



Home Office

Neighbourhood policing: the impact of piloting and early national implementation

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Home Office Online Report 01/08

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has helped make this report possible, especially the following.

- The residents in all the sites who participated in the surveys.
- The project managers and staff in all the implementation areas, and the senior officers, for agreeing to the selection of the sites.
- The Senior Responsible Officer for the Neighbourhood Policing Programme: Matt Baggott.
- The ACPO programme team, in particular Jerry Kirkby, Brian Livesey, and Martin Bagshaw and all of the regional field officers.
- The Home Office policy team, in particular Jo Grinter, Hannah Saunders and Lynne Spiers.
- The Independent Academic Advisory Group, chaired by Professor Sir Tony Bottoms and Professor Rod Morgan.
- Olivier Marie and Professor Stephen Machin for designing and carrying out the econometric modelling.
- The BMRB team, in particular Matt Brown, for the NRPP and BCU telephone surveys.
- The Ipsos MORI team, in particular Claire Millet and Chris Terry, for the organisational surveys.
- Professor Nick Tilley, Geoff Berry, Rick Brown and Tim Read for conducting the BCU process evaluation.
- Home Office/NPIA research colleagues: David Mann and Ian Macdonald for statistical advice; Andy Myhill for help with the fieldwork and checking the analysis; John Dobby for the development of the NRPP and BCU analysis and advice on logistic regression, and Duncan McPhee for assistance with preparing the results tables.
- All the Home Office/NPIA staff who provided comments on early drafts and/or advised on the design of the programme, including Lesley Duff, Andy Healey and, in particular, Rachel Tuffin for all her support and guidance throughout the project.
- The two academic peer reviewers, Professor Wes Skogan (Northwestern University) and Professor John Eck (University of Cincinnati), and Professor Dennis Rosenbaum (Loyola University at Chicago) for their comments on the report.
- Carole F. Willis, who died in 2006, deserves special thanks. Without Carole's leadership and judgement as Assistant Director of RDS, the NRPP evaluation would not have taken place nor would it have informed the development of neighbourhood policing.

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Executive summary

The international evidence base indicates that neighbourhood policing's prospects for success are promising in terms of reducing crime and improving public perceptions, particularly when it involves both the public's participation in priority setting and problem-solving. Both are critical elements of the current programme to introduce neighbourhood policing across England and Wales. Previous research, however, has highlighted the challenges associated with implementing neighbourhood policing and suggested that change requires commitment in the long-term.

The results presented in this report are broadly consistent with the international evidence. When piloted at a local level, neighbourhood policing was found to have a significant positive impact on a wide range of outcome measures, including criminal victimisation, perceptions of anti-social behaviour, and public confidence in the police. Follow-up research found that the vast majority of these improvements were sustained in the longer-term. Importantly, three delivery mechanisms – foot patrol, community engagement, and problem-solving – were all found to be critical in improving the public's confidence in the police.

Research carried out during the first year of the three-year national implementation programme was less clear-cut. As expected, it was too early to reach any firm conclusions about the impact of neighbourhood policing based on the early stages of a national programme which attempts to 'scale up' the implementation of neighbourhood policing. A fuller assessment will only be possible when the programme has reached maturity and full implementation achieved. There was evidence from the programme's first year to suggest that BCUs had not yet implemented in full and that effective community engagement and problem-solving were not yet in place. The evidence suggests that these delivery mechanisms would need to be in place in order to see a change in outcomes. Even though no improvements were found, the research still highlighted the importance of neighbourhood policing and police fairness in *maintaining* levels of public confidence.

Introduction

The implementation of neighbourhood policing has represented a significant undertaking for the Government, police service and their partners. Neighbourhood policing was initially piloted at a ward level as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) between October 2003 and March 2005. Following the small-scale pilot, the three-year Neighbourhood Policing Programme (NPP) was officially launched in April 2005, and has sought to deliver on the Government's commitment for every neighbourhood in England and Wales to have a neighbourhood policing team by 2008.

In both the NRPP and NPP, the purpose of neighbourhood policing activity has been to trigger three delivery mechanisms: police visibility; community involvement in identifying local priorities; and collaborative problem-solving with partners and the public to tackle those priorities.

This report summarises four studies that, together, attempt to develop the evidence base on the efficacy and effectiveness of neighbourhood policing.

- The *NRPP evaluation* and *follow-up study* examine the short and longer-term efficacy of neighbourhood policing when piloted at a ward level under controlled conditions and involving relatively small-scale organisational change.
- The *Basic Command Unit (BCU) level evaluation* and *national evaluation* take an early look at whether the initial introduction of the NPP delivered any early improvements when implemented 'at scale'. They aim to look at the wider impact of an intervention in more complex, 'real world' settings, like a large-scale national programme. *The two studies do not, however, provide a definitive account of neighbourhood policing's effectiveness, which can only be assessed at the end of the three-year programme.*

The impact of piloting neighbourhood policing

The NRPP ran pilots of neighbourhood policing in 16 wards, in eight forces in England, from October 2003 under relatively controlled conditions. Wards were considered to be a convenient geographic unit for the trial because of the availability of administrative data, although the delivery of neighbourhood policing was structured at a more local level in some sites. Each site contained between about 7,000 and 20,000 residents.

The impact of piloting neighbourhood policing at a ward level was assessed in two related studies. The studies provide good evidence of neighbourhood policing's efficacy in both the short and longer-term, where focused police activity and relatively small-scale organisational change could be achieved.

1. The NRPP evaluation

The evaluation concentrated on the six pilot wards in the programme that were matched to comparison sites. Outcomes were measured using a telephone survey of residents in each site. Respondents were interviewed at the outset of the programme, and again after 12 months, to determine whether there were any significant differences between the pilot and comparison sites in how public perceptions and experiences had changed after neighbourhood policing was introduced.

The evaluation showed that the NRPP delivered, after 12 months of implementation, increased public confidence in the police, reductions in crime victimisation, and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as improved feelings of safety, public perceptions of community engagement, police visibility, and familiarity with the police. Further analysis of the survey showed that the three delivery mechanisms were associated with improvements in public confidence. Process information also showed that the change in outcomes was consistent with the focused policing activity that was achieved in the sites.

2. The NRPP follow-up study

Follow-up research was carried out in the pilot sites to find out whether the improvements during the first year of the programme could be sustained in the longer-term. Respondents were again re-interviewed at the end of the programme's second year. The results showed that the positive changes delivered during the NRPP's first year were largely sustained for a second year and, in some cases, lagged improvements were made. However, the findings highlighted that the police must remain focused in the longer-term because of the relative decline in two outcome measures (i.e. perceptions of the crime rate and police visibility).

The initial impact of early national implementation

The NPP attempted to 'scale up' the earlier ward level pilot and implement its critical elements across England and Wales over a three-year period. The implementation process took place in a more complex environment. It was introduced under less controlled conditions and 'scaled up' in larger organisational units where senior officers were faced with competing operational and resource pressures. Again, two studies were carried out on the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing, looking at whether early national implementation prompted any initial outcome changes. *Because of the size and nature of the programme, there was no expectation that the NPP would deliver widespread improvements in public perceptions in its first year, or that local change would be of the magnitude and speed as that seen previously in the smaller-scale NRPP evaluation.* Other research shows that force-wide implementation is likely to deliver changes only in the longer-term.

3. The BCU level evaluation

The BCU level evaluation used a research design similar to the NRPP evaluation. It was based in five 'experimental' BCUs where neighbourhood policing implementation was thought to be most likely, each matched to a comparison BCU. The sites were much larger than the NRPP sites, each with between 140,000 to 360,000 residents.

A survey of residents showed no consistent pattern of change in their perceptions and experiences across the sites during the first 12 months of implementation. It is not possible, however, to reach the

conclusion from this study that neighbourhood policing does not 'work'. First, there was good evidence at the ward level that neighbourhood policing can deliver positive change. Second, there was evidence to suggest implementation in the BCUs was at an early stage and that it was probably too soon for neighbourhood policing to affect a change in outcomes. Analysis revealed that the experimental and comparison sites were not vastly different in terms of neighbourhood policing implementation, thus making differences in performance harder to detect. There was also evidence to suggest that neighbourhood policing had not been implemented in full and/or consistently across the BCUs. The lack of effective problem-solving was an issue for almost all sites, and found to be a particularly difficult mechanism to implement at a BCU level. The NRPP evaluation suggests that all three delivery mechanisms would need to be in place to deliver a change in outcomes.

Like the NRPP study, the delivery mechanisms were found to be associated with changes in public confidence. However, the BCU level evaluation showed that if people's perceptions of neighbourhood policing and police fairness got worse, they were less likely to think that the local police were doing a good job (a measure of public confidence). This underlines the importance of neighbourhood policing not only in increasing public confidence, but also *maintaining* it. Foot patrol was found to be important, but insufficient on its own to prompt a large-scale shift in public perceptions. It seems likely that all three delivery mechanisms need to be delivered in a large enough 'dose' across a BCU, or sufficiently concentrated in local pockets in order to shift public confidence.

4. The national evaluation

The national evaluation aimed to measure the implementation of neighbourhood policing over time and examine how it affected changes in key outcome measures. The results summarised here are from an initial phase of work from an ongoing study that will continue throughout the three-year programme. The study reported here covers only the early stages of implementation and was carried out before efforts to introduce neighbourhood policing force-wide were fully underway. The purpose of this exploratory study was also to test whether advanced modelling techniques could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing at a national level.

The national evaluation drew on repeated surveys of all 43 forces and 244 BCUs in England and Wales. The surveys looked to measure the level of 'self-reported' implementation at the beginning of the programme, and track changes over three years. The results were used to create implementation scores for each area. The modelling techniques compared outcome changes in the BCUs and forces after neighbourhood policing had been implemented ('treatment areas'), to changes in those areas that had not yet been implemented ('control areas'). The national evaluation only looked at changes in implementation and outcomes, comparing the six-month period immediately before implementation started in the Pathfinder BCU (April to September 2005) with two six-month periods afterwards (October to March 2006, and April 2006 to September 2006). This is a relatively short timescale in which to affect change, and covered the period before force-wide implementation was fully underway.

The study showed encouraging signs about the direction of change at a BCU level in the selected outcome measures, but found no statistically significant change. Again, the difficulties associated with implementing neighbourhood policing in a complex setting and across a wide organisational level are likely to have been critical.

Conclusion

Overall, the studies provide good evidence of neighbourhood policing's efficacy at a ward level, both in the short-term and over time, where police activity focused on delivering the central delivery mechanisms. The NRPP delivered improvements in a wide range of outcome measures, the vast majority of which were sustained over time.

In terms of neighbourhood policing's initial impact after the NPP's first year, the results of the BCU level evaluation and national evaluation were less clear-cut. This is not uncommon when programmes are 'scaled up' and introduced in more challenging environments. At this early stage, therefore, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing either positive or negative. This does not mean neighbourhood policing does not 'work'. Such a conclusion is most likely only possible in the longer term after the ongoing evaluation has been able to examine the impact of full implementation. Implementing neighbourhood policing over a whole police force area, particularly community engagement and problem-solving, is challenging and involves larger

organisational change. This report suggests, in line with other studies, that improvements are only likely to be delivered gradually when implementation has been achieved in full, which requires sustained effort and commitment over time. The effectiveness studies, nonetheless, highlight the importance of public perceptions to the success of neighbourhood policing as well as neighbourhood policing's importance in maintaining public confidence in the police.

Together, the four studies show that, while neighbourhood policing can have a significant positive impact when piloted at a local level, they underline the challenges of implementing widespread organisational change and the need for neighbourhood policing to be delivered in the right 'dose'. The studies also reaffirm the importance of the all three delivery mechanisms – visibility, community engagement, and problem-solving – in delivering improvements in public perceptions and experiences.

1. Introduction

Background

The implementation of neighbourhood policing has represented a significant undertaking for the Government, police service and their partners. Neighbourhood policing was initially piloted at a ward level as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) between October 2003 and March 2005. Following the small-scale pilot, the three-year Neighbourhood Policing Programme (NPP) was officially launched in April 2005. Led by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) with the support of the National Policing Improvement Agency, the national programme has sought to deliver on the Government's commitment for every neighbourhood in England and Wales to have a neighbourhood policing team by 2008, and for the accelerated roll-out of 16,000 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by the end of April 2007¹ (Home Office, 2004; 2005). In 2007/08, the Home Office made available £315m to fund the growth in PCSO numbers and support the introduction of neighbourhood policing (Home Office, 2006).

