COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ZERO TOLERANCE
– A STUDY OF PARTNERSHIP POLICING.

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A Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glamorgan/Prifysgol Morgannwg for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This research examines a community safety crime prevention partnership in the communities of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale that lie within the South Wales police area. It analyses the work of the local multi-agency partnership in its attempts to reduce recorded crime and fear of crime within that community through a variety of initiatives and schemes. This includes the use of burglary prevention schemes organised by the police and the local Safer Merthyr organisation.

This is achieved through a variety of research methods including the examination of official statistics over a period of five years, the use of comparative questionnaire surveys and through covert observational methods. The strengths and weaknesses of these methods, including ethical and organisational problems encountered by the researcher are discussed and evaluated.

Results indicate that not one of the objectives set by the multi agency partnership was achieved, and there appears to be no indication of any long-term positive effects as a result of the initiative. Reasons why this should have occurred are explored and a discussion on the implementation of evidence led crime prevention initiatives are considered. Consideration of future policy making-within this area is also considered.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work has not already been accepted in substance for a university degree and is currently not being submitted in candidature for any degree.

I further declare that this work is entirely the result of my own independent investigation except where otherwise stated.

Signed

Date 23/7/2
Acknowledgements

It is usual at this point to offer thanks to individuals who have supported and guided the researcher along this hard but fascinating journey. I see no reason why this should not be the case here.

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1 Introduction

Policing in England and Wales is undergoing a significant change. So profound is the reshaping of the delivery of policing services that, it could be argued, these changes amount to a paradigmatic revolution. Kuhn (1996), for example, suggests that this type of dramatic change occurs when a new way of working attracts an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of activity. In this instance, the new way of working for the police is that of partnerships involving the community, outside agencies and local authorities, in an effort to reduce recorded crime and the fear of crime. The last decade or so has increasingly seen the development of the partnership approach to policing in general and to crime prevention and reduction in particular (Crawford 1998). This is in contrast to the previous reactive style of policing where the police are seen as the only available experts who could tackle crime and control criminals.

Wright (2001) believes that it is difficult to identify precisely when the debate on policing and crime prevention first used the concept of partnerships. Partnership in this sense refers to a purposeful relationship between the police and the public or between the police and other agencies in this field. The debate on policing does not appear to have mentioned the concept until the rise of community policing in the early 1980s and since then the idea that the police could no longer tackle crime alone became something more than a slogan. It was during this time that the Home Office promoted a number of initiatives including the formation of the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit, whilst various Home Office circulars including Circular 8/84
encouraged all agencies to become involved in crime prevention (Home Office 1984b). The then Conservative government supported the launch of Crime Concern in 1988 and from that time onwards oversaw the development of the Safer Cities initiative, which has been the catalyst for many of the crime prevention partnerships in this country. This was especially so in the case of cities where there was a need for economic and social regeneration and likely to be subject to social unrest. A common factor in these schemes was the involvement of police, local government and other bodies in a form of partnerships, which, it was argued, showed that this was a sound approach for effective community safety and crime prevention work (Home Office 1993). Perhaps one of the most influential documents to be published during this period however was the report of the Standing Conference on Crime Prevention chaired by James Morgan, which had the responsibility for reviewing the development of crime prevention. This report became known as The Morgan Report (Home Office 1991) and contained many proposals for the structure and coordination of crime prevention strategies, and in particular highlighted the need for the partnership approach, with an increased emphasis on the role of Local Authorities.

The present Government's commitment.

The election of a Labour government in 1997 meant a new impetus for the Morgan Report. Many of its recommendations formed the basis for *The Crime and Disorder Act 1998* (Home Office 1999) which for the first time placed the coordination of community safety and crime prevention as a statutory duty. This meant that local authorities and chief police officers became the responsible authorities for setting and implementing strategies aimed at achieving a reduction in crime. This was to be achieved with the help of the local health and probation services. The major theme of
the Act takes forward the present government's stated commitment to protect communities from anti-social behaviour and to harness efforts to tackle crime and disorder. The Act also attempts to take advantage of the pivotal position of local authorities to bring together statutory and non-statutory agencies, and the local community to prevent and reduce crime. To focus and enhance local efforts the Act also places a joint responsibility on local authorities and the police to develop and implement local strategies to address the reduction of crime and disorder (Scanlon 1998). The implication for police primacy in dealing with crime and crime prevention is significant. Loveday (2000:224) puts it this way:

'By its introduction, the legislation ends the traditional police monopoly of responsibility for crime control within the local authority area. Under provisions within this Act this is now a responsibility shared with the local authority.'

