

# THE CONJUNCTION OF CRIMINAL OPPORTUNITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR CRIME REDUCTION TOOLKITS

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## Introduction

At the moment a great deal is expected of local crime and disorder partnerships and the practitioners – police, local authority officials and others – that work in them, or in the field of crime reduction and community safety more generally. Quite apart from the requirements of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (crime audits, action plans and so forth), many local partnerships are involved in ambitious development projects funded by the government's Crime Reduction Programme and other initiatives. The common theme of these is implementing schemes which are based on reliable evidence of what works and is cost effective, and which themselves generate *more* of that evidence through rigorous evaluation. Best Value adds a related perspective.

But are the partnerships fully-equipped to deliver? They need help from the centre in a number of ways and this is being addressed not least through the development of **toolkits** intended to supply knowhow and background knowledge on a range of topic areas variously covering specific crime problems (such as vehicle crime), offender problems (such as persistent young offenders) and process issues (broad, such as partnership or intelligence, and narrow, such as repeat victimisation). However, in all the attempts to put knowledge and knowhow on a firm, evidence-based footing there is one notable aspect which has not, until recently, been properly recognised. Practitioners need better tools for thought – better terms, concepts and frameworks than they have at present – and they should all be using the same ones.

We can illustrate the problem in several ways. For a start, some practitioners will talk about 'crime prevention', others about 'crime reduction', still others about 'community safety'. Is everyone using the terms in the same way? Do they really refer to distinctively different 'products'?

When we prompt our professionals to divide up their field of practice, they often have to make do with vague distinctions like *physical versus social prevention* (even building a brick wall has social consequences such as changing who associates with whom); or *prevention versus deterrence* (as if deterrence wasn't intended to prevent). And what are partnerships to make, practically speaking, of the difference between 'victim-oriented' and 'community-based' prevention? At the extreme, it becomes all nuance and factional allegiance. Frameworks based on false dichotomies, overlaps and shifting sands like these offer more hindrance than support.

Better, perhaps, if we avoid these broad-brush labels and focus on specific activities. But here, we confront a rich and fermenting variety of activity. A workable framework would have to find a place for the following, and much more: locks and bolts fitted, crime prevention buses driven round town, 'cognitive skills enhancement' for convicted offenders, all-women taxi services, good parenting classes, trimming of shrubs outside retirement homes, directed patrol, and puppet shows with a moral message. This is all too complex to characterise with any one-dimensional schema such as the popular 'primary, secondary or tertiary prevention' taken from the public health world, useful though that is.

Worst of all, our mythical group of practitioners may have aligned themselves along two cultural fault lines that still divide the entire territory. Do they favour changing offenders, or changing the

crime situation itself by making it riskier, more effort and less rewarding to offend? And do they favour working through enforcement and the Criminal Justice System or acting through a wide range of interventions in civil society?

But does any of this conceptual chaos matter? Why not relax and celebrate this glorious and fertile untidiness? Of course it matters. Without clear terms and concepts, practitioners can't readily communicate with each other – particularly with partners from other agencies – and can't clearly envisage, describe, plan and implement what they are trying to achieve in a community safety/ crime reduction scheme. This makes it hard to focus on how, exactly, the methods employed by the scheme are intended to work – predisposing schemes to weak implementation and drift of objectives, and hindering quality assurance. It also renders evaluation difficult, hinders the accumulation of a collective body of 'what works' principles (an area where some progress has been made but more is badly needed), and stifles intelligent and selective replication in favour of cookbook recipes and tried and *untested* popular solutions. Even finding out what has worked already is difficult without a decent system for describing and retrieving information. Wheels are frequently re-invented – but so, sadly, are flat tyres!

Strategic thinking, too, remains compartmentalised and method-driven rather than problem-oriented. While strategists should ideally be able to choose between *all* the policy levers at their disposal, they can be confined to considering just a few. Finally, it's hard to establish core competences and develop a curriculum for the training and education of practitioners if there is no coherent plan of the tactical or strategic know-how to be transferred. In short, crime reduction and community safety practitioners, policy makers and trainers have been denied the tools for thought that they need to do their jobs well, and that are required to establish a proper professional discipline. To remain content with muddling through in this way runs the risk of significantly misdirecting local and national effort against crime, and of wasting the important opportunity we now have (through the local crime and disorder partnerships, the Crime Reduction Programme, Safer Communities Initiative and other activities), to make a serious and sustainable dent in the rate of crime, which has been growing at a steady 5.5% per year since 1918.

We have, though, taken this issue on. Working with a range of practitioners from police operations and training, probation, local government, the crime prevention organisations NACRO and Crime Concern, the Crime Reduction College and others, over the last few years efforts have been made to develop and test a conceptual framework which aims to provide some key tools for thought. The **Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity** (CCO) framework seeks to:

- Define terms such as prevention, reduction and community safety clearly, and to draw useful distinctions between these perspectives
- Bridge the cultural faultlines dividing the field
- Help practitioners to envisage, communicate, and implement specific interventions in the causes of crime, and to integrate diverse approaches (for example, securing burgled houses whilst cracking down on handlers of stolen goods and addressing what motivates the local teenagers to offend)

In the context of the **toolkits** initiative, the CCO framework can be used to help assemble the knowhow and knowledge in an orderly and systematic way, to ensure all the key dimensions are covered, to facilitate reading across between individual toolkits and above all to help tease out the **working principles** on which practitioners can draw when evaluative evidence is lacking or new circumstances mean it is of uncertain relevance or out of date. The aim is to help practitioners act less like technicians applying fixed remedies and more like creative but professionally-disciplined consultants.

## Definitions

What does the CCO framework look like? It can't be summed up in a nutshell – but what crime prevention practitioner ever thought it could? It starts by defining crime prevention and reduction (Figure 1) and community safety.

