



CRIME AND DISORDER SUB-COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

How the MPS are tackling drugs in Havering

CI Lisa Butterfield
DCI Frank Copley:

East Area CU

SUMMARY

It is well documented that criminal drug use can be found at the root of many social problems, often manifesting in problematic behaviour on our streets and behind closed doors. Crime and disorder ranges from low level drugs related ASB and litter, to high level dealing, supply, OCN and violent crime.

As such tackling drugs requires a wide range of tactics and interventions – across East Area’s policing strands, other Met departments and in partnership with local authorities and other agencies – particularly around regulation of all drug classifications and support work for those who are drug dependent.

The MPS has recently re-launched its drugs strategy, focussing on drug-related violence (DRV) and East Area BCU is committed to this policy too. This will demonstrate a long term commitment to reduce demand, harm and supply within the operating parameters of the BCU. Higher level OCN targeting and DRV will be the responsibility of Met Specialist Crime and the NCA.

Our data analysis shows that possession offences account for around 93% of drug offences in Havering, with Romford Town Centre consistently holding the highest volume. Rainham and Wennington has seen a spike in May 2019.

Within the BCU (and Havering) any focused drugs work will predominantly be undertaken by local SNT and CID proactive resource. However Emergency Response and Safeguarding teams will be heavily involved through their ongoing demand. Within Safeguarding, we know that drug and alcohol dependency is a key driver for DA and other related issues.

Whilst all strands will deal reactively with drug-related crime, the focus should always be on prevention. This will be achieved through our continued partnerships under IOM (inc DIP) and across LBH and other agencies which educate, along with intervening and supporting those with a drug dependency. This is a joint problem to continue to tackle and reduce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the volume of drug-related crime in Romford Town Centre, a recommendation for continued & focussed partnership work in Romford Town to tackle following drug related issues:

- Drug related ASB
- Policing of PSPO
- Licensing activity

Further joint analysis required of Romford TC to identify the following:

- Drugs related ASB type
- Drug possession offences
- Ongoing repeat locations for targeted activity – ASB closure notices / licensing enforcement / drug warrants
- Partnership activity to incorporate street watch / street pastor / drugs outreach workers to identified hot spots

Recommendation – 12 month analysis completed by LBH analyst to support long term problem solving approach in Romford Town ward. To be supported by MPS intelligence/crime data

Activity within PSPO:

- Use of PSPO & s35 police dispersal powers to disperse / displace ASB with particular focus on drug use
- Partnership days of action to focus on drug misuse – incorporating tackling possession offences at key locations / licensing visits / outreach support work

Recommendation – use analysis to draw up 12 month plan, incorporating detail around focus for BAU / opportunities for increased partnership work & monthly joint days of action

Licensing activity:

- Make best use of pub watch to promote drugs safety & psychoactive substance info
- Reinvigorate op 'makesafe' – safeguarding and drink spiking awareness amongst SIA community
- Drugs testing at premises – swabs of bars / toilets etc

We will continue to support existing strategies connected with YOS, IOM, MARAC and MASH functions, many of which will feature drug and alcohol dependencies which drives criminal behaviour.

REPORT DETAIL

Current BCU (Havering) activity is taking place across all strands and the EA DRV strategy uses the 4 P approach – this is aligned to the new pan-London strategy:

Prepare: Build relationships with partner agencies and Night Time Economy businesses, with a view to addressing emerging issues and trends specific to London.

Protect: Problem Oriented and community wide partnerships to achieve best results in reducing drug crime and related anti-social behaviour and improve community safety.

Pursue: Reduce the fear of drug related crime and anti-social behaviour by targeting those involved in drug related violence and those who profit from drug related criminality.

Prevent: Engagement with local community groups and partners, supporting a holistic approach to diversion and intervention, focusing upon the most vulnerable and including high risk gangs affiliated young people.

Current & future pan-Borough activity (within BCU drugs strategy):

- Police LIT (Local Intelligence Teams) identify drugs hot spots pan borough – partnership work to conduct EVA & SARA (problem solving) on long term problems or ASB closure activity / housing enforcement on specific residential premises
- Drugs activity / safety messages to be agenda items for police at ward panel, YIAG & SNB meetings
- Drugs safety & psychoactive substance info to be offered at secondary school – pupil, staff and parent information
- Partnership work with police and LBH licensing officers, work with health professionals to promote good practice & drug safety at NHS premises and licensed dispensaries
- Focus on IOM and DIP strategy
- Continue to have a robust drugs strategy at key local events/festivals. This will require strong collaboration with event organisers and support from LBH.
- Use of Pan-London asset (such as the Violent Crime Taskforce) where possible.
- Stop & Search

Stop and Search in Havering has increased significantly from 12 months ago whereby the numbers were in single figures. Officers have had to be retrained following a number of years where powers were not being used enough, especially in Havering. Increased use of Body Worn Video has seen better levels of

confidence and a reduction in complaints. However, any high profile incidents relating to stop & search can have a detrimental effect on officers, leading to reduction in the use of the power. Some of the recent drugs possession increases are not necessarily a result of more people taking drugs, but as a result of PC's now utilising their powers of search and the suspects who are now being arrested had become so confident of not getting searched that little effort was made to conceal the drugs or discard them.

Ward level activity

SNT will continue to monitor and react to lower level drug activity derived from community intelligence and ward-panel priorities. If activity is linked to DRV, then additional asset can be bid for through the Monthly Intelligence Meeting.

CID activity - Reactive and Proactive

Reactive teams:

- New focus on (Possession with Intent to Supply) PWITS. This has now been taken almost completely into the CID office from Emergency Response.
- There is a focus on fast time charging rather than long Released Under Investigation (RUI) periods. This is assisted by the use of drug expert witnesses being able to do fast time holding statements whilst the suspect is in custody.
- Forensic Strategy - New process to get analysis of the drugs done whilst in custody and improve positive criminal justice disposal.
- DIP focus. Better understanding and knowledge for officers of the DIP process and a focus on using the information to target violent offenders if they are wanted for DIP failures.

Proactive teams: This is a small team, which is highly effective and currently deals with more serious BCU-related crime. This will focus covert activity on gangs, violence and DRV and activity will be derived from ongoing crime and intelligence. This will include carrying out crime warrants and focussed offender activity.

They are self-sufficient and will also work with other MPS units to undertake other types of covert activity, including tactics such as Test Purchase Operations, where there is a specific DRV problem. This will often require wider MPS funding.

There are currently ongoing operations targeting DRV across the BCU by the EA proactive team.

Please see additional reports circulated providing some further detail of activity and crime stats.