The so-called partnership style of policing has become a political issue and this is plain to see. Government ministers constantly confirm their belief in the multi-agency approach as the answer to solving not only crime but also the causes of crime. That the so-called answer to the crime problem appears to lie at the local and voluntary level and in a sense moves central governments responsibility for tackling crime and disorder issues firmly away from central accountability. Charles Clarke (1999:p1), the former Home Office Minister, seems to sum up the government's view on partnership style policing:
'Being tough on crime and on the causes of crime is at the very cornerstone of the government's policies. The key to making our communities safer lies in partnerships at both national and local level and the voluntary sector has a vital role to play in making them work. If organisations work together to encourage people to get involved in their communities, it will help create a safe, just and fair and tolerant society for us all.'

Appeals to the community and partnerships have found resonance in other areas of criminal justice. One is the concept of advocating 'punishment in the community'. In an effort to offset the enormous costs of imprisonment there has been the introduction of a variety of new punishments, which appear to fall short of actual penal incarceration. Allied to this is the current vogue for community mediation and victim/offender mediation and reparation involving a process of a third party communicating between conflicting parties in which, in theory, the parties reach their own solutions to their problems. Criminal justice policies which appeal to the notion of community in some form or other are diverse, yet they all embody, to some degree, a perceived need to connect the formal criminal justice process with informal control mechanisms and to involve ordinary people in its working. Partnership approaches to crime prevention are, as Crawford (1999) indicates, bound up with appeals to the community and are a direct critique of recent attempts by the criminal justice system to eradicate crime. Partnerships appear increasingly to be seen as the answer to providing an effective criminal justice system involving formal and non-formal agencies of control.
Consequently, there is a need to examine the idea of partnerships dealing with such issues. If a paradigmatic change is taking place, there is a need to understand why this is so and what the consequences are of such a dramatic shift in how policing is to be carried out.

This research examines a crime prevention partnership and its efforts to reduce recorded crime and the fear of crime within a particular community. The community involved, Aberfan and Merthyr Vale, is situated in the South Wales valleys.

The partnership attempted to reduce recorded crime and the fear of crime by a measured input of various policing, partnership and situational crime prevention techniques over a twelve-month period from April 1998 to April 1999. This partnership initiative was carried out prior to the introduction of *The Crime and Disorder Act 1998* (Home Office 1999), which stipulates that local partnerships, including the Local Authority and the Police, should be formed to reduce crime and disorder.

The theory being tested, therefore, is that of Administrative or Home Office criminology. Administrative criminology concentrates on the nature of the event and the settings in which it occurs and assumes that offenders are rational actors who attempt to weigh up the potential costs and benefits of their actions. The goal of administrative criminology is to make crime less attractive to offenders.

This theory encompasses the following:

i. Acceptance of dominant definitions of what constitutes the problem of crime;

ii. A lack of interest in the social causes of crime

iii. Acceptance of the need for research to be applied to aid policy development and decision making
iv. Support for rational choice or ‘opportunity’ approaches to specific offences

v. Advocacy of ‘what we know’ and ‘what works’ criminal justice policies

vi. Being either employed within the criminal justice system or acting as a paid advisor to criminal justice officials.

(McLaughlin and Muncie 2001:6)

Given that it appears that the new paradigm for policing in this country revolves around multi-agency partnerships addressing the issues of crime and disorder, the research question is in one sense relatively simple.

i. What effect did this initiative have in the specific targets of reducing recorded crime and the fear of crime within the chosen community by using the techniques chosen?

ii. Further, did the research provide evidence of an effective method of dealing with the problems of crime and disorder or are partnerships, as Walklate (1999) suggests, merely the new buzzword of the crime prevention industry, unable to stand up to scrutiny, merely providing window-dressing and an illusion of purposeful activity?