Crime **prevention** is about reducing the *risk* of occurrence, and the potential seriousness, of crime and disorder events by intervening in their causes. This definition is deliberately inclusive – centring on no particular kinds of causes or theories of crime, and favouring no kinds of intervention over others.

Crime **reduction** gives a somewhat different perspective, simply centring on reducing the *number* and seriousness of these events. It incorporates the **future** orientation of prevention, whether it is directed towards reducing the risk of individual criminal events (eg intercepting a specific racial attack planned for the weekend) or decreasing more general crime risks (eg the high risk of burglary in a neighbourhood, or making offending by particular individuals less likely). But it also has the **present** orientation of disrupting and frustrating specific crimes as they happen (for example through police action to halt a fight or a citizen's action to repulse a pickpocket). And it has the **past** orientation of limiting progressive harm after a crime has happened (eg halting further misuse of a stolen credit card); and arresting, and punishing or treating convicted offenders. In practice, though, there will be very few crime reduction actions which do not have a preventive aspect. Offenders will usually **anticipate** intervention and punishment, and take avoiding action – hopefully by being deterred or discouraged from committing the contemplated crime. And imprisonment, curfews, supervision or treatment will mean they are unable or unwilling to commit the **next** crimes, at least for a while. Crime reduction can be divided into several broad spheres depending on the degree of involvement with the formal Criminal Justice System (box).

### Spheres of crime reduction

**Judicial** reduction intervenes in the causes of crime through the very existence of the Criminal Justice System and through its formal processes in arresting, prosecuting, trying, sentencing and punishing individual offenders.

The rest of crime prevention, acting outside the formal process of the Criminal or Civil Justice Systems, can be called **extrajudicial**. This is implemented by a range of agencies, partnerships, and private companies and individuals; and may take place before or after any court case occurs, or more often in the absence of any such proceedings. Within this 'residual' category, there are two other spheres.

**Civil** prevention covers the everyday, routine social and economic behaviour of individuals and institutions, which create opportunities, motives and predispositions for crime.

But there is an important intermediate area. This can be called **parajudicial** crime prevention. The various agencies involved in the CJS - prison, police, probation - also implement a range of activities which are intended to exercise powers to prevent impending criminal events, to deflect groups at risk of committing crime or to rehabilitate existing offenders. And the police, of course, patrol the streets, frustrate offenders' preparations for crime, intervene in ongoing crimes, administer formal cautions and advise on prevention. Due to their significant impact on individual liberty and privacy, these activities are subject to stringent procedural checks and balances and are often formally linked to the penal process. Parajudicial prevention can be defined as crime prevention which acts through the agencies of the CJS, which may sometimes be formally linked to the criminal process, but which is not strictly part of justice.

**Community safety** (see box) is a concept more closely related to quality of life – freedom from (actual or perceived) hazards, and ability to pursue the requirements and pleasures of living.

### Defining Community Safety

- An aspect of the *quality of life*
- A state of existence in which people, individually and collectively:
  - Are sufficiently free from a range of real and perceived hazards including crime and related misbehaviour
  - Are able to cope with those which they nevertheless experience, or
  - Are otherwise sufficiently protected from their consequences.....
  - To allow them to pursue the necessities of their social and economic lives
  - To exercise their skills and
  - To create and enjoy wealth in the widest sense

### The preventive process

*Doing crime reduction* is what toolkits are all about. The important competences and knowledge to convey are less a matter of circumscribed technical skills and universally-applicable ‘facts’, and more a way of looking at the world and a problem-identifying and -solving procedure to adopt – the **preventive process** (related, of course, to SARA of problem-oriented policing) (box).

### From Crime Problems to Crime Prevention Solutions

The Preventive Process:

- Identification of crime problem – the symptoms – and setting of objectives for reduction
- Diagnosis of causes of crime problem
- Selection of specific interventions, and creation of practical operational solutions
- Implementation
- Evaluation and adjustment

### The symptoms

In dealing with immediate local crime problems the first stage of the preventive process is usually to identify patterns of crime risk. This can be done for example through crime pattern analysis or offender targeting. Figure 2 shows typical results of crime pattern analysis in terms of a ‘problem space’ covering the nature of the offence, offenders and circumstances.

## Diagnosis

The second stage is to identify the immediate causes that come together to make the criminal events happen – the *Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity*. This is a kind of ‘universal story’ of the criminal event, in which an **offender** who is ready, willing and able encounters, seeks out or engineers a crime **situation** comprising a vulnerable and attractive **target** of crime, in a favourable **environment** and in the absence of motivated and capable **preventers** (‘guardians’ in previous approaches – but they do much more than guard). Remoter causes such as societal influences on childrearing quality, or the market price for spare parts for cars, are diverse and many but all ultimately act through the immediate ones. It is possible to pick out just 11 generic kinds of **immediate causal precursor**.

On the *offender* side, these comprise:

- their **criminality** - longer-term, personality-based influences predisposing them to crime
- a **lack of skills to avoid crime** - whether to avoid conflict or to gain a legitimate living
- shorter-term influences on their **readiness to offend** – motives and emotional states (need money, stressed out) as determined by current life circumstances, conflicts, influence of drugs
- offenders’ **resources for committing crime** - skills, courage, knowledge of targets and MOs, tools, weapons and networks of collaborators
- offenders’ **decision to commit offence**, in terms of: **prompting and provoking** their immediate motivation; and their perception and anticipation of risk, effort, reward and attacks of conscience
- their **presence** in the crime situation

On the *situational* side, we have

- the **target** person, property, service, system or information that is vulnerable, provocative or attractive
- the **target enclosure** - building, room or container that is vulnerable to penetration and contains suitable targets
- a **wider environment** that is logistically/ tactically favourable for offenders and unfavourable for preventers, and which may attract or motivate the offence for example through containing suitable targets or setting the scene for conflict
- the **absence of crime preventers** - people or organisations, formal or informal, who make the crime less likely
- the **presence of crime promoters** - who make crime more likely, whether unwittingly, carelessly or deliberately - for example by supplying tools, information or other criminal services before or after the crime; promoters may supply outlets for stolen goods and even come together in distinct **criminal markets**

These are shown diagrammatically in Figure 3, which can act as a diagnostic map for practitioners deciding how to tackle a particular local crime problem or risk.

