime and the fear of crime.</p> <p>This case study highlights a number of successful practices undertaken by the Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership (WLCSP). It complements the NRU report, "Data Sharing for Neighbourhood Renewal: Lessons from the North West" and illustrates how one partnership has sought to deal with a number of common barriers to data sharing. These typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited buy-in from partner organisations • uncertainties about what can and can't be shared under the law • costs and risks in data sharing • differing definitions and methods used in gathering and analysing data
	<h3>Where</h3> <p>Wigan and Leigh, Greater Manchester sub-region, North West</p>
<p><i>Agreement of an Information Sharing Protocol</i></p>	<h3>How did it do it?</h3> <p>Data sharing practices have developed, step by step, since WLCSP was formed in 1999. These have been helped by the development and agreement in 2003 of an Information Sharing Protocol to support joint working and ensure compliance with data protection and human rights legislation. This puts into practice provision within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for data sharing - with a power under Section 115 to exchange information where disclosure is necessary to support the local Crime and Disorder Strategy. The Protocol clarifies as far as possible the circumstances under which data on individuals may be exchanged, recognising requirements under Data Protection and Human Rights legislation. Its content includes, for example, appropriate sharing of sensitive personal data and the aggregation of data for analysis by postcode. The Protocol helped</p>

significantly to allay concerns over what data can be shared, in what circumstances. However, action has been needed to follow through on partner commitments within the Protocol, eg, in convincing staff in an NHS Acute Trust that sharing Accident and Emergency data is acceptable and in their interest.

Heavy local workloads in gathering and improving the quality of crime and related data have been eased by the development of a '**data warehouse**' by **GMAC** - Greater Manchester Against Crime. This brings together information (on a daily or monthly basis) from the police, health service, ambulance, fire and transport, probation, community safety and drug action teams, youth offending teams and local authorities – along with socio-economic data. Standardised definitions and methods are used. Each piece of information is sent to a central system and tagged with its source. The software then enables the user to select items to be mapped, eg, to identify 'hotspots' of offences using data which in some cases is 'real time'. Data from the GMAC system was extracted by WLCSP in late 2004, for example, in producing a 'Problem Profile' on anti-social behaviour, alongside targeted research including a street audit of hotspot areas. Other uses of GMAC data have included profiling the population of prolific offenders.

GMAC has promoted use of the **Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI)**, a national model which seeks to predict areas where breakdowns in community cohesion might occur, using standard, easily accessible methodology. It was developed by the Central Police Training and Development Authority (Centrex) and the Jill Dando Institute for Crime Science, and brings together data on crime (burglaries and criminal damage in a dwelling), deprivation (income and employment), education (GCSE attainment) and demography (population aged 15-24). It has been fine-tuned locally to give a sharper focus (using violence in a domestic setting, number of fire incidents, location of Probation Service and Community Drugs Team clients, health deprivation and lone parents) in analysing concentrations of criminal and anti-social behaviour and factors behind these. As a scanning tool, the VLI can help determine where to focus attention, and it is being developed further with data, eg, on ambulance incidents, Youth Offending Team home locations, adult literacy levels, housing stock, repeat victimisation levels, ASBO/contact card counts and detection rates.

Other initiatives in support of data sharing included an NRF-funded project to introduce **PDA**s (hand held computers) with GIS (geographical information systems) software to the work of **community wardens**. However, when the team of community wardens was transferred as Police Community Support Officers to Greater Manchester Police, this activity did not fit GMP systems and was not continued. There remains interest within Wigan Council in

Use of the Vulnerable Localities Index as a scanning tool

Use of PDAs for data recording and sharing in service delivery

<p><i>Input to joint performance management system</i></p>	<p>how such technology can be used in other settings to improve services.</p> <p>Partners feed their performance data into the Performance Plus performance management system, originally developed by Wigan Borough Council for tracking and reporting performance. This is being rolled out across partner organisations and is linked to the wider Wigan Community Plan. The system allows users to identify readily where the partnership is performing well and where not so well, and prompt action in response.</p>
<p><i>Partners in Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership</i></p> <p><i>Staff resources</i></p> <p><i>Greater Manchester Against Crime</i></p>	<p>Who was involved?</p> <p>WLSCP members are Greater Manchester Police (GMP); Wigan Borough Council; Greater Manchester Police Authority; National Offender Management Service; Wigan, Leigh & Ashton PCT; 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust; Victim Support; Council for Voluntary Service; Customs & Excise; Hindley Young Offenders Institution; Crown Prosecution Service; Greater Manchester Passenger and Transport Executive; Jobcentre Plus; Domestic Violence Services; DIAS; Positive Futures; WAVE; Wigan Refuge; Wigan and Leigh Magistrates Court; and Wrightington Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust. Strong support has been provided by the recently retired Council Chief Executive (as Partnership chair) and the GMP Chief Superintendent for Wigan.</p> <p>Work on data sharing and data analysis is undertaken by an analytical team of four staff, part of a larger ‘virtual team’ involving GMP tactical analysts. Their work programme is defined by a commissioning process which is part of a Partnership board cycle of strategic assessment and reviews and the setting of ‘control strategy’ which focuses police activity on priority areas. They are also working to develop capacity for data analysis more broadly with the partnership (eg, with staff responsible for specific projects, like work on prolific offenders).</p> <p>Greater Manchester Against Crime was created by Greater Manchester Police and the 10 Community Safety Partnerships in the sub-region. It has been designed to drive strategic improvement, taking full advantage of performance data and ICT systems, linked to a standard model for managing partnership business. There is an overarching GMAC information sharing protocol. The GMAC ‘data warehouse’ is managed by Greater Manchester Police who also have appointed a lead officer at superintendent level to work with the CDRPs at strategic level.</p>