In exploring these main issues, and acknowledging that, to some extent, research in this area lends itself naturally to a more quantitative type of analysis, the research also attempts to examine the relationships between the various agencies and the attitudes of the major players who are responsible for the planning and delivery of this type of scheme.
Chapter Two considers the political commitment to the partnership style of policing, placing the concept in an historical context against the background of a general trend of rising crime in this country following the Second World War. It explores the influence of the Home Office in the development of the community safety programme and the subsequent publication of the Morgan Report. For example, by highlighting such initiatives as the Kirkholt anti-burglary project (Forrester et al., 1988) the Home Office has indicated a desire to circulate seemingly good practice throughout the country. Indeed, the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention steering committee as a template for much of their work considered the Kirkholt project. The chapter continues to explore the idea of consultation at a local level and considers the implications of crime prevention interventions at that level. It also considers the relevant strengths and weaknesses of the notion of situational crime prevention techniques based on the classical school of criminality, coupled with the different styles of policing commonly used in crime prevention initiatives throughout Britain. In particular, the chapter explores the impact on British policing of the zero tolerance style of policing supposedly imported to this country from New York City, and considers the implications of such a style on British society.

Chapter Three is an in-depth discussion regarding the research methods employed in carrying out this research. If any research is to stand or fall as a result of the methods employed, it is necessary to provide extensive explanations as to how and why the research was carried out. This chapter therefore examines the various strengths and weaknesses of the differing methods used which included social surveys, covert observations and the use of secondary data from a number of sources. It describes each method and considers the operational problems encountered by the researcher.
including that of carrying out covert observations as part of the research along with access and other methodological issues. These issues and problems were particularly acute considering the role and location of the researcher within the initiative being researched, and the chapter highlights how these moral and ethical problems were overcome. It also examines concepts such as evaluation research, which formed the initial basis of the research, and considers the relative strengths and weaknesses of this approach. In particular the chapter addresses the questions of validity and reliability.

Chapter Four examines the integral make up of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative and provides an historical context of the local partnership policy. It traces the introduction of the local Safer Cities scheme in Merthyr Tydfil, and examines its development into the Safer Merthyr Agency. It provides an explanation of the structure of the agency and analyses the role of the local co-ordinator appointed to head the unit. Further, it explains the work of such agencies and the influence of the 'broken windows' theory of crime, which ultimately led to the zero tolerance policing idea. The chapter also points to the international and national impetus to forming crime prevention partnerships, and explores the relationships between several of the main partners of the local scheme, including the police, local authority and Safer Merthyr. An analysis of the role of the media in promoting the initiative is also explored, as is a full explanation of the inputs from the various component parts of the partnership. The chapter also explains the origins and choice of the specific objectives that were chosen by the partnership to measure its success.
An examination of the various crime statistics for the initiative area and other pertinent locations is provided in Chapter Five. Given that one of the major objectives for the scheme was a dramatic reduction in recorded crime over the 12-month period the results obtained are of particular significance. The chapter examines the criminal statistics for the area concerned for a period of five years, consisting of two years prior to the initiative and two years following the initiative as well as the 12 months of the initiative itself. By examining the data in this longitudinal manner it is believed a clearer picture of events is obtained. The main criminal activities examined are

- Total recorded crime in the initiative area.
- Nationally recorded crime figures
- Domestic burglaries within the local area
- Violent crime within the local area
- Auto crime offences within the local area.

By use of a control area, a comparison is made to establish any noticeable difference in recorded crime, which may be seen as a result of the initiative. Further, the chapter analyses crime data from surrounding areas in order to establish any evidence of displacement of all or particular crimes, as well as the diffusion of benefits that may occur.

Chapter Six analyses the attempt of the initiative to reduce fear of crime within the community. It explores this by analysis of the results of a comparative questionnaire survey carried out before and after the initiative. Apart from an analysis of the data elicited from the respondents, it examines perceptions of crime and fear of crime
within the particular community in question. It explores not only perceived crimes experienced within the community but also the impact of fear of crime, which affects individual's behaviour. This chapter also provides community perceptions about geographic location, crime and individual safety.

Included in this chapter is an analysis of police/respondent contact, which was carried out to examine satisfaction levels and general perceptions about the quality of the police before and after the scheme. What was thought to be impactful upon this scheme was the high visibility of uniformed police on the streets and this is analysed in some depth. Finally, this chapter contains a discussion about the various attitudes displayed by many of the main players within the initiative, as a result of the covert participation methods employed in the research.