The causal precursors can be customised for each crime problem or offender problem addressed (with the vehicle crime toolkit, for example, cars can be treated as the target for ‘theft of’ or damage, and the target enclosure for ‘theft from’). And each precursor can be further subdivided as necessary to indicate more detailed elements that crime reduction practitioners should attend to (for example, in burglary, the home, as target enclosure, can be divided into boundary, entry points and interior).

Note that the approach described so far is based on induction from **immediate crime problems** (the assumption that future risk will be the same as patterns of crime that have already been seen to occur). Other approaches to the identification of risk can also draw on the same framework. **Longer-term** offender-oriented crime reduction approaches start in a different way, identifying risk and protective factors in children's and young people's life circumstances that may subsequently lead them to offend. **Future** risks that are quantitatively or qualitatively different from present patterns can be anticipated too: the CCO map has the potential to help local authorities conduct *crime impact assessments* of proposed practices and policies – vital if they are to fulfil their responsibility under S17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 which requires them consider crime and disorder reduction while exercising *all* their duties. Rather than asking themselves 'what impact on *crime* will this have?', they can get a far better lead by going systematically round the rays of the CCO asking 'what impact on this precursor of crime will this have?'

## Intervention

Having diagnosed the causes of the crime problem, practitioners have to choose how and where to intervene in them. Figure 4 shows a 'universal story of a crime reduction scheme' in which an intervention, at some point upstream, disrupts the conjunction of criminal opportunity, reduces the risk of criminal events (prevention) and if all goes well, ultimately cuts the numbers of such events that actually occur (reduction). Benefits for community safety and economic well-being (such as regeneration) may follow.

Lifting cookbook recipes off the shelf won't do, even if they are fully evidence-based – the interventions must be customised to the specific local problem and context. ***The need for practitioners to focus on the precise nature of the intervention to be delivered, customised to crime problem and context, is the single most important message of this document.***

How can we help practitioners to systematically envisage, consider and select intervention mechanisms? Again we can identify 11 generic kinds of intervention mapped onto the causes they are ultimately intended to block, weaken or divert – even if, as with early childhood schemes, the intervention is way upstream of the crimes they seek to prevent.

On the *situational* side, we have:

- **Target hardening, value reduction, removing passive provocation** etc
- **Perimeter access and security**
- **Environmental design and management** including aiding surveillance, resolving conflicts and setting rules
- **Boosting preventers** – their presence, their alertness, competence, motivation and responsibility whether through formal control (such as patrolling), informal social control and teaching self-protection and avoidance.
- **Discouraging and deterring crime promoters** and awakening their **conscience** – for example through naming and shaming, civil liability, tackling a criminal subculture, procedural controls or market reduction;

On the *offender* side we have

- **Excluding offenders** from the crime situation – for example keeping crowds of children out of sweetshops, keeping young offenders under curfew or in prison, stopping corrupt company directors from running businesses.

- **Deterrence** – raising the perceived risk and costs of getting caught; **discouragement** makes offenders think the effort to commit the crime is too great and the reward too low; **awakening conscience** may move them to anticipate, and avoid, the pain of guilt and shame.
- **Restricting resources for offending** – control of weapons, tools and information on targets and transfer of criminal knowhow. Also control of criminal organisations’ recruitment, growth and efficiency.
- **Reducing readiness to offend** – changing offenders’ current life circumstances including drug and alcohol problems, alleviating stressors such as poor housing, and reducing conflicts.
- **Supplying skills to avoid crime** – training offenders in social and work skills.
- **Reducing criminality** – intervening in early lives to reduce known risk factors and enhance known protective factors through family, school and peer groups; supplying remedial treatment for those who have been convicted.

These interventions are summarised in Figure 5. With this map, practitioners can see the main options laid out, then delve into further detail as they seek to match interventions to crime problems and their causes and context. Two hypothetical examples of diagnosis and intervention are appended, covering theft of airbags from cars in a hospital car park and assault in a pub.

These are highly-specific interventions against specific crime problems. The interventions make **specific opportunities** more risky, more effort and less rewarding for offenders, or focus on disrupting, inhibiting, removing or reforming **specific offenders**. Interventions at a more **strategic** level would address the same causes but in a more structured way, centring on making it difficult for offenders to **earn enough of a living** through crime at acceptable levels of risk and effort – in other words, designing out **niches** for offending. Strategic interventions could involve, for example:

- Trying to design out concentrations or flows of wealth which offenders are inevitably drawn to exploit (eg warehouses of computer chips, funds flowing routinely through particular vulnerable channels).
- Considering wider patterns of displacement, diffusion of benefit and offender replacement which may otherwise limit the sustainability of specific interventions (for example – arrest Mr Big, and Mr Not-so-big takes over the niche, unless this is itself eradicated).
- The Market Reduction approach – disrupting the market for stolen goods (the subject of a specific process toolkit).
- Targeting prolific offenders or ‘lynchpins’ in a network
- Tackling crimes (eg vehicle crime?) that lead to individual criminal careers, or feed more serious crimes such as drug dealing
- More generally tackling crime as if it was a business enterprise, and throwing all central/ local government’s knowledge about how to support enterprise into reverse *without* (the catch) harming legitimate enterprise.