This report summarises four studies that attempt to develop the evidence base on neighbourhood policing. The report provides a snapshot of the evidence as it stood after the first year of national implementation, and should not be read as a definitive account of whether neighbourhood policing 'works'. Such an assessment can only be made after the end of the three-year programme, when neighbourhood policing should be implemented in full. The Home Office's ongoing evaluation programme aims to make this fuller assessment. The aim of the four studies summarised here is more modest. The studies look at the short- and longer-term impact of neighbourhood policing when implemented as a relatively small-scale pilot, and whether larger-scale implementation prompted any early changes during the first year of the national programme. As such, the report should help policy-makers and practitioners reach informed decisions about the continuing implementation programme.

Neighbourhood policing in England and Wales

Neighbourhood policing and its aims

Neighbourhood policing is an approach that seeks to increase contact between the police and the public in defined local geographic areas in order to make the work of the police more responsive to the needs of local people. It gave prominence to the collective security and shared interests of residents living in the same local area (Innes, 2005). Neighbourhood policing, by tackling local priorities in partnership with public and partner agencies, is expected to lead to increased public confidence in the police, and to reductions in those types of crime and anti-social behaviour prioritised by the public. Its primary aims are, therefore, to improve the public perceptions and safety.

The national NPP and the earlier, smaller-scale NRPP both represent central programmes of work to support the local implementation of neighbourhood policing. Using programme management disciplines and providing implementation support, the NRPP and NPP sought to bring about the introduction of neighbourhood policing, respectively, at a ward level and more widely across the police service in England and Wales. The two programmes, to varying degrees of prescription, encouraged the police to resource dedicated neighbourhood policing teams and for the police officers and PCSOs on those teams to carry out specific activities and duties. Neighbourhood policing activities implemented locally included, for example, carrying out targeted foot patrol, holding meetings and/or using more proactive engagement methods to find out what local residents thought, and using a range of enforcement and prevention techniques to reduce crime and disorder problems in the local area.

¹ The original target before accelerated roll-out was for 24,000 PCSOs by April 2008.

Delivery mechanisms

The policing activities that were encouraged under the NRPP and NPP, while subtly different, tried to trigger three delivery mechanisms that were intended to bring about improvements at a neighbourhood level.

- *Visibility* – The consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams capable of working with the community to establish and maintain control.
- *Community engagement* – Intelligence-led identification of community concerns, and effective action against those concerns.
- *Problem-solving* – Joint action problem-solving between the police, community and local partners to improve the local environment and quality of life within the community.

The delivery mechanisms were expected to support each other. In some cases, police presence was expected to foster engagement between the police and local residents, which in turn was expected to help the police, working in partnership, to target their problem-solving activities against the problems that mattered the most to people locally. At other times, it was thought that the police would have to resolve local problems before residents would be sufficiently confident to engage with the police.

Neighbourhood, reassurance and community policing

Neighbourhood policing shares much with other community-oriented models of policing and has been referred to as the 'new' community policing (Innes, 2006). Policy-makers, however, deliberately adopted the term 'neighbourhood' to:

- reflect growing awareness amongst police officers about the complexity of the policing environment;
- distance the programme from earlier community policing efforts that were not sustained over time;
- bring together a range of national and force initiatives under a single banner (e.g. quality of life policing, micro-beats, and Policing Priority Areas); and
- highlight what were seen as neighbourhood policing's distinctive features (see Tuffin, 2007; Innes, 2006).

In contrast to earlier forms of community policing, neighbourhood policing has been managed by ACPO as two central programmes that have tried to encourage and support local implementation, and to monitor its progress. Moreover, the NRPP and NPP both attempted to systematise the work of neighbourhood officers, integrate it with other policing functions rather than to treat it as a 'bolt-on', and link it to the 'neighbourhood' as a specific geographic entity. There has also been increasingly explicit expectation that neighbourhood policing, perhaps unlike community policing, will involve law enforcement as well as order maintenance, and may reduce crime by addressing the concerns of local people, in addition to improving their confidence in the police (Innes, 2005).

The implementation of reassurance policing at a ward level, as part of the NRPP, predated, and was an important influence on the larger-scale NPP. Having similar aims and sharing the same delivery mechanisms, reassurance policing can be seen as one particular model of neighbourhood policing. Indeed, Innes has argued that the differences between the two approaches are subtle and largely symbolic in nature (2005) and that, whereas reassurance policing is explicitly about reassuring the public, neighbourhood policing has a broader focus, is more about the local delivery of policing services and stresses crime reduction as an outcome (2006). More specifically, the NRPP gave greater emphasis, however, to the seven-stage model, which structured police activity in the pilot sites (see Tuffin, *et al.*, 2006), and to the signal crimes perspective which maintained that crimes and disorders 'send signals' about potential risks to people's security, and that some signals matter more than others and affect people in different ways (Innes, *et al.*, 2004). Both ideas remained influential in the development of neighbourhood policing, as shown by the importance attached in the NPP to the public's role in identifying and prioritising the problems that matter the most to them. Unlike earlier forms of community policing and problem-oriented policing, both reassurance and neighbourhood policing place importance on co-production with partners and local people (i.e. their involvement in

service delivery). Given that many of the concerns identified by the public are likely relate to non-crime matters, the success of these policing approaches is likely to rest, in part, on the police's ability to work effectively with partner agencies.

The relationship between neighbourhood policing and community policing is less clear-cut, not least because community policing is a fairly inclusive and elastic concept (see, for example: Weatheritt, 1988; and Mastrofski, 2006). Community policing emerged in the UK in the late 1970s, and stressed the importance of improved police-community relations and strengthened police legitimacy (Tilley, 2003). The model found support in the Scarman Report on the Brixton riots (1981) which highlighted the police's role in the deterioration of community relations. The mechanisms through which community policing and neighbourhood policing were expected to bring about change were different. In this early version of community policing, crime and disorder reduction was a secondary objective to that of improving community relations with the police. Nonetheless, crime reduction was thought to follow from increased police legitimacy, rather than via a process of collaborative problem-solving to deal with locally-identified crime and disorder priorities.

Community policing also gave greater emphasis to community capacity-building as an end in itself, rather than viewing it as a means to support and facilitate the community involvement in problem-solving. Neighbourhood policing can, therefore, be seen as a reinterpretation of an earlier form of community policing albeit one in which community involvement is largely about directing the work of local officers towards the crime and disorder problems that cause the most public concern, and which is closely tied to the idea of problem-solving. For these reasons, neighbourhood policing, perhaps unlike community policing, is not necessarily expected to foster increased social capacity and collective efficacy amongst local residents.² The relationship between the three delivery mechanisms and these neighbourhood outcomes is weak, and there is limited evidence that police interventions are able to engender them amongst residents.

Its prospects of success

Systematic reviews of the international research evidence indicate that the prospects for neighbourhood policing are promising (Sherman and Eck, 2002; Weisburd and Eck 2004).

- *What worked* – Increased directed patrols in hotspots (a key delivery mechanism) was found to be effectiveness in terms of crime reduction. Evidence also pointed to the effectiveness of problem-solving (again a delivery mechanisms) in reducing crime, disorder and fear. Community policing practices were also found to reduce fear of crime but, without problem-solving, were not found to affect crime or disorder.
- *What was promising* – Community policing with public participation in priority setting, and efforts to improve police legitimacy were associated with crime reduction (both are key features of neighbourhood policing).
- *What didn't work* – Community policing with no crime focus, or an increase in officers regardless of their activity in terms of crime reduction.

The literature also highlighted the risks to successful implementation and impact of similar styles of policing. Efforts to introduce earlier forms of community policing in England and Wales have been characterised by implementation failure, as well as cultural and organisational marginalisation (e.g. Irving, *et al.*, 1989; Weatheritt, 1988; Fielding, 1995). More recently, a study found that the failure to deliver promised additional police visibility had a detrimental impact on public perceptions of insecurity (Crawford, *et al.*, 2003).

The experience of community policing in the US has been mixed in terms of both implementation and impact (see, for example, Mastrofski, 2006). Community policing in the US initially emphasised improved police-community relations but, since the 1990s, has increasingly promoted community-identified priorities and problem-solving. Indeed, the approach adopted in the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) (see Skogan and Hartnett, 1997) was an important influence on the NPP and shared key elements.

² Social capacity describes the extent to which residents have the resources and capability to tackle local problems. Collective efficacy is a subtly different concept and refers to the levels of cohesiveness and informal social control within a neighbourhood (Sampson, *et al.*, 1997).

Apart from CAPS, which has run for over ten years, there is little evidence to show that the implementation of community policing can be sustained over time. Many US attempts to implement community policing have either not been taken forward beyond an initial pilot (Roberg, 1994), or not resulted in a dramatic shift in the core activities of the police (Mastrofski, 2006; Zhao, *et al.*, 2001). The CAPS experience has also highlighted the difficulties associated with implementation across a force area and over the longer-term. Particular challenges were making sure local problem-solving was carried out effectively and ensuring that community engagement was representative of local communities and that it informed local policing priorities (Skogan and Steiner, 2004). The challenges of implementing problem-solving are well documented (see Read and Tilley, 2000; Cordner and Biebel, 2003).

In summary, the international research evidence, therefore, highlights the potential for neighbourhood policing to have a positive impact, but warns of the problems with the implementation of key delivery mechanisms (e.g. community engagement and problem-solving).

The evaluation of neighbourhood policing

This report summarises the results from four studies in a co-ordinated programme of research which aimed to evaluate the impact of neighbourhood policing. The first two studies examined the impact of piloting neighbourhood policing

1. *The NRPP evaluation* – an evaluation of ward level pilots to assess neighbourhood policing's impact over a 12-month period (published previously in Tuffin, *et al.*, 2006 and Quinton and Tuffin, 2007).
2. *The NRPP follow-up* – follow-up research in the pilot sites to measure the longer-term effects of neighbourhood policing when implemented at a ward level (previously unpublished).

The second pair of studies looked at the initial impact of early national implementation.

3. *The Basic Command Unit (BCU) evaluation* – an evaluation at a BCU level to determine the impact of neighbourhood policing when implementation was 'scaled up' (i.e. implemented across a wider area).
4. *The national evaluation* – initial findings from an ongoing piece of research that examines whether it was possible, via econometric modelling techniques, to identify any early improvements associated with neighbourhood policing at a national level during the first year of the larger-scale NPP.

The specific aims and methodologies of each study are discussed below.

The purpose of the research programme was to generate a good standard of evidence on neighbourhood policing's impact when the activity is implemented and the delivery mechanisms are triggered at different organisational levels. In the NRPP evaluation and follow-up study, neighbourhood policing was piloted over relatively small geographic areas. These can be described broadly as 'efficacy studies'. In comparison, the BCU level evaluation and national evaluation look at whether neighbourhood policing can have a similar effect when it is implemented across a wider geographic area and as part of a larger-scale implementation programme. These are better categorised as 'effectiveness studies'.

The distinction between efficacy and effectiveness studies is made in public health research with a view to setting out clear research design standards so that 'tried and tested' interventions can be identified for policy-makers and practitioners (Flay, *et al.*, 2005).

- *Efficacy studies* evaluate whether an intervention does more harm than good when introduced in 'ideal' settings, such as a small-scale controlled pilot. Efficacy studies are able to conclude whether an intervention 'works' in a particular scenario for a particular group of people. They require high-quality programme implementation and rigorous research designs that control for other factors that may explain why change occurred.

- *Effectiveness studies* examine the wider impact of an intervention in more complex ‘real world’ settings, like a national programme involving large-scale organisational change, in order to understand when and for whom the intervention is effective. The findings of effectiveness studies are, therefore, more generalisable than those of efficacy studies. The studies require similar levels of rigour, but must be attuned to implementation quality and other factors that may affect the delivery of outcomes when the intervention is ‘scaled up’ in a naturalistic environment. This is important because interventions that lead to significant improvements in ‘ideal’ settings do not necessarily deliver the same results in the ‘real world’.

The four studies, taken together, therefore, aimed to provide evidence as to neighbourhood policing’s efficacy and effectiveness.³

The structure of the report

The distinction between efficacy and effectiveness studies is used to structure this report.