Chapter Seven analyses the results of the initiative in the light of the objectives and the inputs of the various agencies involved in the scheme, drawing together many of the themes of the research. It explores the results in the context of the research methods employed, considering any suitable changes that might be implemented in any future research. The results achieved are considered from two main perspectives, namely the initial policy formation and the process of implementation, looking closely at the interactions between the major agencies and individuals in each. Finally, consideration of the future of partnership policing is considered in the light of the methods employed by the crime prevention partnership and the results achieved in the initiative.
2 Literature Review

'The acceptance of the appropriateness and proliferation of a partnership approach has been one of the most dramatic developments in crime control policy in the last decade, not only in Britain, but also across Europe.'
(Crawford 1998:169)

Introduction

In 1997 the Labour government made clear its commitment to ensuring that crime prevention would become a statutory duty of local government. This commitment was pledged by Jack Straw at a Local Government Association (LGA) conference, 'Crime-The Local Solution', in March 1997. In the light of this commitment local authority personnel throughout England and Wales were charged with the writing of community safety strategies. At the same time the 1996 International Criminal Victimization Survey suggested that these personnel would be working in a context of comparatively high national rates of crime which the British Crime Survey of 1996 estimated had risen 91% since 1985. This fast growing rate of crime has initiated much discussion in the public domain around law and order issues. Much of this discussion has revolved around the impact of such a high crime rate, and associated significant fear of crime, on the quality of life of people living in England and Wales. There has also been a great deal of debate on differing ways to manage the crime problem (Garland 1996) with the significant emergence of the concept of community safety in the mid-1980s driven by the idea that the solution to an area’s crime
problems lay in co-operation between law enforcement agencies and the community.

The 1990s, however, also saw the debate around the concept of zero tolerance policing exported from the USA to Britain, which arguably signalled a move away from the emphasis on community solutions to crime problems. Although ostensibly closely linked to the idea of community safety, zero tolerance in fact substitutes the notion of a complete respite from crime and incivilities for the community, where no infringement of criminal or civil statutes is tolerated. The zero tolerance policing style is justified by reference to community wants and needs but due to its blanket coverage, it cannot recognise different degrees of tolerance that exist within a community, or between one community and another. Zero tolerance policing posits a crime-free environment as the goal of every 'law abiding' individual, without offering any degree of subtlety or attempting to understand the many dynamics of community relationships that are in existence or the diversity of responses to crime demonstrated by individuals.

The Partnership Approach to Crime Prevention

If one accepts Crawford’s argument that the rise of partnerships in crime control has been dramatic, then an historical analysis of the origins of this particular approach is necessary for further understanding. Also, an analysis of the component parts of the partnership approach would need clarifying. These involve a style of policing which is considered unusual, or different in some way, from the normal reactive style of policing, and the use of crime prevention techniques. These crime prevention techniques appear to contain elements of situational crime prevention and include a consideration of repeat victims of specific crimes. Partnerships also purport to include wide consultation with the community they serve.
As Crawford (1998) rightly points out, the last twenty years or so has produced a plethora of research and advice to the police service urging it to tackle problems with the aid of the community and other agencies. Many of the publications urging this approach stem from the Home Office and a typical example of the mood for change can be seen in the influential Home Office circular 8/1984 that stated:

‘Every individual citizen and all those agencies whose policies and practices can influence the extent of crime should make their contribution. Preventing crime is a task for the whole community’. (Home Office 1984:1)

The message could not have been clearer for police services. Consequently, throughout the country, partnership initiatives were introduced. Initiatives such as ‘The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project’ (Forrester et al., 1988) were promoted as flagships of the partnership approach and the police service has been encouraged to engage with other agencies in community crime prevention initiatives. For a number of years the Home Office has sponsored and published research into specific areas of tackling criminality that appear to highlight the successful approach of partnerships involving differing agencies. These initiatives have covered a range of offences from burglary (Brown 1997), public order and annoyance on housing estates (Morris 1996) to thefts against retail outlets (Tilley 1993). The common theme of all such work is the claimed positive results obtained by several agencies collaborating to tackle highly specific crimes. Indeed, such is the faith in the partnership approach that the Home Office has published a document that provide examples of partnership initiatives from various locations within this country that have been deemed good practice (Home Office 1997). The intention of this document, it is claimed, is to
provide a framework of ideas for those agencies not already engaged in the paradigm of partnership policing

One of the main reasons behind the introduction of the partnership approach, it is argued, lies in the fact that there has been a rise in recorded crime and the realisation that the police do not have the resources to tackle this problem alone (Crawford 1998).

