CCi
CUTTING CRIME IMPACT

Community Policing

This Factsheet is based on research conducted for the state-of-the-art report on Community Policing (CCI D2.4).

Cutting Crime Impact (CCI)

CCI is an EU-funded project that aims to support law enforcement agencies (LEAs) as well as relevant local and national authorities (i.e. security policymakers) in reducing the impact of crime and, where possible, preventing crime in the first place. The CCI project supports preventative, evidence-based and sustainable approaches to tackling high-impact petty crime.

CCI will design, develop and demonstrate toolkits relating to four focus areas:

Predictive Policing

Community Policing

Crime Prevention through Urban Design and Planning (CP-UDP)

Measuring and mitigating citizens' feelings of insecurity

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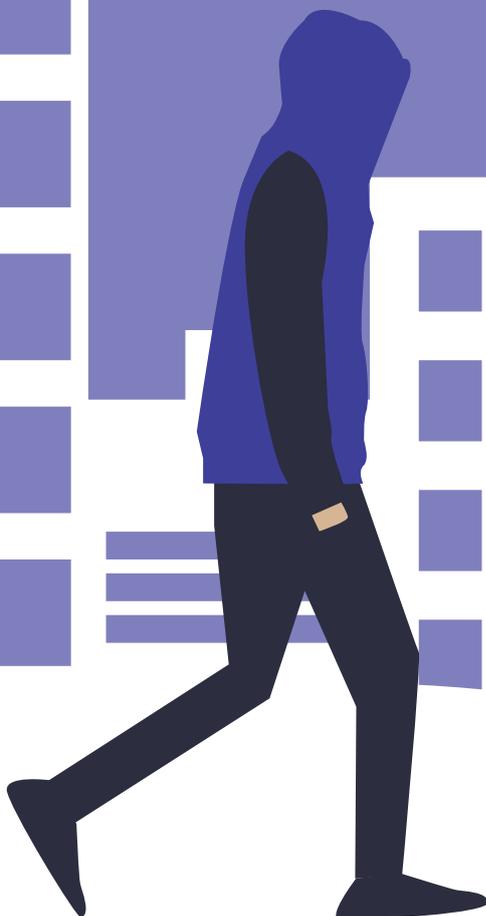
What is Community policing?

Community policing is a strategy of policing that focuses on working closely with the community through interactions with local agencies and members of the public, as well as creating partnerships and strategies for reducing crime and disorder. It is traditionally used by local law enforcement concerned primarily with preventing and solving security problems that have a visible impact on citizens' everyday lives.

Origins of community policing

The approach to community policing has changed over the years. However, the original principles comprise: the use of police officers to patrol the streets; engaging with communities; and dealing with incidents within a particular locality. Below is a timeline for the development of community policing in the UK and US:

- **1829** – The defining principles of modern community policing were developed by Sir Robert Peel, founder of the Metropolitan Police Service in London, UK. Peel aimed to develop an ethical police force and promoted 'policing by consent' – an approach where force is only used in exceptional cases.

- **1960** – Modernisation of the approach. A Home Office Circular encouraged UK police forces to move to a system of 'Unit Beat Policing'. However, technologies were used (e.g. personal radios and police patrol cars) to increase police productivity. As a result, officers were taken off the beat and put into patrol cars, reducing opportunities for regular face-to-face interaction with the public.

- **1970** – The UK police saw corruption and miscarriages of justice hit the headlines with increasing regularity. The police were also pitched into direct conflict with contrasting communities during race riots in urban areas. In the US, the police were in deep trouble with neighbourhoods populated by ethnic minorities. There was a movement towards community policing.

- **1980** – In the UK, new ways of working were promoted by the chief constable John Alderson. Police were encouraged to move: from an authoritarian to a consensual style; from reactive enforcement to proactive prevention; and from unilateral to partnership working—all guided by crime analysis and community consultation.

- **From 2000 to 2010**, 'neighbourhood policing' was developed to address local crime and disorder issues, reassure the public, and reconnect the police with communities.

- **2005** – Influenced by developments in the UK, a new approach drew on the 'signal crimes' perspective – incidents that can disproportionately impact on individuals and communities in terms of their feelings of security. Signal crime is a concept in reassurance policing based on the theory that certain crimes or incidents of anti-social behaviour (e.g. vandalism or drug use in public places) may act as a 'signal' to a community that they are at risk.

