

**Harborough District
Community Safety Partnership Plan
2011 to 2014
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Communication Strategy



Harborough District
Community Safety Partnership

*Harborough District Community Safety Partnership aims to maintain low levels of crime
and promote safe and strong communities'*

Introduction

The Harborough Community Safety Partnership has produced this Communication Strategy to support the delivery of its Community Safety Plan for 2011 – 2014.

The purpose of this communication strategy is to ensure that throughout the partnership's efforts in tackling issues of crime and disorder there is a clear and co-ordinated approach to the way in which activity is publicised to local communities both to raise the profile of the partnership and to encourage local people to participate in making the District of Harborough a safer place to live, work and visit.

Despite a wide range of initiatives, it is generally acknowledged that the majority of local people are unaware of the partnership or the type of work it undertakes. To overcome this, greater emphasis will be placed on a planned approach to engaging with communities by providing members with guidance on the key messages that need to be communicated and a variety of methods with which to deliver them.

Through effective and sustained contact with local communities, the Partnership will be better placed to keep local people apprised of its work and also encourage them to become willing stakeholders in creating a safer and more secure environment for the benefit of everyone.

Aims

This communication plan has been developed to improve contact with communities through a framework that the partnership can adapt and change to suit individual campaigns and media opportunities.

By consistent application of the guidance contained within this strategy the Harborough Community Safety Partnership will be able to successfully:

- Promote and raise the profile of the Community Safety Partnership through media campaigns and by giving the partnership an identity.
- Improve local communities' understanding of the partnership's work.
- Improve the communities' understanding of how they can participate in helping to reduce crime and disorder.
- Support the delivery of Harborough Community Safety Partnership's three year plan, and therefore improve public confidence and reduce re-offending.

Key messages to be communicated

The Harborough Community Safety Partnership has highlighted some key messages that need to be delivered so that local people can be informed of what is being done. It is important that every opportunity is taken to present a joint approach to communication rather than acting as independent agencies. This will help to reassure communities that a united approach is being taken to tackle local problems and will also help to promote the partnerships own identity. The key messages are to:

- Inform local people of the work being undertaken to tackle issues of crime and disorder.
- Provide information about what people can do themselves to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.
- Reduce the fear of crime by reassuring communities that the District of Harborough is a safe place to live, work and visit.
- Encourage and assist communities to become actively involved in tackling local problems of crime and disorder.

Methods of delivery

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Because of the diversity and rural nature of our community, trying to reach our intended audience can, at times, be very challenging. Often the use of a single method to communicate messages can be insufficient to effectively permeate down to the level we require.

Consideration should always be given to using multiple ways of getting a message across to an intended audience as not everyone listens to the same radio or reads the same newspapers. To capture the attention of as many of the intended audience as possible it is intended to use a combination of delivery methods. Below are a variety of options available when deciding how best to deliver a message

Public events

- *‘Consultation events such as the Carnivals or Community Forums* – These can help engage with the public as well as canvas their issues and concerns.
- *Road-show events* – handing out crime prevention tips. This helps provide community reassurance and security.
- *Environmental Action Days* – Reduces the fear of crime, helps engage and reassure members of the public that action is being taken against their concerns.
- *National Awareness Days* – e.g domestic violence, alcohol awareness. These days should be included in the media planner and used to highlight more local initiatives.

Local media – Newspapers, Television and Radio

- *Parish magazines / local papers* – The best way to tap into local community is through very local publications and parish magazines. (List at **Appendix ‘A’**)
- *Photo opportunities* – These are a good way to get interest from newspapers and television and get the most column inches out of the event. Think visually about events you are holding and make provisions for photographers and cameras.
- *Press releases / Media invitations* – The Media Officer from the partner which is leading a campaign will inform press about the event / campaign the partnership is running. Media Lead Officers to be pre agreed in the Partnership Action Plans.

Advertisements

- In the current financial climate the use of advertisements in newspapers, local radio, billboards, magazines, buses etc should be considered carefully. The costs of advertising and the potential impact on a Partnership target must be considered.
- Leaflets can be produced but without effective distribution can be ineffective.
- Posters can be effective on a small budget – these can be distributed through Parishes & Businesses and displayed around the community. These can publicise crime prevention messages, new campaigns or useful contacts.