- Chapter 2, which summarises the results from the NRPP evaluation and follow-up study, examines the efficacy of neighbourhood policing when implemented under controlled conditions and on a small organisational scale.
- Chapter 3 focuses on the BCU and national evaluations and takes an early look at whether the initial introduction of neighbourhood policing delivered improved outcomes when it was implemented ‘at scale’ and required widespread organisational change. It should be noted that the national and BCU level evaluations do not provide a definitive account of neighbourhood policing’s effectiveness. The NPP is a three-year programme, and the studies reported here only assess whether any early improvements were prompted during the programme’s first year, with a view to informing the continuing implementation programme. Ongoing Home Office research will make a fuller assessment of neighbourhood policing’s effectiveness.
- The final chapter draws together the implications from the research programme.

³ The design of the four studies broadly conform to standards of efficacy/effectiveness studies. It should be noted, however, that the criteria for this hierarchy require multiple studies to be completed before claims about efficacy/effectiveness are made.

2. The impact of piloting neighbourhood policing

The National Reassurance Policing Programme

The NRPP preceded the national NPP and sought, primarily, to reassure the public. Reassurance policing, piloted initially in Surrey Police and the Metropolitan Police Service, was developed to address the 'reassurance gap' between public perceptions of rising crime and the fall in the crime rate. Drawing on the idea from the signal crimes perspective that the police could improve public perceptions of security by targeting the signals that affected people the most, the NRPP aimed to:

- reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (through locally defined problems being tackled), and improve quality of life;
- reduce fear of crime and improve feelings of safety; and
- increase satisfaction with, and confidence in, the police.⁴

The NRPP ran pilots of reassurance policing in 16 ward level pilot sites, in eight forces in England, from October 2003. The main police activities in the pilot sites were informed by the signal crimes perspective, and drew on previous community policing models (e.g. CAPS). Like the NPP, the key delivery mechanisms were police presence, community involvement in identifying local priorities, and collaborative problem-solving with partners and the public to tackle those priorities. While the pilot sites received modest additional funding,⁵ ACPO received funding from the Home Office to create a central programme team staffed by seconded police officers who performed programme management functions, carried out initial 'readiness assessments', directly monitored activity in the sites, and provided implementation support. The NRPP is described in greater detail by Tuffin, *et al.* (2006).

Importantly, neighbourhood policing was introduced under controlled conditions and as a pilot. The size of each ward (a local authority electoral district) included in the study were also fairly small, ranging from 7,000 to 20,000 residents. The scale of the programme and the size of the individual pilot sites meant the ACPO programme team could directly support and monitor the standard of implementation in each site in detail, while the forces could concentrate their implementation efforts in tightly defined areas. Police activity was, therefore, focused on delivering neighbourhood policing with few competing demands. It was far from being a laboratory, however, so changing police activity in the sites remained a significant challenge.

The NRPP evaluation

The programme was evaluated at the end of the first year of implementation. The study aimed to identify the short-term effects of implementing neighbourhood policing at a ward level. The evaluation was carried out by a team of researchers at the Home Office who were independent of the ACPO programme team with whom they shared emerging findings to inform the development of the programme. An independent academic advisory group was created, in part, to scrutinise the Home Office evaluation. The findings from the NRPP evaluation are presented here in summary only. More detailed findings are available elsewhere (see Tuffin, *et al.*, 2006; Morris, 2006; Tuffin, 2006; and Quinton and Tuffin, 2007).

Research methods

Data on processes and outcomes were gathered in all 16 pilot sites. The NRPP evaluation, however, concentrated on the six wards in the programme that were matched to comparison sites. The design met the requirements of an efficacy study because the matching of pilot and comparison sites would provide some degree of control for some other factors that might affect outcome measures.

⁴ The improvement of social capacity was also a stated aim of the NRPP, although there was limited activity on the ground in the pilot sites that was specifically designed to trigger a mechanism aimed at nurturing social capacity. Increased engagement between the police and local residents in the sites was primarily about identifying local crime and disorder problems.

⁵ For innovation, rather than additional staffing levels.

Outcomes were measured using police statistics and a telephone survey in each pilot and comparison site. About 200 respondents in each site were interviewed at the outset of the programme, and again after 12 months. The survey analysis focused on those respondents whose views shifted from positive to negative, and from negative to positive over the 12-month period. The impact of neighbourhood policing in individual wards and across the programme as a whole was then calculated by:

- identifying whether there was positive change in the pilot site(s);
- comparing change in the pilot site(s) to that in the comparison site(s); and
- testing whether any differences were statistically significant (e.g. likely to be found again with a different and sufficiently large sample).

Process data were also gathered in pilot sites on the quality and quantity of police activity.⁶ Analysis focused on the three main delivery mechanisms, and attempted to explain the role of the programme in delivering outcome changes in the pilot sites.

The research methods, analytical approach used and limitations of the design are outlined in Appendix A, and are discussed in greater detail in Tuffin, *et al.* (2006) and Quinton and Tuffin (2007).

Summary results

The evaluation showed that the NRPP delivered, over a 12-month period, increased public confidence in the police, reductions in crime victimisation, and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as improved feelings of safety, public perceptions of community engagement, police visibility, and familiarity with the police (see Table 2.1).

The impact of the NRPP on the fear of crime was more limited, with worry about being a victim falling in both the pilot and comparison sites. The programme did, however, have a positive effect on one measure (i.e. worry about being physically attacked by strangers). The process evaluation suggested that these changes were consistent with police activities in the pilot sites. The police were largely oriented towards local priorities rather than the crime types 'traditionally' targeted by the police and which respondents were asked about.

With police recorded crime, it was not possible to assess whether the differences between the pilot and comparison sites at a programme level were significant because data were not available for equivalent time periods. Two of the six sites, however, delivered significant reductions in overall recorded crime set against their comparison sites. There was no evidence to suggest that the NRPP has led to an initial rise in recorded crime, because of increased reporting by the public. The recorded crime results are described in detail by Tuffin, *et al.* (2006).

The impact of the NRPP on social capacity and collective efficacy was limited, which was to be expected given there was little direct activity in the pilot sites aimed at increasing them.

⁶ The data were gathered in a prospective basis by independent contractors.

Table 2.1: Summary of NRPP evaluation survey results

	Programme effect
Public confidence	
Confidence in local police	✓
Crime and anti-social behaviour	
Self-reported victimisation (crime)	✓
Perceptions of anti-social behaviour*	✓
Perception of the crime rate*	✓
Feelings of safety and worry about crime	
Feelings of safety*	✓
Worry about physical attack	✓
Other fear of crime indicators*	-
Perception of risk*	✓
Social capacity and collective efficacy	
Trust	✓
Other measures*	-
Community engagement, familiarity and visibility	
Perceptions of community engagement*	✓
Awareness of police plans*	✓
Police familiarity	✓
Police visibility	✓

* Programme effects are indicated where a statistically significant change was shown for at least one indicator.

The results from the published evaluation are described in greater detail in Appendix B (see also Tuffin, *et al.*, 2006; and Quinton and Tuffin, 2007). Results tables are in Appendix C.⁷

Explanations for the change

In addition to the examination of the process data which showed that neighbourhood policing activity in the pilot sites was consistent with change in outcomes (see Tuffin, *et al.*, 2006), the survey data were analysed to examine whether the respondents' experience of the delivery mechanisms was associated with increased public confidence.

Logistic regression analysis was carried out on the survey responses from the six pilot sites. By taking all respondents together it was possible to look at how the views of individuals changed over time and what was linked with that change. The statistical technique shows whether a particular factor is 'independently' associated with public confidence in the police, and increases 'the odds' of a person being more confident taking into account the influence of other factors.

The variables examined in the model were those that significantly improved between the baseline survey and sweep two, and where there was evidence of a possible link with public confidence. To take account of the influence of people's perceptions before the programme, the model also included respondents' ratings from the baseline.

Importantly, the factors that came out in the logistic regression as being associated with improved confidence (see Appendix D) can be considered as measures of the three delivery mechanisms.

- *Police visibility* – increased perceptions of foot patrol.
- *Police community engagement* – improved perceptions of police effort in finding out what the public think.
- *Effective problem-solving* – reduced perceptions of teenagers being a problem. This can be seen as a proxy for effective problem-solving as it was one of the only problems identified by the public in all the pilot sites, and because there was evidence that neighbourhood policing activity had been taken to address the problem.

⁷ It should be noted that with so many independent significance tests being at the five per cent level being carried out, one in 20 programme or ward effects are likely to be spurious.

In addition to people's long-standing confidence in the police, the model also highlighted the importance of neighbourhood policing in reducing crime; being a victim of crime during the previous 12 months was associated with reduced confidence in the police.

To conclude, therefore, the analysis showed there was consistency between the implementation of the three delivery mechanisms and a change in outcomes, the implication being that if there were weaknesses in any of the three neighbourhood policing activities, change might not have been brought about.

The process evaluation provided further evidence of the delivery mechanisms as being the explanation for change. Analysis of problem-solving and community engagement process data for the individual pilot sites was consistent with the outcomes achieved. For example, the sites that showed a significant positive change in public perceptions of juvenile nuisance – a problem identified by the public consistently across the pilot sites – were the same sites that carried out targeted problem-solving activity, which was well-informed by detailed analysis of the problem and where partners and the community were involved.

The NRPP follow-up study

Follow-up research was carried out at the end of the programme's second year to find out whether implementation of neighbourhood policing at a ward level had longer-term, as well as short-term, effects. Flay, *et al.* (2005), in describing efficacy and effectiveness studies, highlighted the importance of carrying out at least one longer-term follow-up to establish efficacy because of the possibility that outcomes may decay over time.

Research methods

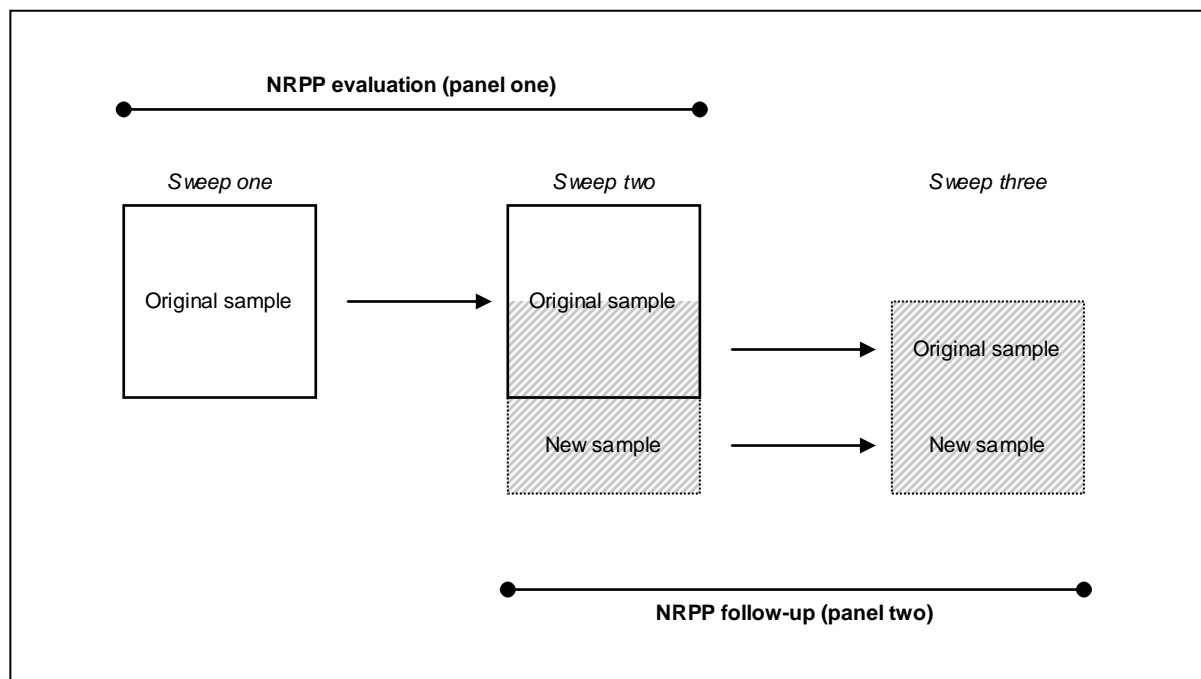
The evaluation, therefore, continued for a second year in four of the most successful sites (which remained matched to their comparison sites).

The four forces all continued with their neighbourhood policing activity in the pilot sites and kept a more traditional approach in the control sites, thereby maintaining the quasi-experimental conditions. Unlike the first year of implementation, the pilot sites were no longer part of a formal programme. The ACPO programme team, which was previously responsible for supporting and monitoring implementation in the sites, played no role in the continuing pilot having taken on responsibility for the national implementation of neighbourhood policing.