Other strategic interventions could, for example, centre on preventing/ resolving sustained **conflicts** between gangs, ethnic groups, young versus old etc, which generate a persistent and diverse series of crime problems. Crime problems of a repetitive or prolonged nature (such as domestic violence), or persistent disorder, would also require analysis and intervention at levels above the basic ‘single event’ perspective – but in addition to, not instead of, that approach.

Whether interventions are implemented in a strategic or tactical context, the immediate *principles* or *mechanisms* by which they are intended to work can be described in terms of the 11 types of cause in the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity framework. In practice, real-world *methods* of intervention are more complex. Remote methods may work by a long chain of cause and effect before they can influence the immediate precursors. A single method (such as putting a fence round a building site)

can work through a whole range of mechanisms (physically blocking access, discouraging offenders, helping preventers – site guards) – Figure 6, illustrating ‘solution space’. Seeking to discover which of the conjectured mechanisms are actually working in any particular case can help attune the method to the local problem and context, and get the best out of it (for example, if publicity appears important in deterring offenders, make the most of this).

Individual methods may of course be combined in a **package** (also in Figure 6) that addresses a range of causes of a particular crime problem; or tackles causes common to a wide set of crime problems. This holistic approach has been shown to confer synergy and efficiency. But the more holistic a package becomes, the more important it is for toolkits to convey the need for practitioners to give it a clear focus on specific problems and their causes and interactions. What we want to avoid is a loose, all-inclusive initiative at risk of unclear and drifting objectives.

## Implementation

Implementation is about targeting and delivery: delivering the right interventions to the right causes of crime in an efficient, effective, sustainable and acceptable way, that addresses the identified and prioritised needs of victims and community.

### Targeting

A public-health distinction widely-used in crime prevention gives three approaches to the targeting of intervention methods:

- **primary** - focusing on the *general* population of potential offenders, or of potential crime situations or human and material targets of crime
- **secondary** - focusing on people at *particular risk* of offending, on targets at risk of victimisation or on places at risk of setting the scene for victimisation
- **tertiary** - focusing on those *already* convicted or victimised, or targets and scenes of existing crime (linking to the concepts of repeat victimisation, repeat offending, and hot-spots – generally shown to be a very efficient approach to targeting scarce resources)

The entities or things targeted need not be confined to the individual level – families, peer groups, institutions, communities etc can all be targeted, as in the ‘social levels’ schema described below. The alternative targeting strategies will of course have respective advantages and disadvantages which depend on the crime problem, the method to reduce it and the wider context. A familiar issue is the tradeoff between efficiency of targeting versus possible *stigmatisation* – targeting a specific housing estate or a specific set of individuals as potential offenders may be more efficient, but could have the drawback of labelling the people adversely. Efficient targeting may also have to be balanced against perceived *equity* – if the residents of one estate receive upgraded household security or more intense police patrols, their neighbours, with similar crime levels, may be upset. Such issues should, of course, be addressed strategically through the audit/ consultation/ action plan process, but there will be much more to consider at the immediate practical level of scheme implementation.

## Insertion of the implementations in the community

‘Official’ or formal crime preventers such as governments and their agencies, and local partnerships, cannot operate alone but must **act at a distance** – by mobilising other public and private institutions and ordinary citizens better-placed to play particular roles in crime reduction. These roles may involve directly intervening in the causes of crime, or facilitating the interventions of others by motivating and enabling them or alleviating constraints. To set alongside efforts to boost these **preventive** roles, we also need to influence those who accidentally or recklessly **promote** crime by their everyday private, public or commercial activities.



Acting at a distance involves a sequence of steps to **insert** the crime reduction tasks in the community. These can be systematically set out under the acronym **CLAMED** (box):

### **CLAMED: Mobilising crime reduction in the community**

- **Clarify the CR tasks** that need to be achieved externally rather than delivered in-house
- **Locate the preventive agents** – identify institutions and individuals with the potential to carry out the CR tasks effectively and acceptably – in terms of their current expertise, manpower, presence at the right places on the ground or involvement at key stages of the relevant processes, and alignment of their own responsibilities and interests with the CR tasks in question (better to find an institution that just needs a gentle nudge to take on responsibility, rather than one that needs massive external incentives, sanctions and support)

Once located, secure their cooperation and enhance their performance in pursuit of the designated goals by:

- **Alerting** them to the crime problem, that they or others might be affected by it, that they might be contributing to its cause and/or might be capable of contributing to its cure.
- **Motivating** them to take on the CR task – through inherent acceptance of and belief in its worth, self-interest in its achievement or compliance with external incentives and sanctions linked to exercise of responsibilities and duties, adherence to standards, avoidance of litigation etc.
- **Empowering** them – building enabling capacity by supplying competence (know-how and technical aids), operational resources such as funds, staff and information, and appropriate legal powers; alleviating constraints, but at the same time ensuring checks and balances are in place to limit over-zealous action.
- **Directing** them (if appropriate) to follow particular guidelines, select particular targets or implement particular activities.

Given the many interdependencies within society, it will usually be necessary to do more than apply the CLAMED approach to individual people or institutions in isolation – more often an integrated set of local actions may be needed to bring together and coordinate a range of agents working in concert. We may for example need to motivate agency A to alert institution B, in its turn to empower and motivate individuals C. Or we may need to act upon one agency to alleviate the constraints it is placing on another, closer to the implementation of the desired crime reduction intervention. And we need to establish an overall local **climate** receptive to CR, to boost and nurture the specific CLAMED activities. Media handling issues will also appear here.