The publication of the Morgan Report (Home Office 1991) saw the term ‘crime prevention’ replaced by the concept of ‘community safety’ in order to broaden the base of support for such partnerships:

‘The term crime prevention is often narrowly interpreted and this reinforces the view that it is solely the responsibility of the police. On the other hand, the term community safety is open to wider interpretation and could encourage greater participation from all sections of the community.’

(Home Office 1991:1)

By implementation of the term community in ‘community safety’, it was hoped that this approach would be more acceptable to the public at large for, as Cohen (1985) rightly points out, the word ‘community’ appeals to the individual perceptions of positive iconography. When the imagery portrayed is positive, the term is coterminous with concepts of natural, openness, integrative or simply ‘in the community’. Therefore, such concepts as community centre, community prison and community policing are generally viewed as positive and non-threatening. (Cohen 1985:116)
Central to the concept of partnerships, it is argued, is the need for a wide consultation process involving the public agencies involved, private business and the community (Elliot and Nicholls 1996: 6-7). For the partnerships trying to provide this service, the aims of this consultation process can be listed as follows:

1. The drive to reach as broad a cross section of the population as possible. All parties, it is argued, have an interest in consulting, as widely and deeply as possible, as failure to do so could mean that prominent crime and disorder problems are not brought to their attention.

2. The identification of public priorities to influence the annual policing plan, to assist in targeting valuable police resources to particular community concerns.

3. The identification of public priorities for local action, so that local partnerships can be focused on individual community problems, such as the perception of youth annoyance.

4. To provide the public with information on policing and community safety matters feeding back information to the public and improving the quality of consultation.

Partnerships, therefore, appear to be concerned with the management of providing a service to the community and, therefore, organisational attainments are quite high on their list of consultation priorities. For the public, according to Elliot and Nicholls (1996), the main reason for engaging in discourse with policing partnerships seems to revolve around two main areas of concern, namely:

1. To obtain rapid police action on public concerns, so that it is likely that the public do not merely wish to be consulted on their views as their priority will be to get the police to address their problems;
2. Obtaining information from the police, such as what the police are doing, how they are performing and the impact the police are having on crime. They may well see consultation as a way to achieve this.

However, the consultation process itself, whilst a laudable notion, is far from infallible. Public meetings, where the community is asked to attend to air their views, are not necessarily representative of the community as a whole. Marginalised groups such as gay and lesbian groups, youth elements and those regarded as outsiders because of minority ethnic background are often not represented at such consultation processes. Consequently, the concerns addressed are those that are normally aired, it could be argued, by locally elected representatives and other community leaders who may not be acting on behalf of the whole community. (Crawford 1998)

One of the biggest influences on the formation of the partnership approach to crime prevention, and touched upon earlier, is the Home Office's Standing Committee on Crime Prevention Report ‘Safer Communities: The Local Delivery of Crime Prevention through the Partnership Approach’ (Home Office 1991). This report, known as The Morgan report, is so influential in this area that it requires closer scrutiny.

**The Morgan Report**

Circular (8/84): *Crime Prevention* (Home Office, 1984b) may be seen as a watershed in crime prevention policy. Its emphasis lies in the principle that crime prevention must be accepted as a significant and integral goal of public policy, both centrally and locally. In this circular particular, stress is placed on the need for a coordinated
approach and joint strategies involving partnerships against crime. Although more often rhetoric than reality around the country the idea of multi-agency 'partnerships' in crime prevention had clearly arrived in Britain.

By the end of the 1980s the Home Office circular *Tackling Crime* (Home Office 1989) showed the further development of the partnership and community orientation to crime prevention in the Home Office. Particular attention was given in the circular to the problem of coordination, or rather the lack of it, between agencies, making up the criminal justice system. This circular lead the way for what was considered to be the key inspiration for much of the subsequent local government, multi-agency and seemingly social crime prevention schemes of the 1990s, *The Morgan Report* (Home Office, 1991).