A third sweep of the telephone survey was carried out at the end of the second year of implementation. A second panel of about 160 residents was created in each site, consisting of 'original respondents', and 'new respondents' interviewed in both sweeps two and three of the survey (see Figure 2.1). Again, analysis was carried out to identify whether any differences between the pilot and comparison sites in how outcomes changed was significant (e.g. likely to be found again with a different, and sufficiently large sample).

The methods and their limitations are described in more detail in Appendix E.

Figure 2.1: The NRPP follow-up panel sample



Interpretation of the results

The follow-up study compared changes in the pilot/comparison sites during the programme's first year and, again, in its second year.⁸ There were five possible patterns of change depending on the impact of the programme in each year (see Table 2.2).

⁸ Comparisons are valid because the follow-up study concentrated on the wards that made the greatest contribution to the programme effects across the board in year one (see Tuffin *et al.*, 2006).

Table 2.2: Summary of possible effects in the NRPP follow-up

	Programme effects	
	Year one	Year two
Continued improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRPP evaluation – a positive programme effect was found. NRPP follow-up – the programme continued to deliver significant positive change. The ‘performance gap’ between the pilot and comparison sites widened in the longer-term. 	✓	✓✓
Sustained improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRPP evaluation – a positive programme effect was found. NRPP follow-up – the difference between pilot and comparison sites was maintained, but no further improvement was made. The ‘performance gap’ was maintained but remained stable, and may indicate a ‘ceiling effect’ whereby further longer-term gains may be more difficult to achieve. 	✓	✓
Lagged improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRPP evaluation – no programme effect was found. NRPP follow-up – a significant positive effect was found. In the longer-term, a ‘performance gap’ between the pilot and comparison sites either emerged or widened. 	-	✓✓
No difference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRPP evaluation – no programme effect was found between the pilot and comparison sites. NRPP follow-up – no programme effect was found between the pilot and comparison sites. 	-	-
Relative decline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRPP follow-up – outcomes in the pilot sites declined relative to the comparison sites because of negative change in the pilot sites and/or positive change in their comparison sites. Any positive ‘performance gap’ was narrowed or was reversed. 	✓ or -	↓

Results

Unlike the results from the NRPP evaluation, the findings from the NRPP follow-up study are previously unpublished. All results tables from the NRPP follow-up are in Appendix F.

Public confidence in the police

In its first year, the programme delivered an overall positive effect on public confidence. Each of the four wards selected for further evaluation also experienced ward level effects. After a second year, the programme level effect was sustained, as was the ward level effect in three of the four sites (Table F.1). The exception was Failsworth West which saw a significant decline in public confidence relative to its comparison ward.

Crime and anti-social behaviour

In the NRPP evaluation, the programme had a positive effect on self-reported victimisation. In the follow-up study, the results were sustained with self-reported victimisation remaining unchanged across the pilot sites (Table F.3). At a ward level, the London and Greater Manchester sites achieved significant lagged reductions in victimisation not seen in year one.

The public’s perception of the crime rate in their local area saw a positive effect in year one of the programme. The results showed a relative decline at the end of programme’s second year. The

proportion of residents who thought crime had fallen decreased by five percentage points in the pilot sites. However, it remained higher than at the start of the programme (measured by the baseline survey) (Table F.4). The percentage of people who thought crime was increasing did not change across the programme; there were no short-term or longer-term programme effects (Table F.5). At a ward level, Ingol was the only site to sustain the year one results for a second year.

The programme had a positive effect on residents' perceptions of five of the eight types of anti-social behaviour in its first 12 months. These effects were all sustained during the second year of implementation (Tables F.6-F.13). In addition, there was a lagged programme effect for perceptions of racist and religious harassment.

At a ward level, individual pilot sites delivered improved outcomes during the second year. East Wickham and Falconwood saw lagged reductions in public perceptions of rubbish/litter and vandalism to bus shelters/phone boxes, and experienced continued improvements in perceptions of racist harassment. Ingol saw lagged and continued improvement for measures of vandalism. Burghfield also experienced lagged reductions in the public's perceptions of people using and/or dealing drugs.

Only three out of a possible 32 outcome measures on the perceptions of anti-social behaviour showed relative decline at ward level during the programme's second year and is likely to represent random chance. Most improved in year one, and remained stable in the longer-term.

Feelings of safety and worry about crime

The programme's positive effect on feelings of safety after dark in year one was sustained at end of the second year (Table F.14). Feeling of safety during the day remained stable (Table F.15).

The NRPP evaluation showed that the programme had a limited effect on fear of crime in its first year. At the end of year two, the results remained largely unchanged (Tables F.16-F.23). Across the sites, the programme effect on worry about physical attack was sustained, and there was a lagged improvement in worry about vehicle theft. At a ward level, results showed very little change. East Wickham and Falconwood showed a lagged improvement in worry about being mugged or robbed, as well as continued improvement in worry about being physically attacked. There was no change in the other pilot sites.

Residents' perceptions of risk also remained relatively stable during the NRPP's second year (Tables F.24-F.29). The programme effects for the perceived likelihood of seeing graffiti and having property damaged were both sustained. Performance across the other outcome measures remained stable, except in Burghfield where there was a relative decline in the perceived risk of being burgled.

Social capacity and collective efficacy

As expected, the NRPP had limited impact on measures of social capacity and collective efficacy during its first year. While improvements in trust were sustained in the programme's second year, no other programme effects were detected (Tables F.30-F.34).

Community engagement, familiarity and visibility

In its first year, the programme led to significant improvements in public perceptions of community engagement across a range of measures. At the end of the second year, almost all of these effects were sustained (Tables F.35-F.42).

There was significant reduction across the programme, and particularly in Failsworth West, in the proportion of people who knew what the police planned to do in their area. Burghfield also experienced a decline, relative to its comparison, in the proportion of people who knew how to get their views across to the police (although it remained higher than at the start of the programme).

The follow-up study found that the programme effect for police familiarity to residents was sustained in terms of the proportion of respondents who knew the police in their local area by name, sight or both (Table F.44). There was, however, a significant reduction in police visibility at a programme level (Table F.43). The proportion of people who reported seeing an officer on foot patrol once a week or more fell across the pilot sites, and particularly in the Metropolitan Police. Despite the fall in police visibility, public perceptions were higher than at the start of the programme. This result also indicates

that the other two delivery mechanisms – community engagement and problem-solving – are potentially more important than police visibility in maintaining results in the longer-term.

Summary and conclusions

Taken together, the NRPP evaluation and follow-up provide good evidence of neighbourhood policing's efficacy when it is piloted at a ward level under relatively controlled conditions.

The evaluation showed that the NRPP delivered improvements across a wide range of outcomes over a 12-month period. The follow-up study demonstrated that, in the longer-term, most of the positive changes experienced during the first year of implementation were largely maintained for a second year (see Table 2.3). In some cases, further improvements were made, although their limited number may be indicative of a ceiling effect.

Table 2.3: Summary of NRPP follow-up results

	Programme effects		
	Year one	Year two	Pattern
Public confidence			
Confidence in local police	✓	✓	sustained imp
Crime and anti-social behaviour			
Self-reported victimisation (crime)	✓	✓	sustained imp
Perception of racist attacks or harassment	-	✓✓	lagged imp
Other anti-social behaviour perception measures*	✓	✓	sustained imp
Perception of the crime rate*	✓	↓	relative decline
Feelings of safety and worry about crime			
Feelings of safety*	✓	✓	sustained imp
Worry about physical attack	✓	✓	sustained imp
Worry about vehicle crime	-	✓✓	lagged imp
Other fear of crime indicators*	-	-	no difference
Perception of risk*	✓	✓	sustained imp
Social capacity and collective efficacy			
Trust	✓	✓	sustained
Other measures*	-	-	no difference
Community engagement, familiarity and visibility			
Perceptions of community engagement*	✓	✓	sustained
Awareness of police plans*	✓	✓	sustained
Police familiarity	✓	✓	sustained
Police visibility	✓	↓	relative decline

* Programme effects are indicated where a statistically significant change was shown for at least one indicator.

Limited progress was made in both the short and longer-term on measures of the fear of crime and social capacity. This was probably a result of there being little neighbourhood policing activity specifically directed towards these two outcomes.⁹

The NRPP's second year saw relative declines in people's perceptions of the crime rate and police visibility. The latter potentially show the comparative importance of the other two delivery mechanisms (e.g. community engagement and problem-solving) in maintaining results over time.

To conclude, the NRPP studies show that a concerted effort to implement neighbourhood policing at a local level can deliver improved outcomes, and sustain them over time. However, the year two results suggested forces must remain focused on implementation in the longer-term because of the relative decline experienced in the pilot sites in some limited areas.

⁹ The fear of crime questions were predominantly about 'traditional' crime types, rather than local priorities.

3. The initial impact of early national implementation

The Neighbourhood Policing Programme

The process of implementation

The NPP sought to oversee the introduction of neighbourhood policing to all neighbourhoods over a three-year period (2005-08). It was an attempt to 'scale up' the earlier ward level pilot and implement its critical elements across England and Wales. Implementation centred, again, on the three main delivery mechanisms. The focus of this report is on the first year of the national programme, and specifically in identifying whether early implementation delivered any initial improvements.

In its first year (2005/06), the programme concentrated on supporting implementation in 43 Pathfinder BCUs, one per force. Each force was asked to nominate a single BCU where they were expected to focus their initial implementation activity. The aim of this targeted approach was to help forces to develop their own learning about the process of implementation before they started to introduce neighbourhood policing force-wide. The selection of the Pathfinders was at forces' discretion. Some selected their Pathfinder because of the policing style already in place, whereas others chose BCUs that were less advanced or posed the greatest implementation challenge. Other considerations included resource levels, performance, experience of successful programme implementation, leadership, and the local funding/partnership issues.

Forces were not limited to implementing neighbourhood policing in their Pathfinder sites in the first year, and developed their own strategies to implement neighbourhood policing across their force area over the three-year programme. Most forces took a staggered approach, starting in a single BCU and then gradually moving to other areas (although the speed of implementation varied). There was a small number of forces where implementation was more advanced, for example, because of their previous involvement in the NRPP (e.g. Lancashire). In these forces neighbourhood policing was introduced in all BCUs at the same time, from the outset or shortly after the Pathfinder was up and running.

Programme implementation was further complicated by the fact that every BCU was at a different starting point, with some having previously introduced a style of policing akin to neighbourhood policing. Local policing environments also varied (e.g. in terms of geography, socio-demography, and population density) and they had to develop a locally tailored approach to neighbourhood policing in accordance with guidance.

The scope and aims of the programme

The NPP was underpinned by a principal guidance document which set out the key features of neighbourhood policing. The *Practice Advice on Professionalising the Business of Neighbourhood Policing* (NCPE, 2006) stated the main aim of neighbourhood policing was "to create neighbourhoods that are safe and feel safe" and the three delivery mechanisms were critical to achieving these aims.

Rather than advocate a highly specified model or detail how forces were to implement neighbourhood policing, the *Practice Advice* outlined ten principles that provided a framework for the police to devise and adapt their own local approaches to neighbourhood policing (see Box 3.1). Individual forces were responsible for interpreting and applying the principles, taking into account their own circumstances. Implementation was, therefore, expected to respond flexibly to local need and context.

The primary aim of the NPP was to increase public confidence in the local police as measured by the British Crime Survey (BCS) (ACPO, 2006). This was reflected by the inclusion of public confidence as a statutory performance indicator in the national Police Performance Assessment Framework. Other outcome measures were considered to be secondary within the programme, and it was recognised that the outcomes of neighbourhood policing would vary across the police service because implementation was supposed to be responsive to local conditions. At the local level, possible outcomes were thought to include improved feelings of public safety and improved perceptions of the crime rate.

Reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour were also seen as possible outcomes at a local level. However, it was not expected that these local outcomes would *necessarily* translate, at a programme level, into aggregated reductions in total crime. This was because neighbourhood policing was intended to tackle the problems that mattered to people locally, rather than tackle fixed types of crime and disorder. The problems identified through community engagement could range from litter through to drug-dealing or gun crime, and were likely to vary between areas and change over time. The Home Office (2005) was clear, given their investment in the programme, that neighbourhood policing was central to its plans to achieve continued reductions in crime. This provided an important backdrop to the programme. The impact of the NRPP on self-reported victimisation – despite its emphasis on the police’s reassurance role – meant there was some evidence to suggest that the national implementation of neighbourhood policing might too lead to a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Box 3.1: The ten principles of the NPP

Neighbourhood policing:

- is an organisational strategy for the police, partners and the public to work together to solve problems, improve neighbourhood conditions, and increase feelings of security;
- is integrated with other policing functions (e.g. protective services, investigations and response);
- requires evidence-based deployment of neighbourhood policing teams against identified need;
- establishes dedicated, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams;
- is locally dependent, and is flexible and adaptive to local conditions;
- requires the police to work with local people to identify the problems that are most important to them, and to influence local policing priorities;
- establishes collaborative partnerships between other agencies and the public for problem solving;
- uses the National Intelligence Model as a basis for deployment;
- requires effective community engagement, communication and feedback; and
- needs rigorous performance management against local plans and commitments.