### **Social levels of action**

The methods employed in inserting, implementing and intervening act on or through a diverse set of ‘entities’ in the real world, ranging from the individual offender or target, to family, community, or institutions such as schools. Confusion regarding which of these entities a method is supposed to act on can severely disorient practitioners or partnerships. The entities can be described in terms of a range of **social levels**:

- Individual places/people

- Family and intimates
- Peer groups
- Institutions – school culture etc
- Media
- Areas (purely geographical) and Communities (common-interest, whether or not geographical)

CR practitioners need to be aware of the levels they are dealing with because a particular crime problem (or a wider social need consequent upon that crime) may appear at one level (eg casualties of drunken assaults arriving in hospital); its causes may operate at another (eg the layout of the streets); and the solutions at yet another (eg the policies for public entertainment licences).

**Community** is a particularly problematic concept. It is important to unpack the term because people's use of the term is extremely varied and loose, and this can obstruct clear thinking about problems, causes and solutions, and communication between CR partners. There are traditional, geographical communities, of course, and wider communities of interest and/or identity (eg members of an ethnic or economic group, spread out in space) which are not localised, but 'virtual'. Communities comprise a mix of individual and collective interests, whether these relate to individual private residents and users, or corporate institutions. Most so-called 'community crime reduction initiatives' are *community-based* rather than acting through community mechanisms. Community can feature as:

- a physical and social environment or setting for crime
- a target of crime (eg if a mosque is attacked)
- a source of preventive interventions (acts of collective self-protection, informal social control, conflict mediation)
- a context for prevention which can help or hinder it (for example, by hostile attitudes to the police)
- a source of awareness, motivation and empowerment for crime preventers (eg a neighbourhood watch group)
- a means of implementing crime prevention methods (eg helping elderly neighbours to mark property, or alerting them to risks of burglary) and supporting victims of crime
- a source of offenders (eg many high-risk individuals live there) and crime promoters (handling stolen goods, passing on criminal resources such as information or weapons)
- the cause of crime in its own right (eg a lawless subculture, or a community in internal conflict)

Many of these aspects of community can be linked to the still-developing concept of **social capital**. This has been defined as "*features of social organisations such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit.*" A related concept is **collective efficacy** - the ability of the community to control the precursors of crime, and levels of trust, respect and self-esteem within and between community members which enable them to do so.

## **Management: planning, feedback, monitoring and evaluation**

There are several kinds of crime reduction activity to be managed:

- **Routine services** such as patrolling, provision of crime prevention advice to households and companies, or probation casework.
- One-off **operations** – such as targeting a specific offender or intercepting a specific crime.
- **Schemes** – an organised crime reduction initiative which addresses a specific local crime or disorder problem at a particular point in time, usually through the implementation of one or more preventive methods. Some schemes may involve **packages** – a linked set of schemes

tackling a wide range of causes, or perhaps tackling a **holistic** set of causes common to a number of crime problems in an area.

Management can be considered at two levels:

- **Strategic management** – in the crime & disorder partnership context, this is the process that begins with crime audits and action plans.
- **Tactical management** – covering the management of individual crime reduction schemes initiated under the wider strategy.

Each will require different arrangements for management. The focus here is on the tactical management of schemes.

### **Tactical management of crime reduction schemes**

It is important for toolkits to use the same management terms throughout, to avoid serious confusion. The terms that follow are consistent with those used in the Crime Reduction Programme.

Whatever the methods employed by a crime reduction scheme, we can describe it in terms of a ‘universal story’. The short version of the story is as follows:

- **input** of funds and resources leads to
- **implementation** activities (targeting and delivery) which lead to
- **interventions** in the causes of crime (measurable as **outputs**) which lead to
- **outcomes** (principally reduced crime)

Implementation relates to tasks to be achieved internally within the crime reduction scheme. Outputs and outcomes relate to consequences to be achieved in terms of the crime problem being addressed.

The long version of the story is:

- **acquisition of input** (fund raising etc) leads (at various points) to
- **input** of funds and resources which supports
- **data collection and analysis, planning and implementation** activities (targeting and delivery) which lead to
- **insertion** activities (mobilising others in the community – measurable as **immediate outputs**) which lead to
- their delivering **interventions** in the causes of crime (measurable as **remote outputs**) which lead to
- **intermediate outcomes** (first steps in influencing the causes of criminal events – such as changed attitudes among young offenders completing a reformatory course – amounting to reduced *risk* of crime) which lead to
- **ultimate outcomes** (principally reduced crime) which may lead to
- **wider costs and benefits** (in terms of quality of life, wealth creation, regeneration etc).

**In advance** of each step, management involves progressing this sequence, through **planning and option appraisal**, securing **commitment to proceed** from all the relevant parties, and setting out a series of **objectives** at different levels, including **milestones**.

**During or after** each step, management involves various reviews to compare achievement against objectives and take action to anticipate or correct any shortcomings – **feedback and adjustment** processes such as monitoring and evaluation.

Some of these feedback loops are short and elementary to guide immediate tactical action, others longer and wider in scope to track the ultimate objectives of the scheme or to feed into wider crime reduction strategy:

- Internal **monitoring of implementation and insertion** – involves ensuring that the various objectives and milestones set for activities and outputs are being met or are on course – including **quality assurance** of the actions undertaken. Action is taken to correct shortcomings.
- **Local process evaluations** – a more thorough, usually independent, assessment of how input was transformed into output; whether this was efficiently and effectively targeted and delivered – what went right and wrong; and what tricky issues were involved, such as equity.
- External **performance monitoring** – ensuring that crime reduction targets are being met (such as ‘a 30% fall in vehicle crime’) or reliable indicators of crime risk are falling.
- A full-blown **local impact evaluation** – attribution of cause and effect (such as ‘vehicle crime fell by 40% and of this, 25% can be attributed to the scheme), what specifically went right and wrong; assessment of **cost effectiveness and cost benefits**, to ensure accountability and foster the achievement of **best value**. Informs the decision whether to continue, modify, expand or replicate the scheme elsewhere within the partnership.
- Process and impact evaluations and cost effectiveness assessments designed to build up the **strategic, national knowledge base** of what works.

