

## **Tackling Drug Related Violence within the London Borough of Havering**

### **Summary**

Drug abuse is commonly known to be the foundation of many social problems and the root to a number of crimes. This often creates problematic behaviours within our communities whether this be openly on the streets or behind closed doors in the family home. The scope of drug related crime ranges hugely from low level drug related ASB onto high level drug dealing, organised crime groups and violent crime.

In order to tackle DRV a number of tactical options are available to intervene. Intervention is required across the board from the East Area policing command and in partnership agencies within the local authorities. Tactical options include, but are not limited to enforcement of the law surrounding DRV and to help support and guide those who are drug dependant.

The MPS Drugs Strategy 2017 to 2021 – Supporting Local Issues That Matter was created to deal with the impact of drugs on our local communities and to help build the trust in the Police. DRV is a pan-London issue and this strategy is built upon that taken from the MPS Drugs Strategy 2017 to 2021.

Our data identifies that drug offences within Havering have increased by 34.7% (+183) from January to December 2019. 93.5% of drug offences are possession of drugs with the most offences being within Rainham and Wennington Ward.

All strands within the East Area BCU deal with drug-related crimes, with the main focus on these on prevention. Continuous partnership working across the Police and the local authorities need to continue. Further education across the board is required to help with the reduction of DRV. It is evident from the data that drug offences have been increasing over the past 12 months and further work is required to reduce this.

### **Recommendations**

With the increase of drug related crime within Havering recommended tactical partnership work is required to tackle drug related crime including violence. With the assistance from the local intelligence unit crime hotspots can be identified to help concentrate policing demands to the right areas. Targeting drug related ASB, drug possession offences and drug related violent crimes will help with identifying crime hotspots.

- Licensing Activity
- Proactive Patrols (overt & covert)
- Partnership working

#### **Licensing**

- Utilise pub watch, promoting responsible drinking and drug safety
- Drink spiking awareness to be promoted across licenced premises
- Joint operation for drug testing in hidden areas such as toilets with local council
- Conduct Operations utilising drug itemisers at venues as a condition of entry
- Enforcement of current licencing conditions, ensuring ALL conditions are met
- Ensure ID scanners such as Scannet are being utilised by all trained SIA security officers

## Proactive Patrols

- Overt patrols focused on town centres during late evenings/weekends
- Utilise Sec. 35 police dispersal powers to displace ASB
- Utilise stop and search powers
- Increase police resources i.e. requesting assistance from MSC & VCTF

## Partnership Working

- Incorporate street watch, street pastor, drug outreach works in areas with high footfall such as Town Centre's.
- Joint operations with BTP & Dog Unit in key travel hubs (train and bus stations) across LBH. Focusing of drug dogs to assist with identifying criminal offences.

## **Current & Future Borough activity**

- Creation of the East Area BCU drugs advisor role.
- Police LIT (local intelligence unit) to identify the drug hot spots across Havering. LIT to also actively identify and link drug related ASB and pass to SNT to act on immediately who will enforce closure notices with local council.
- Drug related presentations to be given at ward panel meetings.
- Safer schools officers to provide education to schools, school children and parents regarding drug abuse and drug safety.
- Use of MPS resources such as Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF) and Territorial Support Group (TSG).
- Stop & Search powers.
- Continuous partnership working with police, local authority, NHS and mental health practitioners to focus attention on drug related safety to promote good working practice across the board.
- Use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) & S. 35 Police Dispersal Powers to disperse ASB within particular areas linked to drug abuse.

## **SNT level activity**

SNT to continue their work enforcing lower level drug related offences which has been identified by local community intelligence and ward-panel meetings. Their focus continues past arresting, charging and convicting criminals for drug related offences, but to then further prevent offences by utilising ASB closure notices. The use of partnership working with the local council housing department can help to tackle this area to assist with the prevention drug related crime.

## **CID activity – Reactive & Proactive**

### Reactive Teams:

- There is an emphasis to deal with fast time charging rather than releasing suspects on bail or released under investigation for those arrested for Possession with Intent to Supply (PWITS) investigations. This is being supported by a Rapid Drug Service giving investigators quick turnarounds for forensic examinations linked to drug supply whilst the suspect remains in custody.

- The introduction of a Local Drugs Advisor (rank of Detective Sergeant) has been appointed to oversee drug possession and supply cases to ensure all drug related investigations are being dealt with diligently to improve positive disposals.
- Training and development for officers to EDIT test suspected drugs locally to identify the drug whilst suspects are in custody, offering local officers fast time results to support charging decisions and remand applications.
- A focus on increased drug expert witnesses locally to the East Area BCU to assist with providing officers dealing with PWITS investigations the evidence required to support charging decisions and remand application whilst suspects are in police custody.

#### Proactive Teams:

The East Area BCU have 2 teams that currently cover the whole BCU, which include Havering. These are the Proactive Unit and the Gangs Enforcement Team. The team consists of both Detective and Police Constables with knowledge and experience on dealing with crime from a covert perspective. This includes gang related crime and DRV with activity derived from ongoing police operations to intelligence led policing. Day to day activity includes identifying intelligence and progressing operations in order to obtain search warrants to actively conducting covert proactive patrols across the BCU identifying crime in hotspots linked to gang activity and DRV.

Proactive teams are self-sufficient with scope to support other MPS departments. Most of their operations require further MPS funding which is applied for by the team independently.

There are ongoing operations targeting DRV and gang related crime across the EA BCU by the Proactive Unit and Gangs Enforcement Team.