Source: adapted from NCPE (2006).

The roles of the programme team and the Home Office

As with the NRPP, the Home Office provided funding to ACPO to create a national programme team that largely consisted of secondees from police forces and partner agencies. The programme team performed a central policy and programme management function and provided forces with local implementation monitoring and support.

Five regional field officers carried out initial readiness assessments of the Pathfinders prior to implementation and continued to provide implementation support on an ongoing basis during the first

year. In subsequent years, the field officers increasingly focused on monitoring at a force level to identify gaps in implementation with a view to providing more tailored support. Other activities of the programme team included carrying out a limited number of BCU visits, giving additional support to forces at risk of implementation failure, monitoring for force action plans, providing confidential feedback on progress, tracking neighbourhood policing resource levels, developing self-inspection guides, and running practitioners events. A clear distinction was made between the role of the programme team and that of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), who conducted formal, qualitative inspections of forces in each year of the programme to assess their overall performance and provide a specific grading on progress with neighbourhood policing.

The Home Office had three principal roles during the programme. The Police Reform Unit was responsible for government policy on neighbourhood policing, and for the management of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund which provided additional funding to forces for the recruitment of 16,000 PCSOs across England and Wales. A Home Office research team was also responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the national programme. As before, researchers shared information and insights from the evaluation with the ACPO programme team to inform the implementation process, but were careful to ensure the evaluation was kept independent of the programme. The independent academic advisory group created during the NRPP continued with the purpose of scrutinising the ongoing Home Office research.

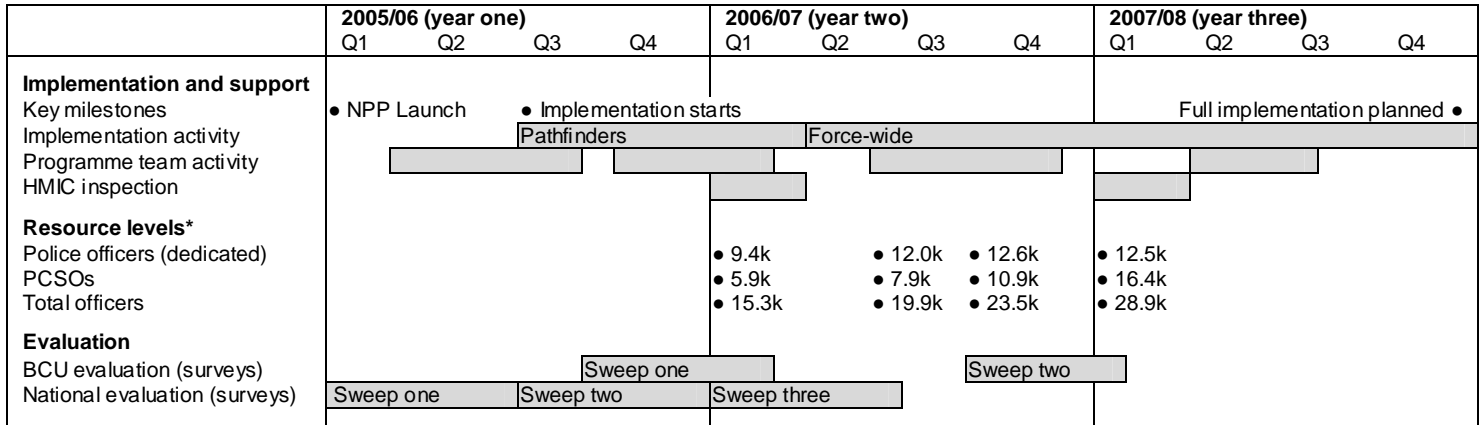
The nature of national implementation and its evaluation

The setting for the NPP was, therefore, much more 'naturalistic' than the earlier NRPP. The intervention was 'scaled up' and introduced under less controlled conditions and in organisational units where senior officers were faced with competing operational and resource pressures. Compared to the ward level pilot sites, the BCUs were also much larger in geographic terms. The population of the sites included in the BCU level evaluation ranged from 140,000 to 360,000 residents (up to 18 times the population of the *largest* NRPP ward). The sheer size of the programme and the challenge of implementing neighbourhood policing across a force area meant that it was more difficult for the ACPO programme team to maintain the same level of support as was achieved during the relatively modest NRPP. Such implementation issues are common when programmes are 'scaled up' and introduced in a more complex environment (see, for example, Homel, *et al.*, 2005).

As mentioned, the two effectiveness studies looked at whether the early national implementation of neighbourhood policing, despite the challenges associated with 'scaling up' programmes, prompted any initial changes in outcome measures. Because of the size and nature of the programme as well as the focus in its first year on the Pathfinder BCUs, there was no expectation that neighbourhood policing would deliver widespread improvements in public perceptions, or that local change would be of the magnitude and speed as that seen previously in the smaller-scale NRPP. The national and BCU level evaluations looked only at changes in outcomes after the first year of the national programme with a view to making a fuller assessment of neighbourhood policing's effectiveness at the end of the three years. Even though the NRPP evaluation identified local improvements after only 12 months, other research has suggested that efforts to introduce neighbourhood policing across a whole force area are only likely to see improvements of a similar size in the longer-term. For example, under CAPS, similar measures of perceived police effectiveness gradually increased by 14 percentage points over a seven-year period (Skogan, *et al.*, 2000).

Figure 3.1 shows the timeline for the NPP, and how the timing of implementation activity and support related the two effectiveness studies. The national evaluation looked at the 12-month period after implementation had started. During this time, implementation activity was largely focused on the Pathfinder BCUs, rather than across whole force areas. Force-wide implementation began at the tail-end of the period covered by the organisational survey (there was a three-month overlap). Resource levels during this period, while increasing, were also not at the level achieved later in the programme (with around 8,000 of the 16,000 PCSOs in post). The BCU level evaluation was carried out slightly later, but started soon after implementation in the Pathfinders was underway and was completed with 12 months of the programme left to run. It is also important to note that, during this period of evaluation, forces mainly dealt with resourcing issues, particularly the staffing of the neighbourhood policing teams and the accelerated recruitment of 16,000 PCSOs, and tried to ensure they had appropriate systems in place. They were potentially less focused on developing practice on the ground. At the same time, the police service was also engaged in the national debate about police force mergers.

Figure 3.1: NPP timeline



* Source: ACPO 'tracker' survey for England and Wales (based on forces' self-reported resource levels).

The BCU level evaluation

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing when implemented across a relatively wide geographic area. It looked to identify short-term effects at a BCU level, during the first year of the NPP. Key issues were whether implementation could itself be achieved across a BCU and whether it also delivered improved outcomes over a relatively short timescale.

Research methods

To test the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing at a BCU level, the evaluation used a quasi-experimental design similar to the earlier NRPP studies. Data on outcomes and processes were gathered in five experimental BCUs, each matched to a comparison BCU. The experimental sites were identified by the programme team, in consultation with Home Office researchers, drawing on the programme team's initial assessments and early data collection from the national evaluation. The aim was to identify the five Pathfinder sites which were among those thought to have the best chance of successfully implementing neighbourhood policing during the first year of the programme. These sites were expected to behave the most like experimental areas.

It was not possible for the selection of Pathfinders in the study to have been random because of the complexities and requirements of the national programme. There was a high risk that randomisation would have resulted in the inclusion of experimental sites that had not 'received' neighbourhood policing. The risk would have been due to the range of different ways forces had gone about identifying their Pathfinder BCUs (described above), and the early stage of implementation. The selection of sites was, therefore, largely constrained by the requirement to maintain quasi-experimental conditions. Despite this important constraint, the selection of individual sites was also informed by the need for a broad range of policing environments to be represented in the sample (e.g. urban/rural areas, different regions, and ethnic composition).

The selection of comparison sites was more complicated because, unlike the NRPP pilot where forces were committed to maintain quasi-experimental conditions, all BCUs were required to implement neighbourhood policing by the end of the programme. The study, therefore, attempted to exploit the 'naturally occurring' experimental conditions created by the national programme. The comparison sites were also identified from the programme team's assessments; they were non-Pathfinder BCUs from other force areas where progress with implementation was anticipated to be slower. In other words, they were the areas most likely to remain 'uncontaminated' by neighbourhood policing during the study and behave most like control sites. The experimental/comparison sites were also matched. Pairs were from the same 'BCU family'¹⁰, and had similar crime and 'citizen focus' performance under the Police Performance Assessment Framework.

¹⁰ In 2004, the Home Office created groupings or families of BCUs which shared similar socio-demographic characteristics in order to assess their comparative performance. Each BCU was allocated a unique set of peers (up to 14 in total) to which it

As with the NRPP evaluation, outcomes were measured at the beginning of the programme and again after one year using a telephone survey with a randomly selected panel sample of residents. Further details about the survey method are in Appendix G. Process data were also collected from all ten sites at the end of the study period.¹¹ Their purpose was to help explain the nature of any changes observed across the sites, focusing on the delivery of the three delivery mechanisms. In particular, process evaluation aimed to:

- establish whether neighbourhood policing had been implemented in the five Pathfinders;
- check whether the quasi-experimental conditions had been met; and
- identify any contextual factors that may have provided an alternative explanation for change.

Results

Programme and BCU level

Analysis of the public survey was again carried out to identify whether neighbourhood policing had led to programme and/or BCU level effects. As before, it compared any change in outcomes in the experimental BCUs with that in the comparison sites, to see whether the difference was significant (i.e. unlikely to be due to chance).

The analysis showed no consistent pattern of change at either a programme or BCU level (all results tables are in Appendix H). There were very few significant differences in the performance of the Pathfinder and comparison sites over the study period. Where effects were found, they were not associated with any one particular BCU or outcome measure. Instead, the effects were randomly distributed across the sites and different outcomes. While there was no overall improvement in the Pathfinders relative to their comparisons over the 12 months, it should be noted that no overall decline in outcomes was found either. In a small number of cases, outcomes improved in the comparison sites relative to the experimental sites.

Explanations for the lack of change

Despite the lack of positive effects, it does not automatically follow that neighbourhood policing does not 'work' at a larger organisational scale. In order to establish whether this was the case, three explanations for the lack of change must to be examined.

- *Theory failure* – the intervention was implemented properly, but failed to deliver the expected results.
- *Implementation failure* – the intervention was not implemented fully, meaning it was unable to deliver the expected results.
- *Evaluation failure* – the intervention was implemented properly and may have delivered the expected results, but which were not picked up by the evaluation.

Theory failure

The evidence from the efficacy studies that improvements were brought about by neighbourhood policing and maintained over time suggested that the ideas underpinning implementation were sound. While there are subtle differences between reassurance and neighbourhood policing, theory failure was unlikely given the strength of evidence in favour of implementation and/or evaluation failure as more likely explanations for the lack of change in the BCUs.

Implementation failure

There was evidence to suggest that the programme had not been implemented in full and/or consistently across the wider geographic area, thereby reducing the likelihood of it having an impact. 'Dosage', the extent to which the Pathfinders had introduced neighbourhood policing in the first year

was most similar. Comparisons between a BCU and those in its most similar grouping are seen to be fairer and more meaningful.

¹¹ Data were gathered on a retrospective basis by independent consultants.

of the programme, may have been an issue particularly as the implementation of neighbourhood policing was intended to take place over three years. The process data suggested that the sites were all at different stages of implementation, and that the standard of implementation varied even within BCUs.¹² Some were at a relatively early stage, and reported that introduction of key elements of the programme was 'just about to happen'. Others had teams in place, which resulted in increased visible patrol, and had just started to engage with local communities. The lack of effective problem-solving was an issue for almost all sites, and found to be a particularly difficult mechanism to implement at a BCU level. This finding was consistent with other studies on problem-solving which have found systematic activity on the ground hard to establish and maintain (Tilley and Read, 2000; Cordner and Biebel, 2003; Skogan and Steiner 2004).