External performance monitoring and evaluation should aim to keep an eye on what is happening to **undesirable side effects** such as displacement of crime to other locations or other methods and targets of offending, and inadvertent increases in fear. Other kinds of tracking involve **validating** the targeting, output and outcome measures themselves – for example by checking whether crime reporting rates are themselves changing as a result of the crime reduction scheme. (With domestic violence, for example, increased reporting may be a subsidiary outcome objective of the scheme.) For funders or managers of schemes, **drift of objectives** is vital to avoid. Holistic packages of schemes are particularly susceptible – the broader the scope of the package, the more the effort needed to specify and manage what is to be carried out.

## Keeping ahead

The generic causes and cures identified in diagnosis and intervention spaces are an unchanging background to what practitioners can do. By contrast, however, the specific interventions and methods they implement will have to change and upgrade, or become obsolete. This is because criminals are always adapting to preventive methods. New technology and business practices are constantly providing new opportunities for crime - new targets, tools, and environments. Organised criminals are best-placed to exploit these changes. To cope, preventers have to adapt and innovate as fast as the criminals. This process can be called **Gearing up against crime**. It involves:

- **Scanning** for emerging crime problems, and for new modus operandi; and
- **Anticipation** of future problems so that vulnerabilities can be designed out before we get huge ‘crime harvests,’ as happened with mobile phones.

We also have to make interventions:

- **Adaptable** and upgradeable,
- **Varied** - so the offender can’t ‘break one, break them all’; and
- **Unpredictable**.

Any 'what works' database will also have to find ways of keeping up to date. 'What used to work' is no good!

## Further developments

It is intended to develop this overview note more fully when time allows, and with benefit of feedback from users (on both content and ways of improving user-friendliness without sacrificing precision); also, as the individual toolkits themselves evolve, to build them more systematically around the CCO framework than has proved possible in the initial timescale. Possibilities are also being explored of trialling CCO in a practical context.

A further, more detailed description of the CCO framework is available as a formal publication:

Ekblom, Paul (2000). **'The Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity - a Tool for Clear, 'Joined-Up' Thinking about Community Safety and Crime Reduction'**. Chapter in Ballintyne, S., Pease, K., and McLaren, V., eds., *Secure Foundations. Key issues in crime prevention, crime reduction and community safety*. Institute for Public Policy Research.

PowerPoint presentations and high-quality graphics are available on request from the author: [paul.ekblom@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:paul.ekblom@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

**Keeping ahead** is covered in:

Ekblom, Paul (1997). **Gearing up against Crime: a Dynamic Framework to Help Designers Keep up with the Adaptive Criminal in a Changing World**. *International Journal of Risk, Security and Crime Prevention*, October, Vol 2/4:249-265.  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/risk.pdf> and:

Ekblom, Paul (1999). **Can We Make Crime Prevention Adaptive by Learning from Other Evolutionary Struggles?** *Studies on Crime and Crime Prevention*, 1999, Vol. 8 No.1: 27-51. Stockholm, Sweden: National Council for Crime Prevention. <http://www.bra.se/extra/studies/> click on title.

## CCO – Example 1: A pattern of car airbag thefts from a hospital car park

Note that the suggestions for interventions are all ‘initial ideas’, which would have to be filtered for suitability and cost effectiveness in the specific context where they were to be implemented. Not every cause gets an intervention.

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<b>Immediate precursors to crime or disorder event</b>	<b>Possible interventions in cause</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Crime promoters</b>	
1. Local fence will buy airbags – has a ready outlet in local market. 2. Local group of offenders pass on MO for removing airbags. 3. Car owners still sometimes leave doors unlocked/windows open. 4. Some car makers still give insufficient attention to security. They may also adopt a strategy of selling cars cheap and spares dear, giving elevated value to the airbags.	1. Crackdown on local fences, and car parts sales over wider area. 2. Attempt to break up group/ prevent fresh recruitment by attracting youngsters into other circles. 3. Publicity campaign to alert owners. 4. National action on car design and pricing strategies.
<hr/>	
<b>Crime preventers</b>	
1. Hospital gives little priority to crime against visitors. 2. Part-time security guard with limited training, poor communications and on short term contract. 3. Car park users hurry in and out of hospital, hence little time and little motivation to report suspicious activity – which would involve long walk back to reception area. 4. Not within sight of public space, hence no passing police patrols.	1. Mobilise hospital authorities to take responsibility – eg name and shame. 2. They may then improve provision of guards (if these are appropriate). CCTV might be considered as means of using guards to greatest effect. 3. Reporting point for people seeing suspicious activity, conveniently placed in car park area – doubles as enquiry point and emergency help point in case of attack. 4. Lower wall/bush on road running beside car park, so patrols can look in. Consider altering traffic flow (if cheap, or reviewed for other reasons) to allow vehicle patrols easy access.
<hr/>	
<b>Environment</b>	
1. Hospital car park – many entrances, hence poor access control, and poor pursuit. 2. Thick bushes and weak lighting give good concealment and poor surveillance, hence tactically favouring offenders over preventers. 3. Rich concentration of targets.	1. Reconfigure entrances/exits. 2. Trim/relocate bushes; improve lighting especially in hot-spots of theft within car park (but be alert to internal displacement). Take account of lighting, CCTV, surveillability and scope for response by guards, in integrated approach. 3. Can't do anything about this.

