**PhD Research Project**

The Inverclyde Initiative Evaluation - Situating Policing Policy in a Community Planning Context

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**Rationale:**

Crime among young people, in particular knife-crime and anti-social behaviour, constitutes a 'perennial source of anxiety' (Muncie 2009) and tackling this is a central concern of Scottish Government policy and the Police-Community thematic Network of SIPR. This has consistently been linked to issues of social deprivation, poor housing, low educational attainment, drug and alcohol abuse and poor employment prospects. Alcohol has a large impact in deprived residential neighbourhoods (Forsyth et al 2007), contributes to criminal activity (McKinley et al 2009) and young people who engage in street drinking rarely recognise the dangers they are placing themselves in (Galloway et al 2007). Gang, knife and alcohol related crimes can have profound effects on the life-choices and chances of young people growing up within this culture and can adversely affect mobility within and between areas and employment opportunities (Frondigoun et al 2008). Crime, disorder and community safety have become significant areas of concern for communities, with a large number of people believing that young people are a problem within their area (Hill and Wright, 2003).

The groundbreaking Inverclyde Initiative has been hailed as a model for reducing such youth crime. It was run by the Inverclyde Sub-division in the Greenock area, identified as having significant on-street disorder problems including under-age drinking, gang activity and a knife-carrying culture. It constitutes an innovative approach to policing, focusing on addressing the problems of youths deemed to be 'at risk' and associated issues of 'child protection' by aiming to raise parents' awareness of the activities their children are involved in; challenge youths' behaviour patterns; educate them about the dangers they are placing themselves and others in; provide them with information and opportunities to encourage positive life choices; and inform them about community opportunities to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Strathclyde Police developed the Initiative in accordance with ACPOS' Public Reassurance Strategy and delivered it in conjunction with community planning partners through a multi-agency approach following the ethos for community planning and the single outcome agreement (SOA), introduced by the Scottish Government in 2007/2008. SOAs have been hailed by the Scottish Government as 'potentially the most profound and radical shift in the culture and practice of public service delivery in Scotland in the past 60 years' (Christie 2009). They are associated with an 'outcome approach' - a strategic focus identifying actual outcomes which are evidence-based and capable of delivery and continuous improvement for the community - down to the local level of multi-member wards. Policies are built on understanding, trust and confidence amongst the partners signed up to the agreement to address issues relevant to the localities.

Therefore an in-depth analysis of the process of developing this concept, along with an analysis of the outcomes of the Inverclyde Initiative, is timely as there is currently little research in this area, specifically in relation to policing. It will also examine the efficacy of the policy in addressing youth crime, particularly that of anti-social behaviour and knife crime. The research will identify examples of good policing practice, policy development and partnership working. It will therefore inform Government policy on the efficacy of SOAs in the community planning process and contribute to the development of future policy and also highlight the success and barriers at the local level of partnership working towards SOAs.

**Aims & Objectives:**

* to evaluate the efficacy of the Inverclyde Initiative in reducing youth crime, particularly knife, alcohol and gang related crime;
* to identify and explore examples of good working partnerships in addressing these issues at a local level and to highlight any barriers to effective partnership working;
* to explore the main strengths and weaknesses of SOAs in achieving and sustaining the desired outcomes of the Initiative.
* to identify the changing context of policing in the community planning context of SOAs;
* to identify any changing patterns of youth crime through an examination of police records and other sources of information;
* to explore whether any changes (reduction) in youth offending have been sustainable;
* to explore the attitudes of partner agencies, young people and their parents to the Initiative;
* to explore how police officers at different levels view the changing context of their work and different policing policies and strategies;
* to identify areas of good practice and those where community expectations are not being met;
* to identify barriers to/means of improving relationships and enhancing co-operation.

**References:**

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**Publications:**

[**Project update, 2010**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704122957/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/EPP_update_2010.php) (Entered January 2011)

[**Building Safer Communities: An Evaluation of the Enhanced Policing Plan in  the Shettleston, Ballieston and Greater Easterhouse area of  Glasgow.**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704122957/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/Building_Safer_Communities.pdf) Liz Frondigoun, Jan Nicholson, Annette Robertson, and Siobhan  Monigatti, Glasgow Caledonian University  [Entered, August 2008]  
[**Executive Summary of the above document**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704122957/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/Building_Safer_Communities_Exec_Summary.pdf)  
  
[**An Evaluation of the Inverclyde Initiative**](https://web.archive.org/web/20130704122957/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/InverclydeInitiative.pdf)  
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