Feedback from the ACPO programme team has suggested that, across the programme as a whole, some forces and BCUs concentrated on putting the basic 'building blocks' in place during the initial stages of the implementation, rather than developing fully-fledged systems. Some areas, for example, were reported to have focused on identifying community priorities in a fairly mechanical way, rather than adopting a broader approach based on the systematic collection of community intelligence to orient policing towards the problems that matter the most to the public. The latter approach, which had been previously developed in some of the NRPP sites, was reported to have been more structured and drew more explicitly on ideas from the signal crimes perspective. The view of the ACPO programme team was that more fully-fledged systems were starting to emerge and that time was required for engagement processes to start to take on a community intelligence focus.

Evaluation failure

There were also three primary factors that may have resulted in the research design failing to identify programme and BCU effects.

- *Sample sizes* – The relatively small size of the samples meant only large differences among the experimental and comparison BCUs (i.e. around +/- ten percentage points) would have been significant. Regardless of the sample size, the direction of change in the outcome measures was random and not consistent with neighbourhood policing having an effect.
- *Possible ceiling effects* – The NRPP follow-up showed that, after an initial jump in performance, results in the pilot sites were more likely to be maintained in the longer-term than further built upon.¹³ It is possible that, because Pathfinders that were relative advanced in terms of implementation were selected as treatment areas, the task of improving outcome measures in these sites may have been made more difficult. The Pathfinders may not have been completely 'clean' in the pre-test period, and may have been affected by the general trend across the police service towards neighbourhood policing.
- *Pockets of implementation* – There was evidence from the process evaluation to suggest that the standard of implementation varied *within* individual pilot sites, with some neighbourhoods making better progress than others. The sampling of respondents across whole BCUs would have missed any concentrated changes in public perceptions and experiences that may have occurred in these pockets.
- *Quasi-experimental conditions* – The research design required that the 'naturally occurring' experimental conditions were maintained during the study period. However, because neighbourhood policing was being implemented nationally, there was a strong possibility that some aspects of neighbourhood policing may have been implemented in the comparison sites. Examination of the process data revealed that the Pathfinders and comparison sites were not vastly different in terms of their implementation of neighbourhood policing, thus making differences in performance harder to detect. Further analysis of the survey results confirmed there was substantial overlap between BCUs in terms of residents' experience of neighbourhood policing activity in their local area. (See Appendix I for analysis of process and survey data).

¹² This is important given that the sample was drawn from across each BCU.

¹³ This was likely to be due, in part, to implementation in the second year of the NRPP being less intensive.

Individual level

The survey analysis was primarily geared towards detecting the *average* change for a *group* of respondents, such as those living in a ward or BCU. Because it assumed that everyone in that area might benefit from the intervention (rather than in smaller pockets), the tests looked to identify whether neighbourhood policing affected people's perceptions when they were aggregated together at programme and BCU levels compared to those living in other areas (i.e. 'ecological' change). It did not look at how the perceptions of *individual* respondents who lived in those areas change over time (i.e. 'individual' change).¹⁴

By shifting the analytical focus towards this individual level, away from average change across an area, the BCU level evaluation could describe what had happened in the ten sites and help explain the apparent lack of change. Taking all respondents together, and removing the distinction between those who lived in experimental/comparison sites, the analysis examined how the perceptions of individual respondents changed over time and what was associated with that change.

The analysis concentrated on identifying the factors associated with a change in respondents' perceptions of local police effectiveness (i.e. the BCS measure of confidence) as it was the main programme outcome. The NRPP study had found the three delivery mechanisms, as well as reduced victimisation, were all associated with increased public confidence. The BCU panel sample provided an opportunity to test whether people's experience of the same mechanisms were again related to improved ratings of the police.

A logistic regression model was again developed, similar to the one used in the NRPP study. They differed in one important respect: the BCU model took into account not only those respondents whose perceptions *improved* over time (i.e. from a negative to positive rating), but also those whose perceptions *deteriorated* over time (i.e. from a positive to negative rating).¹⁵ The respondents whose views stayed the same were the reference category.

The resulting model (see Appendix J) contained the following factors that increased the likelihood of a respondent being confident in the police.

- Confidence in the police at the baseline.
- Improved perceptions of regular foot patrol in the local area.

The factors that decreased the likelihood of a respondent being confident in the police included:

- being a victim of crime in the previous 12 months;
- deteriorated perceptions of the local police understanding the issues that affect the community;
- deteriorated perceptions of the local police treating everyone fairly;
- deteriorated perceptions of police willingness to listen and respond to people's views;
- deteriorated perceptions of the police being effective at working with the local community; and
- deteriorated perceptions of regular foot patrol in the local area.

While the results of the NRPP and BCU models were very different, taken together, they underline how important the central delivery mechanisms were not only to improving public confidence in the police, but also to *maintaining* it. The BCU model suggests that if a person's perceptions of neighbourhood policing got worse, they were more likely to give a lower rating for the effectiveness of all local police. It is notable that variables related to police visibility, community engagement and, to a lesser extent, the co-production of solutions – all three delivery mechanisms – came up as being linked to reduced confidence. The public's perception of fair treatment by the police was also significant, highlighting the importance of 'procedural justice' and legitimacy in shaping public perceptions (see Tyler and Fagin, 2005; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003).

¹⁴ This is consistent with the fact that BCUs were allocated for treatment or comparison, not the people living in those BCUs.

¹⁵ Marginal shifts in perceptions were not examined (e.g. from 'good' to 'excellent').

While the respondents whose views deteriorated were likely to have reduced confidence in the police, the reverse cannot be said for those whose perceptions improved. Positive experience of each of the delivery mechanisms was not linked to improvements in the perceived effectiveness of the local police. Only improved perceptions of foot patrol were positively associated with increased public confidence, which again underlined how far the sites had progressed and that some had not implemented neighbourhood policing in full. That no proxy measures for improved community engagement and problem-solving came up as positives supported the earlier finding that the treatment areas had largely focused in the first year of the programme on getting resources in place which had led to an increase in police visibility, but that policing practice on the ground was in its infancy.

Interpretation

Overall, it was not possible to conclude that the Pathfinder BCUs delivered improvements similar to those seen in the NRPP pilot. The views and experiences of most people living in the experimental areas did not change. While the perceptions of a small proportion of residents did improve, this was cancelled out by a similar proportion whose perceptions got worse. This finding can be interpreted as a warning to forces about the challenges they face in rolling out neighbourhood policing and in making a positive impact, particularly around establishing effective community engagement and problem-solving.

The BCU and NRPP studies both found that extra foot patrol alone did not increase public confidence. The process evaluation suggested that most sites in the BCU level evaluation had increased levels of visibility, partly because of the large injection of PCSOs, but that community engagement and problem-solving were less well-developed. While foot patrol was found to be important to the people whose ratings of the police improved, it was not sufficient on its own to prompt a large-scale shift in public perceptions that was picked up by the survey. It seems likely that all three mechanisms need to be delivered in a large enough 'dose' across the BCU or in more concentrated local pockets in order to shift public confidence. The provision of information to the public may also be crucial. Research carried out by the Metropolitan Police on their Safer Neighbourhoods programme points to a link between public confidence in the police and how informed people felt about the work of local officers (Stanko, *et al.*, unpublished). Those who felt well-informed were more likely to say crime and anti-social behaviour improved, to be satisfied with local policing and have positive views of the police.

The study also gives a clear message about the opportunities and risks around the implementation of activities to trigger the three delivery mechanisms. Neighbourhood policing has the potential to lead to increased public confidence, particularly where the delivery mechanisms are fully implemented and are actually noticed or experienced by residents. However, if the public do not see neighbourhood policing activity in their local area and *think* police practices are getting worse locally (regardless of what the police actually do), this is likely to have a detrimental effect on public perceptions. The same can also be said for how fairly residents think the police treat people.

This finding points to an important imbalance or asymmetry in public confidence. It was deterioration in the public's perception of neighbourhood policing, rather than its improvement, that had the greatest impact on their confidence. If respondents thought the police did not understand the issues that were important to them, were unwilling to listen and respond, were ineffective at working with the local community, treated people unfairly, and were not visible, their confidence in the police was likely to reduce. However, if people thought the opposite, they were no more likely to be confident. Even though most people's views stayed the same, this highlights the fragility of public confidence in the police. In other words, it may be relatively easy for the police to do things that lower public confidence, but difficult for them to implement activity that will raise it on a large organisational scale.

The asymmetry in public confidence echoes recent research on encounters between the police and the public (Skogan, 2006). The research showed that the impact of public encounters with the police was strongly asymmetrical. Whereas having a positive experience has little impact on a person's satisfaction with the encounter and that the police may get little credit from the public for delivering a professional service, "a bad experience hurts a great deal" (Skogan, 2006: 112) and can have a seriously detrimental effect on people's perceptions. Skogan suggested that people may either dismiss positive experiences with the police as exceptions to the norm or treat good encounters as a given. The impact of having a bad experience on people's perceptions was found to be 4 to 14 times that of having a good experience. It also showed that factors associated with positive experience (e.g.

fair and polite treatment, and receiving a prompt and helpful service) were small and not significantly different from zero.

It was not possible from the process data to say whether neighbourhood policing activity did in fact get worse in the sites during the study. Irrespective of what actually happened, how neighbourhood policing mechanisms were *perceived* was more critical in shaping whether residents thought the police did a good job. This prompts an important question about whether public expectations of the police had been raised and, in particular, whether their perception of things getting worse was made against a higher benchmark rather than the situation as it was before implementation started.

The national evaluation

An evaluation strategy was developed at the planning stage of the NPP to evaluate its effectiveness at a 'macro' level.¹⁶ The national evaluation sought to measure the implementation of neighbourhood policing over time and examine how it affected changes in key outcome measures. Rather than look at the impact of implementation in an individual area or a small number of pilot sites, the national evaluation sought to build on the evidence about the impact of neighbourhood policing at a local level and adopt a 'whole programme' approach whereby the overall impact of the NPP would be assessed using standard outcome indicators from police performance management. Inevitably, such a 'whole programme' approach would ignore important changes that may be expected to occur at a neighbourhood level as it tries to identify the aggregate effect of implementing the programme as a whole. While such an evaluation strategy runs the risk not showing where and when implementation has succeeded locally, its findings should help determine whether the programme, at the end of its three-year cycle, has delivered its objectives. The results reported here are from an initial phase of work, looking at early implementation, and was carried out before efforts to introduce force-wide were fully underway.

The study is exploratory in that, in addition to assessing the initial impact of the NPP, it also provided an opportunity to examine whether econometric modelling was a suitable evaluative approach having been used in smaller-scale studies and less complex settings (see Machin and Marie, 2005). The exploratory nature of the study should be emphasised because most outcome measures were available only at a force level, and because of the timing of the evaluation gave only a limited period in which the NPP could affect change.

Research methods

Organisational surveys

Influenced by longitudinal studies of police departments in the US (see, for example, Wilson, 2004; and Zhao, *et al.*, 1999), the national evaluation looked to measure the level of implementation in all 43 forces and 244 BCUs in England and Wales at the beginning of the NPP, and then tracked changes over the three years of the programme. Repeated surveys of all force and BCUs were carried out every six months to create panel data. The first sweep was carried out in October 2005 to coincide with the completion of the programme team's readiness assessments of the 43 Pathfinders, and asked about neighbourhood policing in the period before implementation was formally underway (April to September 2005). The results reported here draw on the first three sweeps of the organisational surveys, the period during which implementation activity was concentrated in the Pathfinders rather than across whole force areas (see Appendix K for timings and response rates).

An online survey approach was used to minimise the bureaucratic burden placed on forces and to help ensure a high response. The approach involved sending each respondent a personalised email containing a unique hyperlink to a web-based questionnaire. Response rates and summary results could be monitored on an ongoing basis and enabled tailored follow-up work to be carried out with individual respondents who had not completed the questionnaire to boost the overall response rate (see the technical reports¹⁷).

The questionnaires gathered detailed 'factual' information about the policies, systems, procedures and (to a lesser extent) practices that were reported to be in place, rather than respondents' views on,

¹⁶ The national evaluation was designed by Paul Quinton. All modelling work was designed and carried out by Stephen Machin and Olivier Marie from the London School of Economics.

¹⁷ All technical reports are available on request.

or subjective assessments of, implementation. Survey respondents were usually the chief officer responsible for neighbourhood policing and BCU commanders (or neighbourhood policing project managers). Different questionnaires were developed for forces and for BCUs, and were revised for sweep three to reflect changing implementation requirements. They were based primarily on the programme's guidance documents.