The main thrust of The Morgan Report was that the concept of crime prevention is somewhat limited in scope and has generally been police driven with other agencies having only a marginal stake in it. In its words:

"The term crime prevention is often narrowly interpreted and this reinforces the view that it is solely the responsibility of the police. On the other hand, the term 'community safety' is open to wider interpretation and could encourage greater participation from all sections of the community in the fight against crime."

(Home Office, 1991: 3).

Effectively, community safety, as a guiding idea, was heralded as a way of moving beyond a situational definition of crime prevention (focusing on the management, design and manipulation of the built physical environment) to a broader social
definition (seeking to change criminal motivations which are perceived to lie within people by affecting the social environment)

The Report went on to identify six key elements that needed to be addressed, namely structure, leadership, information, identity, durability and resources, in order to improve the organisation and delivery of multi-agency crime prevention.

This report supported the notion that local authorities be given the statutory duty (and therefore the resources) to co-ordinate crime prevention/community safety strategies for their locality. The report also argued that sufficient resources to make this change must be forthcoming from central government. In passing, it may be noted that the recommendations regarding both local authorities’ statutory role and resourcing were not taken up by the government during the 1990s, probably due to its concerns over costs and its ideological hostility to local government per se. With the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Home Office, 1999), a statutory partnership was introduced rather than Morgan’s recommendation of a leadership role for local authorities. The Labour Party’s proposals, however, as part of this Act, have stated that no extra resources would be given to local authorities for their new statutory responsibilities for crime prevention. That said, much of the Morgan Report’s philosophy of partnerships, multi-agency collaboration and audits is to the fore in current crime prevention policy proposals (Home Office, 1997).

Hughes (1998) argues that the Morgan Report appears for the most part as a report written by local authority and police officers for officers. In particular, the discussion of how these multi-agency partnership officer groups relate to issues of democratic
accountability, he believes, is never fully addressed. Further, it is argued that citizens are being called upon to play a crucial role in crime prevention through their own actions. As in other social policy areas, there is an appeal to the much-vaunted but ill-defined active citizen to play a key role; in this case in both crime surveillance and 'policing'. The Home Office pamphlet 'Partners against Crime' (Home Office 1994) confidently asserts that power of partnerships in beating crime was proved and three complementary partnerships were presented as initiatives to be launched or given further encouragement nationally in 1995. These were the already well-established 'Neighbourhood Watch Schemes', 'Street Watch' and 'Neighbourhood Constables'.

Loveday (1994) has noted that much of the central government proposals for 'community' crime prevention suggests that voluntary community action should replace collective provision, resulting in a voluntary surveillance society.

Liddle and Gelsthorpe (1994a, 1994b, 1994c) focus their attention on the extent to which the multi-agency 'call to arms' from both the Home Office Circular 44/1990 (Home Office 1990) and the Morgan Report (Home Office 1991) has affected the thinking, shape and direction of local crime prevention initiatives in the UK. In particular, their research addressed the six elements mentioned previously as crucial to multi-agency partnerships highlighted by the Morgan Report. Liddle and Gelsthorpe chronicle the varying structures (from formal to informal), modes of leadership, involvement of external agencies and relationships to both local and central government across the range of local initiatives. Their work tends to concentrate more on the functionality involved in the initiatives on the ground rather than the structures and outcomes and actions that are generated by these bodies.
Walklate (1999) acknowledges that over the past twenty years it has become evident that managing criminal acts has become an increasingly diffuse and diverse problem, with more emphasis on interactive agency work. For Garland (1996), this is a new way of governing crime problems, namely the ‘responsibilisation’ strategy, with the recurring message that the state alone is not, and cannot, effectively be responsible for preventing or controlling crime. Others must be made aware that they too have a responsibility in this regard, and must be persuaded to change their practices in order to reduce criminal opportunities and increase formal controls. In the context of crime prevention this strategy is clearly associated with notions of partnership, multi-agency and, of course, self-help. It has been argued that the partnership approach has not been characterised more than by a change of focus from crime prevention to victimisation prevention (Karmen 1990). This area has considerable support for the partnership approach as research has shown that some people and places are repeatedly victimised and that patterns of repeat victimisation are often found for different types of offence (Bridgman and Sampson 1994; Pease 1998). Repeat victimisation, it is argued, is usually swift and predictable: it often happens very soon after the first event, with the risk of becoming a repeat victim diminishing over time (Crime Concern 1998).