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**Target enclosure**

1. Car body – despite recent improvements, still fairly easy to break into.
1. National action on car design.

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**Target person or property**

Airbag – a ‘hot product’:

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|--|--|
| 1. Concealable (small)                                   | 1. National design solutions.  |
| 2. Removable (for ease of repair/replacement)            | 2. ...   |
| 3. Accessible (.....)                                    | 3. ...   |
| 4. Valuable (£100) – marketing strategy                  | 4. National action to alter marketing strategy.  |
| 5. Disposable (serial numbers absent or easily removed). | 5. National action to improve serial numbering, and facilities to check these; local checking procedures eg through Trading Standards. |

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**Offender presence in situation**

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| 1. Hospital car park acts as favourite hanging-around site for local youths – no others readily available. | 1. Explicit exclusionary policy, enforced by guards; curfews and incarceration for high-risk offenders; more positively, create/adapt other places for young people to hang around – youth shelters, clubs? |
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**Anticipation of risk, effort and reward**

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|---|--|
| 1. Risk and effort perceived low in relation to reward – at all stages: preparing for crime (hanging around, casing vehicles), executing the theft, escape, and carrying/storing/ disposing of airbags. | 1. Change offenders’ perceptions of risk etc, by publicity to deter (raised risk of getting caught, and convicted, with serialised airbags; bent cycle tyre levers accepted as going equipped), and discourage (people won’t be buying the airbags/ fences will give a lower price). |
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**Resources for crime**

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|---|--|
| 1. Modus Operandi readily acquired from promoters – peers and fences. | 1. (as under Promoters) – disperse/dilute peer group; crack down on fences – treat ‘schooling’ of offenders especially severely in court.                              |
| 2. Adapted cycle tyre lever often used.                               | 2. Confiscate bent tyre levers; (as under ‘Anticipation’) use as evidence of going equipped; nationally, redesign car/ airbag to require a special tool to extract it. |
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**Readiness to offend – current life circumstances**

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| 1. Offenders have little honest entertainment. | 1. Supply attractive and affordable entertainment facilities elsewhere. |
| 2. Unemployed hence little money.              | 2. Economic regeneration.   |
| 3. Some have drug habit that requires funding. | 3. Drug treatment, crackdown on dealers, education.                     |

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**Resources to avoid crime**

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| 1. Some offenders have lack of basic literacy, which constrains job prospects. | 1. Literacy scheme – for all young people, for those at risk of offending, for those who have offended. |
| 2. Others are impulsive in the face of temptation.                             | 2. Cognitive skills training – again, primary, secondary or tertiary targeting.                         |

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**Criminality (predisposition)**

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| 1. High-crime subculture influences local youths' attitudes to property from an early age. | 1. Community-level interventions to alter subculture, ideally working <i>with</i> residents; perhaps changes in housing allocation policies to reduce concentration of families who have a history of criminal activity and social disorder offences. |
| 2. Risk factors for offending present include especially poor school performance/truancy.  | 2. Mobilising families and schools to exert social control to reduce truancy; improving school performance/attractiveness to pupils.  |
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## CCO – Example 2: A fight in a pub

Note that the suggestions for interventions are all ‘initial ideas’, which would have to be filtered for suitability and cost effectiveness in the specific context where they were to be implemented.

This example is a typical potentially serious incident, starting in a pub and ending in the street- one of many similar in this hot spot – which can be analysed rather like an air crash, to derive preventive lessons. Ideally this would be broken down into several scenes, reflecting stages and locations of the fight, but for simplicity it is shown here as one.

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<b>Immediate precursors to Crime or disorder event</b>	<b>Possible interventions in cause</b>
<b>Crime promoters</b> (culpable, negligent or innocent)	
1. Some onlookers ignore fight	1. Encourage good citizenship – cautious social control.
2. Others egg offender on	2. Engender subcultural approval of good behaviour.
3. Victim was an active promoter – insulted offender	3. Avoidance – teach prudence.
4. Bar staff ignored confrontation until too late	4. Alert, motivate, empower bar staff to intervene effectively and early...
5. Bar staff failed to clear up empties – lie around available for misuse.	5. ...and to clear up glasses and bottles (restrict resources)
6. Pub management/ brewery adopted policy of attracting mainly young people – concentration of potential offenders, insufficient rule-setters/ role models	6. Broaden intake of clientele.
7. Pub management declined to change to toughened beer glasses.	7. Motivate management to change – persuasion, incentives?
8. Pub management indifferent to risks to which customers exposed.	8. Naming/shaming; threat of withdrawal of licence by magistrates.
<b>Crime preventers</b>	
1. Passers-by do not intervene to try to separate protagonists, or call police. Due to fear of reprisal; hostility to police.	1. Witness protection; build social capital of trust to give bystanders motivation/confidence to intervene (depending on the level of danger); improve police- public relationships.
2. Police arrest offender (preventing further escalation of current event and hopefully leading to prevention of next offence/s). However, force is stretched since all pubs close at once.	2. Negotiate with pubs to stagger closing time; involve licensing magistrate.

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**Environment**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Physical/tactical: restricted space outside pub, so difficult for protagonists to go their separate ways.</li><li>2. Poor lighting inhibits surveillance and intervention.</li><li>3. Motivational: potentially rowdy young people attracted to entertainment district.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reopen disused exit onto street.</li><li>2. Improve lighting after careful inspection – so offender can't lurk unseen; and so facial recognition is possible, perhaps in conjunction with CCTV (although this is unlikely to deter expressive crime by intoxicated offenders, it could help catch and convict more serious ones and then deter people from getting drunk in first place).</li><li>3. Find other attractions/venues for boisterous young people, to reduce concentration; attract alternative clientele; use planning authorities to avoid number of licensed premises/same location or on nodal points</li></ol> |
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**Target enclosure – pub**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provocation – crowded – collisions/spilled drinks readily occur.</li><li>2. Priming – very noisy music/games machines – stress shortens offenders' fuses, makes preventers' attempts at social control difficult.</li><li>3. Inadequate rules of acceptable behaviour established – generates and permits crime; reputation for rowdiness attracts people who like that sort of thing.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Rearrange furniture; consider reducing demand/ spreading it more evenly over time; restrict numbers/enforce fire safety limits</li><li>2. Reduce noise.</li><li>3. Establish and publicise rules; enforce them through staff training, more experienced staff, building relationships with clientele.</li></ol> |
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**Target person**