The surveys only captured *self-reported* levels of implementation. While data were triangulated against the ACPO programme team's assessments and HMIC's inspection results, limited independent checks were carried out to confirm what BCUs and forces reported to have in place.¹⁸ While such surveys provide an estimation of change over time, they provided no insights about *how well* various aspects of neighbourhood policing had been implemented or the *quality* of what was reported to be in place (Cordner, 2004). It was recognised from the outset that respondents may over- or under-state the level of neighbourhood policing implementation, although they were encouraged to be accurate. Caution is, nonetheless, required in interpreting the results of the self-report survey particularly in light of previous qualitative fieldwork that has revealed there are sometimes differences between what is thought or supposed to happen (policy) and what actually happens on the ground (practice) (Martin Innes, personal communication).

Box 3.2 provides a summary of self-reported levels of implementation in key areas (i.e. resourcing and the three delivery mechanisms).

Box 3.2: Self-reported levels of implementation

Cross-sectional analysis of the organisational surveys showed there were statistically significant shifts in self-reported levels of implementation in key aspects of the programme. Examples are shown below.

- **Self-reported implementation of neighbourhood policing** – By sweep three, eight forces (19%) reported that implementation in their Pathfinder was 'complete'. Most said that implementation in the Pathfinder BCU was 'underway' (81%). Only two forces said that implementation had been completed in all BCUs by September 2006.
- **Resource allocation** – Over the three sweeps of the survey, there was evidence of an increase in resource coverage. By sweep three, only three per cent of BCUs said that teams or officers had not been deployed to all neighbourhoods in the BCU. This was a reduction of nine percentage points on the previous sweep. There was also a shift towards BCUs adopting a dedicated team approach rather than other organisational structures (e.g. 'hybrid' officers and individual neighbourhood officers). In total, 85 per cent of BCUs reported having dedicated teams organised at a neighbourhood or sector level, an increase of 14 percentage points from sweep two.
- **Visibility** – Rather than ask about levels of targeted foot patrol, the questionnaire focused on the extent to which neighbourhood officers were 'abstracted' from their neighbourhoods and/or carried out non-neighbourhood policing activities.

Overall, there was a fall in the percentage of BCUs that allowed neighbourhood officers to work outside their neighbourhood, from 15 per cent in sweep two to ten per cent in sweep three. There were significant drops in those reportedly allowing neighbourhood officers to work outside their area to cover general policing duties (36% to 24%) and response officer shortages (35% to 5%).

There was also evidence to suggest that BCUs were increasingly limiting the amount of time neighbourhood officers spent responding to *routine* calls for service from the public. Between sweeps two and three, the proportion of BCUs allowing officers to respond to *any* emergency call in their neighbourhood fell by 16 points (from 36% to 20%), and to *any* non-emergency call in their neighbourhood by 15 points (from 51% to 35%).

- **Community engagement** – There was a large and significant increase in the proportion of BCUs that stated that neighbourhood priorities were mainly set by local people (rather than by the police or partner agencies). This increased from 27 per cent of BCUs to 48 per cent between sweeps

¹⁸ It was not possible to correlate the self-reported measures with other sources because the ACPO and HMIC data were not gathered systematically at the BCU level.

two and three (a 21 point rise). Pathfinders were more likely than non-Pathfinders to report neighbourhood priorities were mainly set by local people (60% and 46% respectively).

The survey results also showed that there were statistically significant increases in the reported use of different community engagement techniques amongst BCUs. Between sweeps two and three, the largest increases were in the use of key individual networks (20 points), street briefings (19 points) and survey-based approaches (17 points). There were also important differences between Pathfinders and non-Pathfinder BCUs. Pathfinders were stronger in their use of 'non-traditional', proactive methods of engagement including: street briefings (64% compared to 43%); door knocking (74% compared to 62%); key individual networks (74% compared to 67%); and environmental visual audits (74% compared to 56%).

- **Problem-solving** – Overall, progress was evident over the three sweeps of the survey in terms of the systems in place at a BCU level to support problem-solving. It was not possible, however, to assess the extent or quality of problem-solving activity on the ground. By sweep three, BCUs generally had basic systems in place. For example, most allocated problems to officers (83%), provided training to officers (80%), and provided analytical support (77%). Fewer BCUs had more advanced systems for supporting problem-solving, such as training partner agencies or local people in problem-solving (46%), carrying out appraisals of neighbourhood problem-solving activity (42%), or recording all problem-solving plans (53%). Less than half (44%) carried out longer-term analysis of the problems affecting neighbourhoods.

BCUs were asked what problems had been identified as neighbourhood priorities during the previous six months, and what problems had been targeted by neighbourhood problem-solving activity. The results were compared and suggested that the activity of neighbourhood officers was shaped by other influences besides locally-identified priorities. The largest differences between problem-solving activity and neighbourhood priorities were for the following and included crime types 'traditionally' targeted by the police: abandoned vehicles (19 points); arson or fires (19 points); hate incidents (17 points); physical assaults (17 points); street robbery (16 points); burglary (16 points) and vehicle crime (14 points). That there were relatively large disparities can be seen is an indication that operational policing was not completely responsive to the needs of local people and that the processes of aligning frontline activity to local concerns were not well-developed at this early stage of the three-year programme.

Note: All results are statistically significant based on confidence intervals at the 95 per cent level (using the fixed population correction). Sweep one responses: BCU = 199 (82%); force = 41 (95%). Sweep two responses: BCU = 217 (89%); force = 215 (98%). Sweep three response: BCU = 215 (95%); force = 42 (98%).

The econometric modelling approach

The approach looked at the changes in outcome measures over time in the BCUs and forces after neighbourhood policing was introduced ('treatment areas'), and compared them to the changes experienced in other areas that had not yet started to implement ('control areas'). The analysis looked at the average effect of implementation on outcomes, taking into account 'fixed area effects' at the start of the programme (i.e. the characteristics of areas that do not vary substantially over time such as deprivation, ethnic composition and crime levels).¹⁹ The national evaluation treated the NPP as a 'natural experiment', but one where the control sites would end up implementing neighbourhood policing by the end of the programme. Appendix L sets out the main limitations of the overall design of the approach.

Measuring implementation of neighbourhood policing

The organisational surveys were used to measure neighbourhood policing implementation in two ways. First, individual questions were identified as proxy measures for self-reported implementation to test the modelling technique and were taken to represent the 'minimum requirement' for areas to be 'implemented'.

¹⁹ Trends in victim satisfaction were initially controlled for in the force level analysis as it was hypothesised that satisfaction might affect public confidence independently of neighbourhood policing. No effect was found and, as a result, it was not included in the analysis reported below.

- *BCU level* – reporting that neighbourhood policing resources had been deployed to all neighbourhoods and were targeted, and that neighbourhood policing priorities were mainly set by local people.
- *Force level* – reporting that force-wide implementation of the *Practice Advice* was underway or complete (not a measure of full implementation).²⁰

BCUs and forces were scored *either zero or one* for each sweep depending on whether they had implemented the minimum requirement (i.e. neighbourhood policing was 'switched off' or 'switched on').

Second, the survey responses were used to develop an overall 'implementation score'. A range of questions were identified in order to distinguish areas that had implemented neighbourhood policing from those that had not. The questions were scored 'theoretically' based on what full implementation was expected to look like in a BCU or force.²¹ The 'threshold' for implementation was based on the requirements set out in, for example, the *Practice Advice*, and what the programme team considered to be an acceptable standard of implementation.²² Not all questions were suitable for scoring. Even though changes were made to the questionnaires in sweep three, similar thresholds were applied to ensure the standard of implementation was maintained between the sweeps.²³

BCUs and forces were scored somewhere *between zero and one* for each sweep depending on their reported level of implementation (i.e. neighbourhood policing is not simply 'switched on' or 'off', but was on a sliding scale that varied in its intensity).²⁴

Appendix M describes the first stage of analysis which checked whether the two measures of implementation were correlated. It should be noted that both approaches, besides being based on self-reported data, create one-dimensional measures of implementation. In other words, they treat implementation as if it is a single entity whereas, in practice, there are different dimensions to implementation (not least the three delivery mechanisms). This means that, even though some sites may be better than others at implementing different aspects of neighbourhood policing, they may receive similar overall scores.

Measuring outcomes

The national evaluation concentrated on the following outcome measures (see also Appendix N).

- *The rate of total recorded crime (force and BCU)* – While crime reduction was seen as a possible outcome of neighbourhood policing locally, it was dependent on the nature of the problems identified and prioritised by local communities. Neighbourhood officers were to be oriented towards the issues that mattered most to local people (including non-crime matters), rather than specific crime types 'traditionally' targeted by the police (e.g. volume burglary, vehicle crime and robbery). It did not follow that the targeting of local problems would automatically lead to the NPP reducing *overall measures of total crime* at either a force or BCU level. The measure was, however, included because of the positive results of the NRPP evaluation and because of need to monitor any adverse effects of implementation.
- *The rate of recorded violent crime and criminal damage (force and BCU)* – These measures reflect crime types potentially more susceptible to neighbourhood policing and were more likely to be identified by the public as priorities (see Tuffin, *et al.*, 2006).²⁵
- *The overall detection rate (force and BCU)* – Increased detections were not an intended aim of neighbourhood policing. The outcome measure was included because there was concern that neighbourhood policing might have an adverse impact on detection rates.

²⁰ This was based on a question asked only in the first two sweeps. As only one force had not responded positively by sweep two, it was assumed that force-wide implementation was at least underway in all areas by sweep three.

²¹ The 'marked up' questionnaires are available on request.

²² Staffing levels were not included in the score because too few areas responded consistently over time.

²³ The changes, however, precluded weights being applied to those questions that reflected the more crucial aspects of implementation.

²⁴ This 'normalised' implementation score was achieved by dividing an area's total score by the number of questions.

²⁵ Violent crime was included because, in 2006/07, the majority of offences were for those that involved 'less serious' injury, of which almost half were assaults without injury and harassment offences (Jansson, *et al.*, 2007). Depending on local priorities, these are crime types likely to be tackled by neighbourhood policing.

- *Victim satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the police (BCU only)* – The programme did not have a specific delivery mechanism that would directly affect victim satisfaction or dissatisfaction.²⁶ The outcome measures were included as a proxy for public confidence (which were not available at the BCU level).
- *Public confidence in the police (force only)* – Improving the perceived effectiveness of the local police was the principal aim of neighbourhood policing, and experienced significant increases in the NRPP evaluation at ward level.

The selection of some of the outcome measures was partly governed by their suitability for analysis, and was prompted by the lack of suitable indicators at the BCU level. Many of the outcomes in the NRPP evaluation are measured by the BCS, but can be aggregated only at a force level.

A principal limitation of using survey measures from the BCS is that with the sample sizes at the police force level are relatively small. This means that the size of the outcome change would need to be fairly large if it was to be statistically significant. This is particularly important given that the results reported here refer only to the programme's first year, and that the size of any change in outcomes was expected to be modest given the early stage of implementation.

Results

Three statistical models were developed at both BCU and force levels to test whether implementation had an effect on outcomes. Simple area fixed effects models were used (see Appendix O).

- *The minimum requirement model* – Model one used the proxy measures on the minimum implementation requirements (i.e. resources deployed and targeted, and neighbourhood policing priorities mainly set by the public; and implementation of the *Practice Advice*). It distinguished between areas that had implemented neighbourhood policing from those that had not. Implementation in the sites was, therefore, considered to be have been either 'switched on' or 'switched off'.
- *The intensity model* – Model two used the overall implementation scores. It provided a more finely graduated assessment of implementation, measuring the 'dosage' of neighbourhood policing in an area (between zero and one). Implementation in the sites was, therefore, considered to have been on a 'sliding scale'.
- *The threshold model* – Model three, again, used the implementation scores. A threshold was applied to the scores based on the average (median) level of neighbourhood policing implementation. Areas above the average were classed as implemented, while those below the average were classed as not implemented. Implementation in the sites was, again, considered to have been either 'switched on' or 'switched off'.

Appendix P outlines how neighbourhood policing was scored in the three models, and how the survey sweeps related to the availability of outcome data.

BCU level

Table 3.1 summarises the results of the minimum requirement, intensity and threshold models on crime, detections and victim satisfaction. Each coefficient (β) shows how much of a change in the outcome was prompted when self-reported implementation was 'switched on', taking into account longer-term trends in the BCU.²⁷ The resources model, for example, suggested that victim satisfaction increased by three per cent for the BCUs that implemented neighbourhood policing. Overall, the pattern of change across the models was encouraging. Apart from the total crime rate and victim dissatisfaction measures, all the outcome measures changed in the direction consistent with neighbourhood policing having a positive impact.