**Further thoughts on Partnerships.**

For partnerships, therefore, there is a need for close cooperation to ensure that more crime is reported, rather than remain hidden and unreported. Further, those repeat offences can be easily identified with this information shared between agencies and that action is taken immediately to prevent re-victimisation. Such strategies it is hoped would place victims’ rights firmly on the partnership and therefore political
agenda. However, as Erez (2000) points out, this type of approach has, it appears, failed to transform practices and victims’ feelings about the criminal justice system remain on the whole negative. Whilst many current partnerships’ relationship with victims remain in the domain of purely notification and the supply of information to them, Erez suggest that victims could play a greater part in the policy formation which guides many partnerships in crime prevention.

For Karmen (1990), therefore, the partnership approach has just become the new buzzword of the crime prevention ‘industry’. However, Karmen argues that it is no bad thing for the responsibility for the ‘crime problem’ to be owned by an increasingly diffuse variety of individuals and organisations even if the make-up of the partnerships is far from ideal. Alternatively, it is the very diverse make-up of many of the agencies that constitute partnerships that can be problematic. Crawford (1998) calls attention to the inter-organisational conflict and differential power relationships that can occur. He argues that partnerships, especially within the field of crime control and criminal justice, by their nature, draw together diverse organisations with very different cultures, ideologies and traditions, that pursue distinct aims through divergent structures, strategies and practices. Deep structural conflicts exist between the parties that sit down together in partnerships. Criminal justice agencies have very different priorities and interests, as do other public sector organisations, voluntary bodies, the commercial sector and local community groups.

Not all agencies and groups are equally powerful and certain agencies tend to dominate the policy agenda, such as in the field of crime prevention. As Sampson et al (1988: 178) have noted:
'The police are often enthusiastic proponents of the multi-agency approach, but they tend to prefer to set the agenda and dominate forum meetings, and then to ignore the multi-agency framework when it suits their own needs.'

While this approach can cause conflict, Jones and Crawford (1995) argue that, significantly, agencies involved in partnerships use strategies such as conflict avoidance as well as engage in overt conflict. By doing so, they argue, such measures contribute to the smooth running of partnerships at a formal level. One of the strongest supporters of the partnership approach to community safety is Jon Bright (1991; 1996; 1997; 1999.) In support of his arguments for this type of policing, Bright attacks four dominant views about crime prevention and these are worthy of closer inspection. Briefly, these dominant views are:

1. 'Nothing much can be done'
   Bright argues that government policies such as quality training and employment programmes support families, improve parenting and maintain family cohesion. He suggests that interventions such as these can be effective in reducing crime and re-offending.

2. 'The criminal justice system prevents crime'
   Here Bright argues that the formal criminal justice system - apprehending, prosecuting, sentencing, punishing and rehabilitating offenders - has only a limited effect in controlling crime. Increases in police resources, he argues, do not necessarily lead to reduced crime, and rates of recidivism following release from prison remain high. This is supported somewhat by the Audit Commission (1996a), whose report into multi-agency style policing in Central Scotland found:
'Only one demand - a visible police presence to reassure and deter antisocial behaviour - is solely a police responsibility. The others fall squarely within the remit of the local authority and other agencies - education on drug and alcohol abuse, improved street lighting, safer play areas, more leisure facilities, road safety measures and attention to environmental concerns such as dogs fouling pavements and parks.'


Bright continues by focusing on the fact that the public’s demands on the police broadly fall into three categories, namely more uniformed officers on the street; offenders arrested immediately; and the expectation that the police will deal with organised crime and serious crime, child abuse and drug trafficking. Because the police cannot meet these demands, Bright continues, the refocusing of police resources has been at the expense of community reassurance and prevention work. It is therefore clear, he continues, that the criminal justice system agencies' main functions are to process crime after the event and punish the very small proportion of offenders who are convicted. The deterrent, preventative effects of the system are very limited and poor value for money.

3. 'Communities alone prevent crime'

Attacking the communitarian movement belief, in empowering the community and thereby reducing crime, Bright argues that, whilst having a vital role to play, communities’ capacity to resolve crime and disorder patterns is often overstated. Anti-crime and-disorder community strategies, he argues, are least common and least successful in the areas where they are most needed, namely poor, high crime neighbourhoods. Whilst acknowledging the growth in voluntary crime prevention schemes, typified by neighbourhood watch schemes, Bright argues that there is
little support for neighbourhood watch in areas where the risk of crime is highest and where the risk of crime is high and there is little sense of community. Generally, it is argued, too much has been expected both of policing and community organisations to resolve crime with communities expected to address problems they have neither the resources nor authority to resolve.

