The Ps of Prevention - A Model for Local Crime Prevention Planning

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Prevention	**Policing**	Policing (in its broadest context) is critical to local crime prevention. Ensuring guardianship, eradicating permissiveness and improving clear-up rates support local crime prevention initiatives.
	People	Protecting people is a key goal of local crime prevention planning. Strategies designed to reduce (repeat) victimisation and end offending will be integral to any local efforts.
	Places	Addressing factors promoting crime in particular areas will often bring swift success. Crime prevention through environmental design and situational crime prevention measures reduce opportunities, increase risks and reduce rewards of crime.
	Perceptions	Tackling the fear of crime complements prevention techniques and programs. Reducing fear of crime can promote greater use of public areas and increase surveillance, as well as improving the quality of life.
Process	**Planning**	Planning preventative efforts is critical to success. Planning includes analysis of existing crime data, reviewing local resources and capacity and developing effective strategies.
	Problem-solving	Problem-solving encourages ongoing analysis and response. Crime prevention plans need constant refreshing and renewal. Through a problem-solving approach, specific crime problems can be individually addressed.
	Proprietorship and Participation	Local involvement and ownership is necessary to motivate and maintain interest. While evidence-based strategies are important, local initiative and creativity will also ensure appropriate responses to emerging crime problems. Building participation in and ownership of local residents will help maintain participation.
	Parternships	No one agency has the resources to effectively tackle crime. Working in partnership is a necessary feature of local crime prevention planning.
	Performance	Monitoring and reviewing performance is important in determining effectiveness. As measures are developed, new crime problems or techniques will be developed. Frequent monitoring of performance will determine if suitable measures have been adopted.

The following provides a detailed explanation of the Ps of prevention.

Prevention and Process

Two strands to the planning model have been developed. This acknowledges that there are specific issues associated with mounting effective preventative responses. The two strands are best summarised by reference to a simple binary distinction – outcome and process. Prevention is aimed at an outcome (reducing crime, increasing resilience, increasing risks of crime, reducing rewards, etc.). These outcomes will only be achieved through effective processes. Process refers to the methods used to achieve these outcomes.

Prevention

Policing

Community members and business owners naturally have a tendency to equate crime prevention with policing. Discussions of crime invariably raise issues of policing, including responsiveness, adequacy and punishment. Public and private police are critical to efforts to prevent crime. Without getting captured by discussions of policing, it is important in local crime prevention planning to consider issues associated with (formal and informal) guardianship of key areas and encouraging (formal and informal) social control. Strategies to encourage reporting of crime; improving police relationships with particular communities; effective guardianship of hot spots and sending messages that offending is unacceptable are all relevant to considerations of local crime prevention planning. Each of these issues has implications for policing.

People

Preventing crimes against the person will be a significant focus of any local crime prevention plan. Property offences will often garner greatest interest within a community, generally because of the visibility of these offences. Nonetheless, it is critical that offences against the person receive due consideration and prioritisation. The less visible offences will have detrimental consequences for a community and must be considered in any local crime prevention plan. While preventing these crimes will often pose significant challenges, it is important that councils' liaise with existing strategies (i.e. regional violence against women campaigns), consider ways of contributing to the reduction of risk factors in the area and seek to build on protective factors through community programs and funding.

Places

Key hot spots exist in every Local Government Area (LGA). Focusing attention on these locations can bring positive results. Undertaking routine audits of key locations and ensuring a whole-of-council response to planning, development applications, lighting, landscaping, repair and cleaning (amongst other things) will help to prevent the vulnerability of particular areas to crime. Local government must work with external partners including businesses to tackle crimes occurring in public places. Licensees, retailers, shopping centre management and security personnel are just some of the primary players who must be engaged in efforts to prevent crime in specific locations.

Perceptions

Fearful people will often retreat from particular locations. This will have deleterious consequences for that area. Tackling perceptions and fear of crime can help to alleviate irrational fears. People mostly want to know that something is being done to fix a problem. Promotion of positive activities and strategies should be routinely undertaken.

Process

Planning

Effective local crime prevention requires considerable planning. The limits of local government; the multitude of potential partners and players; relevant pre-existing regional, state and commonwealth initiatives and internal policies and practices are just some of the reasons that necessitate effective local planning. Good planning requires, amongst other things, good access to and analysis of crime data; support of inter-agency crime prevention planning structures; strong leadership and coordination and effective problem-solving methods.

Problem-Solving

Crime prevention efforts frequently stall due to an absence of practical action designed to specifically address local crime problems. Adopting a problem-solving approach can help maintain and sustain motivation of partners and ensure focus on specific crime problems. Various problem-solving models exist that can support local efforts. For example, Paul Ekblom's 5 Is (Intelligence, Intervention, Implementation, Involvement, Impact)[1] provides the basis for specific crime problem-solving activities.

Proprietorship and Participation

Getting local community members to own and participate in local crime prevention is an ongoing challenge. Benefits accrue if all people living, working and visiting an area take some responsibility for that area. Achieving this, especially in areas of high mobility or low commitment to the local community can be especially difficult. Local forums, development of simple educational material (including crime problem-solving literature), training of key local representatives, insurance incentives, community grants for local initiatives and other community consultative structures can aid greater involvement of local community members. Direct impact on crime levels might be negligible, but an increased understanding of local crime problems and a heightened understanding of prevention methods can emanate from such activities.

Partnerships

The somewhat trite statement that crime is everyone's responsibility remains true. Whole-of-council, whole-of-government and whole-of-community responses are required for effective local crime prevention. Building partnerships within, across and outside of council are necessary to provide a 'joined-up' response to crime.

Performance

Finally, monitoring and evaluating performance of interventions is necessary. Too few crime prevention initiatives are evaluated. Reviewing performance of individual initiatives will determine the efficacy of maintaining these interventions. Opportunities for learning why particular responses worked or didn't work in particular locations will be critical to future planning and should ultimately contribute to the wider body of knowledge on local crime prevention planning and initiatives.

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[1] http://www.designagainstcrime.com/web/5is_detailed_docs.htm