- **Over the last decade**, the emphasis shifted from volume crime to harmfulness, from public-place and property crimes to those affecting vulnerable individuals and groups. Police also had to deal with emerging problems such as cybercrime and terrorist threats.

Community policing in Greater Manchester, UK:

In Greater Manchester, the Mayor is responsible for Police and Crime Commissioner functions. In 2018, the Mayor published a new plan for policing and crime, **"Standing Together: plan for safer, stronger communities"**. This plan was developed in consultation with local people, community and voluntary organisations, local authority community safety partnerships, victims' groups, and support services. It sets out agreed priorities for police, community safety organisations, victim support and criminal justice services to help build a safer, stronger Greater Manchester. Consultation with the public and those who contribute to community safety has identified three key priorities.

- Keeping people safe ➜ providing high quality services, and partner agencies are working together to reduce demand on emergency services, support the most vulnerable and keep people safe.
- Reducing harm and offending ➜ protecting and supporting not only those who have been victimised but also rehabilitating those who have committed the offences.
- Strengthening communities and places ➜ helping to build resilient and resourceful communities including online communities, and protecting the places where people live, work, socialise or travel.

- Since 2010, central Government has cut the amount of money to the police. In GMP, this has resulted in the loss of 2,000 police officers. At the same time, they have to deal with complex crimes, such as cybercrime, terrorism, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Faced with these cuts in public funding and increasing demand, GMP has transformed its services and more than ever reinforced the common work with all public agencies, the voluntary sector, and local people.

Community policing in Lisbon, Portugal:

The community policing strategy implemented by the Lisbon Municipal Police (LMP) was built on the necessity for police to adopt a more preventative approach open to citizen participation. This model aims to ensure a more efficient and sustainable response when addressing security problems at the local level. LMP conducted a first pilot in 2009, in close cooperation with local partners in Alta de Lisboa— a mixed housing area in the north of Lisbon, with security problems, but also with an active local partnership.

The community policing model developed in Lisbon is focused on the analysis of causes of community problems, trying to understand why they occur. The model contributes to the reduction of fear of crime and helping residents to see their community as a safer and better place to live. Through this model of policing, police, citizens and partners work together to not only identify the community problems, but to systematically reflect and understand why they occur and to mobilise community resources for problem mitigation and prevention.

Community policing model in Lisbon was built upon six key principles:

1. Security is not only the responsibility of the police, but also of all the community
2. A cooperative and trusting relationship between police and citizens is required
3. Consultation and engagement of local community in the process of planning, implementation and evaluation of the community policing should be supported
4. Promotion of a preventive approach
5. Promotion of a problem-solving approach

6. Openness of the police organisation to incorporate community contributions, adopting methods to meet local security needs prioritised by the citizens, networking and enhancing community resources are all required.

Through trainings and focus group discussions with residents and local partners, the concept of community policing was introduced in Alta de Lisbon. Residents were asked about their main concerns, what they felt were the most problematic areas and the profile of the agents that should be chosen. Based on the results, police officers for the community policing role were selected. In November 2011 was the beginning of the first on foot patrol by the Community Policing Team. Since then, through this close cooperation between the police and local partners, the partnership promotes crime prevention activities aimed at more vulnerable groups.
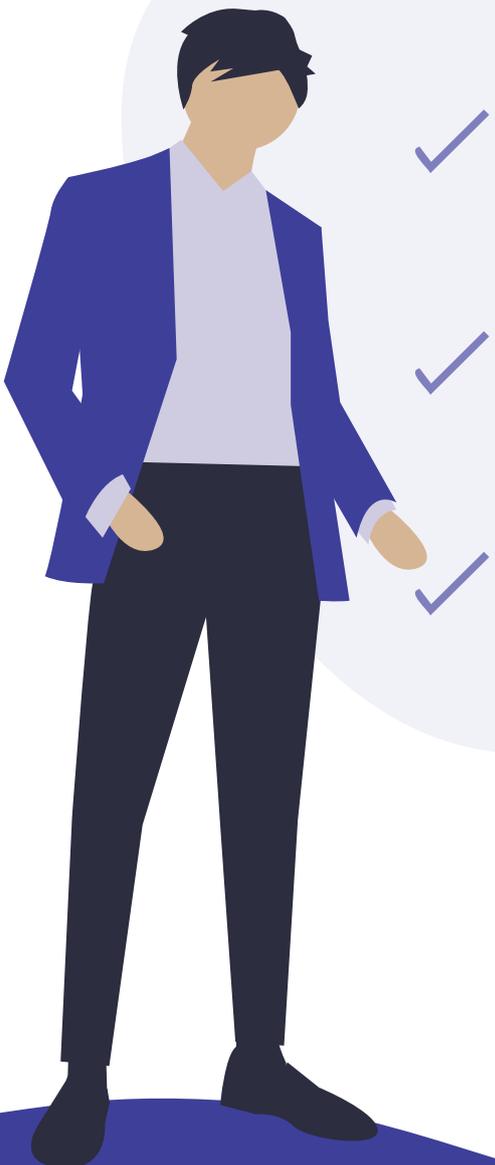
Community policing in Catalonia:

