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Briefing Note:

Evaluation of Operation Reduction

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Introduction

Operation Reduction was established in November 2005 and aimed to tackle both the supply and demand associated with drugs in Brighton and Hove. This was to be achieved by increasing the number of drug users in treatment and increasing the level of drug seizures and the number of individuals charged with supplying controlled drugs. By targeting these issues it was also hoped that a reduction in levels and fear of crime and antisocial behaviour in hotspot areas could be achieved.

Methodology

This evaluation focused on changes in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour within the Brighton and Hove area and also amongst the individuals targeted by Operation Reduction.

Area based analysis

This analysis suggested that total offending across Brighton and Hove decreased following the introduction of Operation Reduction. Indeed, as shown in Table 1, between the pre-period (November 2003 to October 2005) and the post-period (November 2005 to October 2007) **total crime reduced by 4%.**¹

Table 1: Change in total crime between pre and post periods

Year of dataset	All offences in dataset	Change on previous year	Percentage change on previous year	Significance of change year on year
Nov 03-Oct 05	64,113	-	-	
Nov 05-Oct 07	61,558	-2,555	-4%	ns

ns=not statistically significant

As the Operation sought to reduce crime by reducing the need to fund a substance misuse habit, it was anticipated that greater reduction would be noted on particular offences, specifically those of an acquisitive nature with a quick offence-to-cash turn around.²

Changes in the level of these 'impact' offences suggested that they decreased at a greater rate than offending overall. Indeed, as Table 2 shows, between the pre and post periods **crime falling into this impact category decreased by 18%.**

¹ This 4% decrease was not statistically significant. However, the overall 4% reduction masks changes between individual years. Indeed, between the November to October period in 2004/05 and the same period in 2005/06 a 1% reduction was noted, whilst between 2005/06 and 2006/07 a 10% reduction was seen.

² Impact offences were determined to be: burglary in a dwelling (including aggravated burglary); burglary in a building other than a dwelling (including aggravated burglary); robbery of personal property; theft from the person; theft in a dwelling other than from an automatic machine or meter; theft from a vehicle and theft from a shop.

Table 2: Change in impact crimes between pre and post periods

Year of dataset	Impact offences in dataset	Change on previous year	Percentage change on previous year	Significance of change year on year
Nov 03-Oct 05	19,169	-	-	
Nov 05-Oct 07	15,805	-3,364	-18%	**

** = statistically significant at the 99% confidence interval

Anti-social behaviour was also examined across Brighton and Hove comparing one year prior to the start of Operation Reduction with one year after.³ This suggested a slight (but not statistically significant) increase of 3%.

Individual based analysis

Analysis of offences attributed to those targeted by Operation Reduction revealed that individuals' offending in the two-year period after contact with the operation was significantly lower than that in the two-year period prior to contact. Indeed, a **63% reduction in their overall offending** was seen between the pre and post periods compared to a 21% reduction in offending by those known to, but not targeted by, the Operation (the comparison group).⁴

Further, examination of the change in impact offending revealed that a **50% reduction in impact offences** was found among those targeted by the operation between the pre- and post-periods, whilst a 23% increase in such offending was found among the comparison group.⁵

The analysis above focuses on all individuals targeted by Operation Reduction. However, the operation effectively consisted of two halves; one side involving enforcement targeted at those supplying drugs (supply) and the other targeted towards those using illicit substances, encouraging them into treatment (demand). Change in offending in each of these two groups is considered below.

Demand side analysis

A **69% reduction in total offending** between the two-year pre and the two-year post period was seen when examining the offending of those targeted under the demand element of

³ Due to coverage of data provided.

⁴ The 63% decrease in offending for those targeted was statistically significant (T=-5.771, df=89, p=0.000), whilst the 21% decrease noted in the comparison group was not.

⁵ The 50% decrease in offending for those targeted was statistically significant (T=-2.798, df=48, p=0.007) whilst the 23% increase in offending noted in the comparison group was not.

Operation Reduction.⁶ Further, **impact offending also reduced by 69%** between the pre- and post-periods.⁷

Supply side analysis

A **62% reduction in total offending** between the two-year pre and the two-year post period was seen when examining the offending of those targeted under the supply element of Operation Reduction.⁸ However, impact offending reduced by just 29% between the pre- and post-periods.⁹

However, those targeted on the supply side of the operation may not be offending to support a substance misuse habit and one would not necessarily anticipate a reduction in these impact offences. Further analysis suggested that there was, however, a statistically significant decrease in their drug offences (78%¹⁰) compared to a non-statistically significant increase in the drug offences of those targeted under the demand side.¹¹

Summary

Operation reduction and the targeting of particular individuals appears to have contributed to a significant decrease in offending across Brighton and Hove, specifically in terms of a reduction in acquisitive offences associated with funding a drugs habit.

This decrease in acquisitive offences was greater in the group targeted within the demand element of the operation, whilst drug offending reduced in those targeted by the supply element of the operation.

⁶ This decrease was statistically significant (T=-2.356, df=15, p=0.032).

⁷ This decrease was statistically significant (T=-2.558, df=12, p=0.025).

⁸ This decrease was statistically significant (T=-6.603, df=68, p=0.000).

⁹ Not statistically significant.

¹⁰ T=-6.622, df=59, p=0.000).

¹¹ The increase was equivalent to just 6 offences (although this was a 300% increase denoting a rise from 2 to 8).