²⁶ Dissatisfaction was included to assess whether impact neighbourhood policing may have an asymmetrical impact on victims' perceptions.

²⁷ Unlike the other models, the intensity model does not look at the overall shift from not being implemented to being implemented, but at marginal changes in implementation. It captures any critical change in implementation that affects outcomes, rather than a shift in implementation at a fixed point which may be less critical.

It was not possible, though, to say that the implementation of neighbourhood policing had a positive effect on outcomes. Each result is an estimate of how much change occurred, based on a small sample of BCUs; the 'actual' change experienced by the wider population is likely to lie in a range around that estimate (i.e. the confidence intervals). Small changes coupled with relatively wide confidence intervals mean that the actual results may have gone the other way (i.e. the confidence intervals included zero). So, while the resource model *estimated* a three per cent increase in victim satisfaction, it may have increased by up to nine per cent or fallen by three per cent. There were signs that outcomes had changed in the right direction, but this apparent improvement was not significant.

Force level

Again, three statistical models were developed to test the impact of neighbourhood policing, using three different measures of force level implementation, on crime, detections, and public confidence. Unlike the BCU models, the force models did not show a consistent pattern of change (Table 3.2). None of the outcome measures changed in the same direction across the three models. In addition to the mixed results, the confidence intervals were again too wide to be certain about the direction of change.

Table 3.1: BCU summary results table

	Minimum requirement model (resources)			Minimum requirement model (priorities)			Intensity model			Threshold model		
	β	CI (95%)		β	CI (95%)		β	CI (95%)		β	CI (95%)	
		Higher	Lower		Higher	Lower		Higher	Lower		Higher	Lower
Total crime rate (log)	-0.004	0.010	-0.018	-0.001	0.013	-0.015	0.004	0.047	-0.039	0.004	0.020	-0.012
Violent crime rate (log)	-0.010	0.023	-0.043	-0.014	0.019	-0.047	-0.011	0.071	-0.093	-0.005	0.022	-0.032
Criminal damage rate (log)	-0.013	-0.038	0.012	-0.017	0.022	-0.056	-0.035	0.067	-0.137	-0.005	0.024	-0.034
Detection rate	0.003	0.025	-0.019	0.005	0.021	-0.011	0.018	0.055	-0.019	0.007	0.023	-0.009
Victim satisfaction	0.031	0.088	-0.026	0.015	0.046	-0.016	0.118	0.387	-0.151	0.017	0.080	-0.046
Victim dissatisfaction	0.003	0.021	-0.015	0.006	0.022	-0.010	0.014	0.055	-0.027	0.011	0.023	-0.001

Note: The confidence intervals are based on robust standard errors clustered at the force level, weighted by population. The R^2 values ranged from 0.39 to 0.99. Detailed results tables are in Appendix Q.

Table 3.2: Force summary results table

	Minimum requirement model (<i>Practice Advice</i>)			Intensity model			Threshold model		
	β	CI (95%)		β	CI (95%)		β	CI (95%)	
		Higher	Lower		Higher	Lower		Higher	Lower
Total crime rate (log)	0.001	0.030	-0.028	-0.028	0.035	-0.091	0.000	0.020	-0.020
Violent crime rate (log)	0.019	0.076	-0.038	-0.055	0.076	-0.186	0.003	0.044	-0.038
Criminal damage rate (log)	0.011	0.044	-0.022	-0.047	0.065	-0.159	-0.009	0.020	-0.038
Detection rate	0.001	0.017	-0.015	-0.012	0.025	-0.049	-0.005	0.007	-0.017
Public confidence	0.002	0.020	-0.016	-0.012	0.029	-0.053	0.001	0.009	-0.007

Note: The confidence intervals are based on robust standard errors, weighted by population. The R^2 values ranged from 0.77 to 0.98. Detailed results tables are in Appendix Q.

Summary and conclusion

While there is evidence on neighbourhood policing's efficacy, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about its effectiveness at this early stage. This is not the same as concluding that neighbourhood policing 'does not work', because of the positive evidence at a ward level. It is most likely that a fuller assessment of whether neighbourhood policing is effective can only be made after the programme has reached maturity and full implementation of activity designed to trigger the three delivery mechanisms has been achieved. Further research may also be required to examine the impact of neighbourhood policing at a more local level during the three-year national programme in order to determine where, and under what conditions, implementation delivers a change in outcomes.

The timing of the effectiveness studies meant that the sites implementing neighbourhood policing had relatively limited time – around 12 months – within which they had to bring in resources and develop practices on the ground in order to affect a change in outcomes. The national evaluation reported here also covered the period before force-wide implementation activity was fully underway. It was, therefore, reasonable to expect that early national implementation would not deliver the sort of change seen in the 12-month NRPP, particularly given the result of similar force-wide initiatives that suggest improvements are likely in the longer-term (e.g. CAPS).

The BCU level evaluation did not find a consistent pattern of change in the Pathfinder sites. While there were no improvements, no detrimental effects were found. Most likely, the analysis indicated that the quasi-experimental conditions had been compromised. The Pathfinders had not implemented in full and were not vastly different from the comparison sites. The process data showed there were weaknesses around community engagement and problem-solving (in line with previous research). Compared to the NRPP pilots, police activity across the wider organisation was also less focused. This highlights an important risk to the national programme. It seems likely that all three delivery mechanisms need to be rigorously implemented and the public need to see improvements in the way they are policed – and not just foot patrol – if ratings of the local police are to improve.

Analysis of those residents whose views *did* change also underlined the importance of neighbourhood policing, and the fairness of the police, in *maintaining* levels of public confidence. Confidence was found to be 'fragile'; if people thought neighbourhood policing activities were getting worse, this was associated with reduced confidence. These findings may help explain why the BCS has not shown more rapid changes in public confidence since the NPP started, although relatively little is known about what other factors, besides neighbourhood policing, affect people's confidence in their local police (see, for example, Bradford, *et al.*, unpublished).

There were positive indications from the organisational surveys that BCUs and forces were reportedly starting to introduce systems and processes in line with neighbourhood policing. The finding, however, that there were sizeable disparities between neighbourhood priorities and problem-solving activity indicates policing was not yet completely responsive to local need and further work to develop problem-solving processes is required. Early results from the national evaluation also showed some encouraging signs about the direction of outcome change at a BCU level, although no significant results were found. It will be important for the national evaluation to carry on as implementation continues to expand. In order for significant change to be detected at a 'macro' level, however, bigger shifts in outcomes or larger sample sizes are required. Moreover, further work is needed to develop more robust measures of implementation that reflect each of the delivery mechanisms, resource levels, and a broader range of contextual factors. Finally, given the national evaluation takes a 'whole programme' perspective, there remains scope for further research to be carried out at a more local level by academics, practitioners and/or the National Policing Improvement Agency to help understand the impact of implementation in particular neighbourhood settings and how the individual delivery mechanisms operate in different contexts.

4. Conclusions

The purpose of this report was to summarise the findings from a co-ordinated programme of research to show whether neighbourhood policing is an efficacious and/or effective intervention at an early stage of implementation. The NRPP evaluation and follow-up study provide good evidence of neighbourhood policing's impact at a ward level, both in the short-term and over time, where police activity focused on delivering the central delivery mechanisms (i.e. police visibility, community engagement and problem-solving). Neighbourhood policing, when implemented locally and under controlled conditions, was able to deliver positive change across a wide range of outcome measures, although there may have been evidence of a ceiling effect. The studies, therefore, provide support for neighbourhood policing's efficacy.

In terms of effectiveness during the NPP's first year, the results of the BCU level evaluation and national evaluation were less clear-cut. This is not uncommon when programmes are 'scaled up' and introduced in more challenging environments, and one of the primary reasons for the efficacy/effectiveness study distinction. Measurement and implementation issues meant that no improvements were found. At this early stage, therefore, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing – either positive or negative. In order to reach such an assessment, full implementation of each of the three delivery mechanisms has to be achieved. This does not mean that neighbourhood policing does not 'work'. No such claim can be made based on the evidence presented here. This is particularly the case given that these studies looked to detect a change in outcomes when averaged across relatively wide areas. It is unlikely that they would be able to detect improvements that had occurred in smaller geographic pockets where local implementation has been successful. The interim findings from NPP's first year are, nonetheless vital to policy-makers and practitioners and provide information about the sustainability of the programme, not least about the challenge of implementing widespread organisational change and the speed at which improvements may be delivered. Further research will be required to assess the impact of the NPP as it continues, and to evaluate neighbourhood policing's impact more locally in order to understand where and under what conditions implementation might be successful.

The NRPP evaluation and follow-up study add to the growing body of evidence on the impact of policing, and are consistent with earlier research that shows targeted foot patrol and problem-solving are effective (see Sherman and Eck, 2002). The critical role played by all three delivery mechanisms also supports previous work that shows community policing can improve public perceptions, but cannot reduce crime and disorder without problem-solving (see Weisburd and Eck, 2004). Thus, forces working with their partners should continue to build on their efforts to understand the needs of local communities and to develop their problem-solving capability at a neighbourhood level (e.g. via training, programme planning and monitoring). The two efficacy studies illustrate that neighbourhood policing can improve public perceptions and experiences at a local level, particularly where activity is focused within a neighbourhood and with strong central support and monitoring. The improvements generated at this local level were also sustained over time, even though the sites were no longer part of a formal programme. That two of the outcome measures – perceptions of the crime and police visibility – declined during the second year is a warning signal to forces that they need to remain focused on maintaining activity on ground.

Taken together, the studies suggest that, while important, foot patrol is potentially less critical to delivering and sustaining change in public perceptions compared to community engagement and problem-solving. The BCU level evaluation indicated that foot patrol, on its own, is unlikely to lead to substantial changes in public confidence. The process data showed that Pathfinders had increased levels of visibility, but were further behind with community engagement and problem-solving. This was consistent with the survey results. Although visibility was recognised by those people whose views did improve, people who thought police practice around the three delivery mechanisms had got worse tended to have *reduced* confidence in the police. This underlines the importance of community engagement and effective problem-solving. (The provision of information and feedback to the public may too be important.) It also raises the possibility that neighbourhood policing had not been given in a large enough 'dose' or was not sufficiently concentrated in local pockets during the early stages of the programme. Furthermore, given the emphasis on co-production and the extent to which problems identified by local people are likely to relate to non-crime matters, it seems likely that the success of

neighbourhood policing in the longer-term rests, in part, on how well the police are able to work in partnership with local agencies.

Difficulties with implementing community engagement and problem-solving across a force-area are well-documented and were identified under CAPS (see Skogan and Steiner, 2004). Full implementation of neighbourhood policing – and these critical delivery mechanisms – is likely only with sustained effort and commitment in the long-term. Given the size of the national programme and the challenge of achieving large-scale organisational change, improved outcomes of a similar magnitude to those seen in the NRPP evaluation are unlikely to happen within a couple of years. Chicago saw perceptions of police effectiveness increase gradually over a seven-year period (Skogan, *et al.*, 2000). It should also be noted that, in spite of these increases, there has been a recent shift away from CAPS due to pressures to set up specialist crime squads (Rosenbaum, 2007). In order to mitigate these longer-term pressures, the programme team is looking at, for example, what other factors shape the public's confidence in the police, the impediments to problem-solving, and how to develop effective community engagement practices.

Even though neighbourhood policing has been shown to improve public confidence, the report has also highlighted an important imbalance in how good a job the local police were perceived to be doing. Deterioration in perceptions of neighbourhood policing, and of fairness, were found to be associated with reduced confidence. If, however, people saw improvements in policing, they were no more likely to be confident in the police. Perceptions here are key to the success of neighbourhood policing, irrespective of what was actually happening on the ground. One implication of this asymmetry is that, while it is fairly easy for the police to lose the public's confidence, it is relatively difficult for the police to make significant gains. Neighbourhood policing, therefore, has a central role in *maintaining* current levels of public confidence, not just improving it. Given the fragility in public confidence, what can the police do? The evidence from the NRPP study remains important. It showed that, when neighbourhood policing was implemented in full at a local level, the three delivery mechanisms – visibility, community engagement, and problem-solving – were influential in increasing public confidence in the police.

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Produced by the Research Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office

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ISBN: 978 1 84726 586 9

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