Websites

- Websites of the individual partner agencies can be updated with CSP crime prevention messages.
- Publicise good news stories about partnership achievements.
- Provide diary dates for up and coming CSP campaigns and public events.
- Updating partner agencies websites provides a direct link to the CSP’s audience which will raise their profile and increase public confidence.

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- Web Sites should have links to other Community Safety Partnership web sites.
- The Harborough Community Safety Partnership will develop its own home page with the District Councils own content management system.

Newsletters

- Use will be made through partner newsletters which can publicise the achievements of the partnership. These can promote future events and campaigns as well promote community involvement.
- Newsletters can raise the profile of the partnership, increase public understanding of the work of the partnership and reach a wide audience.
- Community Safety information can also be placed within other newsletters such as those generated by schools and the voluntary sector.

Branding

- Officers should include the partnerships corporate branding on all partnership material.
- For photograph opportunities Officers will be expected to wear own uniforms (Police, Fire, Council etc) each incorporating their own logo. Where possible the Partnership banner should be in the background of the photograph.

Hard to Reach Groups

Crime and disorder impacts upon different sections of the community in different ways. Some sections, for various reasons, may be inaccessible to standard communication mechanisms. The partnership will need to consider how best to reach and elicit the participation of locally appropriate 'hard to reach' groups. This can take considerably more initiative, imagination and effort to ensure that such groups of people become more readily and effectively included. Indeed, it may well be that they are only hard to reach because insufficient effort is being made. It is unlikely that whole sections of the population do not want to express their views and wishes but more likely that we are not communicating in an appropriate manner.

Defining 'hard to reach' groups can be difficult but the more commonly recognised groups include:

- Young people
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
- Older people
- Disabled people – physical, sensory & learning difficulties
- Minority ethnic groups
- People with caring responsibility
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered community
- Socially excluded groups
- Asylum seekers / refugees
- Homeless people
- Travellers
- People with mental health problems
- Faith communities
- Small businesses
- Rural communities
- People from disadvantaged areas

The reasons why these groups can be hard to reach vary but can arise from a wide range of conditions such as:

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- Some groups of people, such as working single parents, have less spare time than others, such as retired people
- Difficulty understanding written or spoken English
- Cannot see, hear or understand
- Mobility difficulties
- Culturally isolated from mainstream society's activity
- Feel alienated from, or even suspicious of, the organisation trying to communicate with them
- Have no permanent address
- Living with long term illness
- Out at work all day
- Just may not be interested in engaging with public bodies

To have a positive impact on groups that are hard to reach or engage with the partnership should consider alternative methods of communication as well as the more traditional ways to target the general population. Again, there is no definitive list but having identified the particular group or issue you wish to focus on, consider:

Build on what you've already got – use your existing relationships with minority sections of the community to involve them with other local initiatives and as a route into other groups

Make a personal approach

Target appropriate venues; youth clubs, leisure centres, training establishments, lunch clubs, community centres and faith groups

Access through trusted workers, carers, community leaders and teachers

Contact voluntary groups, health organisations, charities etc.

Use familiar channels for information e.g. community newspapers. Places of worship, existing networks and meeting places

Consider using social networking sites on the internet e.g Facebook, MySpace and twitter.

These are widely used by young people and other hard to reach groups. A profile can be created easily and without cost

Make information available in a number of different forms e.g. Braille, large print, CD and in appropriate languages

Keep track of changes in communities in terms of location and makeup

Develop a network of key individuals to use as a means of maintaining contact

Avoid jargon and write in plain language

'Piggyback' on other events that the target audience are really interested in e.g – Age Concern events, Carnival, Youth events, young mothers meetings, festivals etc.

Hold events at times dependant upon the circumstances of those you wish to communicate with

Consider special needs such as wheelchair access, hearing loops for those using hearing aids

Finally – Think imaginatively about your options when trying to communicate with hard to reach groups – consider the audience and what might interest them.

Accountability

Key to the success of any communication strategy is the need to hold people to account for its delivery. Whilst everyone who is a member, either directly or indirectly, has a role to play in communicating the work of the partnership, the Strategy board has overall responsibility in ensuring that the communication strategy is actually being converted from words to action.

The Strategy Board will appoint a Lead Officer for the Communications Strategy.