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|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Passively provocative – wearing rival team's strip.</li><li>2. Vulnerable – slight build.</li><li>3. Present in pub due to away match.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Advise young people on street-wise prudence – avoidance tactics.</li><li>2. Training for self-defence, assertion not aggression.</li><li>3.</li></ol> |
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**Offender presence in situation**

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|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Routine visit to regular pub.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. If this regularly brings 2 rival sets of supporters into contact/ conflict, try to channel them to different pubs with different hours in different parts of town; and/or encourage culture of more friendly rivalry; police/magistrates role to restrict access on football related occasions, publican/doorstaff role to restrict access to pub</li></ol> |
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**Decision to commit offence:****Anticipation of risk, effort and reward**

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|---|---|
| 1. Not very salient – an impulsive, expressive crime.                           | 1. Make aware of serious consequences for victims, and of penalties. (But both would have to be pretty extreme to have any impact.) |
| 2. Supportive mates, ineffectual bar staff, poor lighting outside – little risk |   |
| 3. Weak appearance of target/ victim – little effort or risk.                   | 2. Establish culture of non-aggression (stupid/uncool).<br>3. Training for self-defence, confidence.                                |

**Prompting, provoking**

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|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Revenge, honour motives engaged.                          | 1. As 2 above.          |
| 2. Sight of empty beerglasses prompts their use as a weapon. | 2. Clearing up empties. |

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**Resources for crime**

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| 1. Beerglasses – tempered – break into jagged edges. | 1. Replace with toughened glass or plastic (and watch for displacement to bottles). |
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**Readiness to offend – current life circumstances**

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|---|---|
| 1. Offender primed by history of conflict with victim's team, and recent defeats. | 1. Work with football team to encourage constructive attitude; or sack their manager.   |
| 2. Offender primed by significant consumption of alcohol.                         | 2. Modify drinking culture; have attractive soft drinks available at reasonable price; train bar staff to monitor customer state and if necessary restrict consumption – include this in rules. |
| 3. Offender primed by stressful noise/overcrowding in bar.                        | 3. Reduce noise and overcrowding.   |

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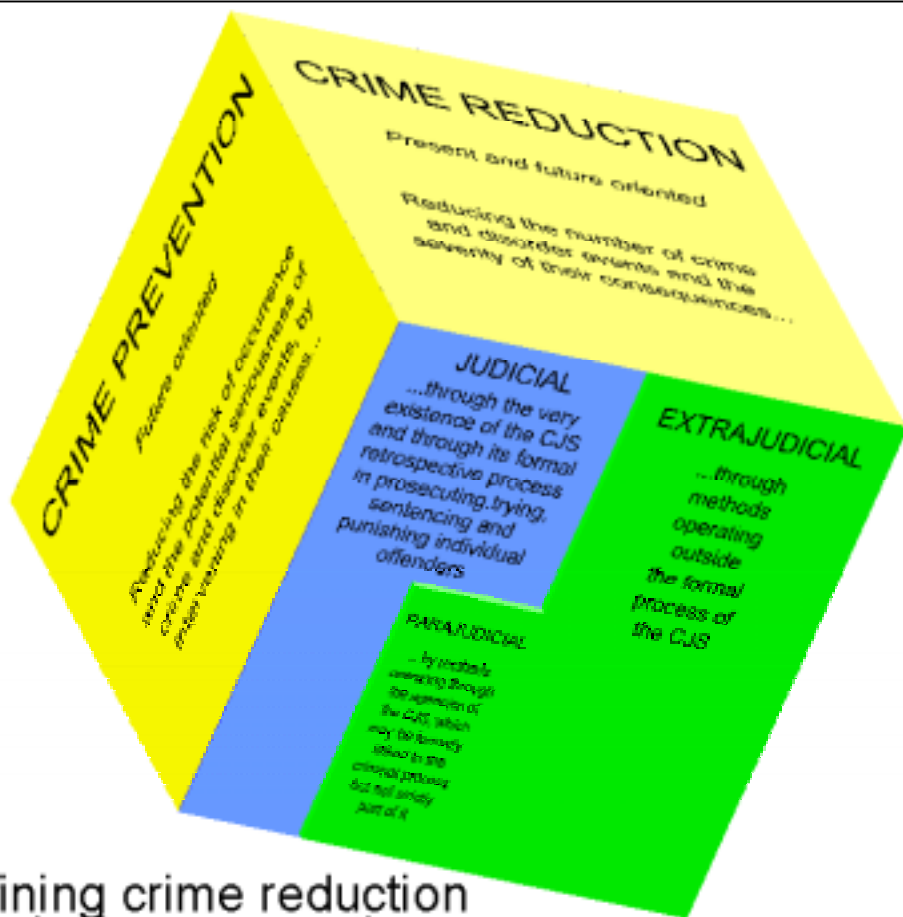
**Resources to avoid crime**

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|---|--|
| 1. Lack of self-control                   | 1. And 2. On a primary, secondary or tertiary basis, work with parents, schools, supporters club, prison or probation service to foster aggression management and social skills for de-escalation. |
| 2. Lack of ability to de-escalate dispute |  |

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**Criminality (predisposition)**

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Aggressive predisposition. | 1. And 2. On a primary, secondary or tertiary basis, work with parents, schools, supporters club, prison or probation service to identify and reduce any underlying causes of aggression/ easy provocation, including changing subcultural approval, poor parental discipline; in shorter-term, supply resources to avoid crime as above. |
| 2. Prone to provocation.      |   |
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Defining crime reduction and crime prevention

## Problem Space - a Map of Symptoms and Crime Reduction Objectives