In the transition to democracy in the late 1970s and 1980s, there was a need to transform the Spanish police from a (political) State Police force into a Police Service based more on citizens' human rights. The police had an active role in preserving Franco's Regime, and the new situation required new values and principles, and indeed a new Police mission. The need to transform the police, resulted in a frenetic search for models that could serve as a reference and that had democratic prestige. Most of Spanish police services have tried to look for legitimacy in the Peelian model.

The police model of the Generalitat Police-Mossos d'Esquadra, the autonomous police force of Catalonia, is inspired by the proximity or community police model. Adopted since 1994, when this police force started to replace the National Police and the Civil Guard, it was considered not only as a change of police forces but as a change from a more traditional police model to a community one.

The Catalan police, the Generalitat Police-Mossos d'Esquadra, has two orientations of the community policing model: (i) at a global level (central services), and (ii) at a local level. Central services have a specialised unit in Community Policing (ORC). This area lists the topics of interest. For example, there is a list of vulnerable groups, such as: elderly people; minors; female victims of gender violence; victims of domestic violence; victims of hate crimes or discrimination; and tourist victims. There are also specific areas of citizen security including: home burglaries; crime associated with companies or commercial establishments; security in nightlife; thefts and robberies in the rural areas. In fact, the most relevant community policing experiences have taken place at the municipal level. To support implementation, there are concrete objectives in the field of the prevention and public safety, for which specific monitoring is carried out and where priority is given to proximity actions. Central services make generic operating guidelines that, once in the local areas, are adapted according to the particular circumstances and the specialised units of proximity and their relationship with the community. The more theoretical approach at a global level, contrasts with the absolutely practical approach adopted at a local level.

Key messages from CCI

The community policing approach is not only about police visibility, contactability and trust – or even citizen-police dialogue – it is also about what priorities the police will follow, who will do what and what their aims/targets will be

The approach prioritises problem-solving and perceived police fairness, integrated in a crime prevention model, reducing criminal victimisation and disorder, improving feelings of security, fostering trust and improving public perceptions of policing.

The relationship between the different concepts (community policing, neighbourhood approaches, crime victimisation, feelings of insecurity and trust in and legitimacy of the police) are still far from clear. However, we might conclude that the community policing approach works in the sense that it offers the benefits desired by citizens and policy-makers.

The terms used for community policing vary between countries and change over time. Terms include: neighbourhood policing (UK); citizen-oriented police work (DE); territorial police work (DE); proximity policing (ES); and community-oriented policing (US). The way in which the community policing model is applied also varies between countries and regions.

The basic principles of local officers engaging with citizens in local areas remain the same, but the emphasis has changed over the years. Programmes of reform have aimed to tackle problems such as corruption and racism, as well as shift focus onto addressing the perceptions and concerns of local communities.

Trust implies a kind of social contract, a two-way dialogue between police and citizens. Trust may be seen as a prerequisite for policing, while in many police models 'trust' is seen as a result of community policing.

A review mentioned by the UK College of Policing in 2018, has shown that neighbourhood policing is effective at reducing public perceptions of disorder, increasing trust and confidence in the police and increasing the perceived legitimacy of the police.

Community policing can be also used by local law enforcement agencies to tackle the current terrorist threats. This approach is used to minimise the spread of radical ideologies and as a form of gathering intelligence. Interaction between the police and the public can provide an important source of information for the intelligence.

Currently, the problems facing community policing model are austerity, combined with increasing demand for police services.