<p><i>Benefits of the GMAC data warehouse</i></p>	<h2>What did it achieve?</h2> <p>Priority given to data sharing and analysis in WLCSP is reckoned to have contributed significantly to performance improvement, including reductions on burglaries, vehicle crime, town centre and transport-related incidents and anti-social behaviour. Overall, in 2004-05 volume crime in Wigan and Leigh reduced by 15%. Analytical work is supporting action where the Partnership has performed less well, eg, in particular neighbourhoods, in tackling domestic violence and in resettling ex-offenders and drug users (eg, on the Trees Estate in Leigh).</p> <p>The GMAC system has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freed up analyst time for higher added value research, using the data generated as a basis for more in-depth investigation of WLCSP priority issues • saved time, eg, time not spent chasing data or less time spent 'cleaning', ie, improving the quality of data
<p><i>Benefits of the Information Sharing Protocol</i></p>	<p>The Information Sharing Protocol has provided a platform for more effective partnership working. It has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • given reassurance and confidence to front line staff and managers in partner organisations about the practicalities of data sharing • provided a lever for dealing with particular barriers within partner organisations • saved time for the analytical team in not having to seek written agreement every time particular data are required
<p><i>Benefits of the VLI</i></p>	<p>The Vulnerable Localities Index has proved adaptable for local purposes and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirmed priorities for neighbourhood targeting • provided a basis for encouraging partners in health and education to look more closely at neighbourhood priorities in service delivery (which is being taken forward under the Wigan Local Area Agreement pilot)
<p><i>How the data sharing has assisted delivery</i></p>	<p>In turn, outputs from the analytical work, for example, have helped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify anti-social behaviour flashpoints, their different characteristics and appropriate tactical responses • partners recognise the importance of early years interventions (ie, work with children and links with the Children and Young People's Partnership) • street-based drug services to recognise that they need to target

areas in addition to Wigan town centre in prioritising their work

- foster a 'virtuous cycle' of evidence-based practice - where partnership members are increasingly convinced of the value of analysis and progressively more demanding of the quality of analysis that can be provided

The problem profile prepared for Leigh Town Centre has led to partnership action (eg, 'target hardening', reassurance work by PCSOs, and free locks and bolts provided by Victim Support) and a significant reduction in burglary rates.

Other benefits have included:

- ease in assembling data in revising the Community Plan and preparing the Local Area Agreement (Wigan has been one of the first round LAA pilots)
- improved ability to convey the picture of crime and anti-social behaviour to community audiences (eg, in a meeting with the Community Empowerment Network in February 2005)

<p><i>Strategic leadership</i></p> <p><i>Dealing with data sharing barriers</i></p> <p><i>It takes time...</i></p>	<h3>Check list</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior members of a partnership can make a big difference to effective data sharing, by showing their commitment to an evidence-based approach, resolving high-level barriers, and ensuring that there is the necessary support and understanding within their organisations. (This was needed, eg, in securing community drug team data.) • Invest in trust: build relationships and show partners that you make responsible use of the data they provide. • Ensure that you and your partners fully appreciate the legal context for data sharing. • Don't make assumptions about the extent/ nature of understanding of data sharing and data protection in partner organisations. Always be prepared to revisit the <i>strategic</i> objectives behind data sharing agreements. • Understand partner concerns: why are they reluctant to share data? What can you do to reassure them and help them see the benefits of data sharing from their perspective? (One Wigan example involved helping the Acute Trust understand how sharing Accident and Emergency data could help them reduce peaks in demand and thereby reduce bed blocking.) • Employ ways of sharing data without disclosing information about individuals. The GMAC software package, for example, includes 'Hotspot Detective' which indicates geographical concentrations without giving numbers. • Don't expect to develop effective data sharing arrangements overnight: it's taken Wigan seven years to reach the present level, and hard work to resolve some of the barriers along the way.
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www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp/cs/commsafety/

Greater Manchester Against Crime www.gmac.org.uk/

Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership (2003) Protocol for the Sharing of Information within the Borough of Wigan TO BE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD ALONG WITH A PROBLEM PROFILE (LEIGH TOWN CENTRE)