4. 'Crime is a single solution problem'

Highlighting this area, Bright cites the recent suggestions to solving crime such as more police, tougher sentences; more jails; etc. Bright's argument here is that these are not efficient ways to combat the crime problem. For him, there are only two ways to prevent crime. These are:

a) Make crime more difficult to commit, more risky and less rewarding, whilst making better use of security and surveillance, and

b) Prevent criminal behaviour by reducing the risk factors long associated with offending, such as poor parenting and school failure.

Bright's views are regarded by many as underpinning much of the partnership philosophy in terms of crime prevention. His arguments appear to be gaining momentum. That the consequence of believing the myths for so long has resulted in the creation of an expensive, inefficient and self perpetuating criminal justice system, high crime rate and large numbers of young people drifting into crime, is hard to refute. Consequently, it is argued, only a comprehensive partnership approach to tackling crime and its associated problems involving all agencies is seen as the way forward. However, Bright tinges this approach with some degree of realism, appreciating that the problems of such an approach can be immense.
‘To bring about this shift in policy will require the vision to see what can be achieved, and political leadership of a high order to bring it about’

(Bright 1997:113).

Underpinning the partnership approach and central to Bright’s influential vision of preventing crime and disorder lie two basic fundamental implementations in policy. The first is a commitment to the paradigm of situational crime prevention techniques, particularly rational choice theory and including crime prevention through environmental design. This involves a variety of target-hardening methods and close co-operation with the local police. The second is a change in policing philosophy at a local level in order to achieve crime prevention partnership aims. These changes have been publicised under various headings and catchphrases, but basically fall into three policing styles, namely COP (Community Oriented Policing or simply Community Policing), POP (Problem Oriented Policing) and Zero Tolerance type policing. It is these main policy areas that will now be examined.

Situational Crime Prevention

In general terms, so far as current partnerships in community safety are concerned, the main type of crime prevention strategies that are being implemented, and success claimed for, are those termed situational crime prevention. Many of these initiatives revolve around specific crimes such as burglary and car crime. (Anderson et al 1995; Hough and Tilley 1998a; Tilley et al 1999) This is in contrast to a separate main stream of crime prevention commonly referred to as social crime prevention.
Whilst social crime prevention focuses on tackling the disposition to offend through improved welfare and educational programmes such as mentoring schemes, situational crime prevention pays attention to the opportunity structure to commit crime itself. It could be argued that in terms of cost, situational crime prevention is much easier to implement and can also give quicker results making it easier to evaluate the success of the partnership.

It is generally agreed that the situational theory of crime prevention was most fully developed by ‘administrative criminologists’ working at the Home Office Research Unit in the 1970s. Jock Young (1992) first coined the phrase to describe the dominant establishment approaches to understanding both crime and its control in Britain at this time. The term ‘administrative’ is used to capture the politically pragmatic and seemingly atheoretical perspective of such criminologists when compared with the previously dominant aetiological perspective of mainstream criminologists. The latter was, according to its Home Office critics, obsessed with the search for the causes of criminality (often termed the aetiology of crime). In contrast, administrative criminology argues that the search for causes is futile, but the opportunities to commit crime can be controlled. The historical context behind the emergence of this new approach in the UK may be summarised as follows. Between the 1940s and the 1970s in the UK, as elsewhere, both criminologists and policy makers tended to concentrate on dispositional rather than situational variables in their explanations of crime and in their strategies of prevention and control. This focus led to an emphasis on treating individual dispositions to crime rather than altering the situations that led to the crime being committed. Dispositional variables are those features associated with the character, intelligence, values, etc. of offenders that
disposed them towards committing crimes. These theories imply that whether or not an individual commits a crime on a given occasion is largely determined by his or her personal characteristics or attributes – they seek to explain criminality rather than criminal acts. Psychologists have been impressed by the immunity to temptation that characterises the ordinary, well-socialised person, and have consequently concentrated their attention upon those circumstances in which socialisation, in this sense, fails. (Trasler 1993).

However, during the 1970s a crisis appeared revolving around the rising crime rate during a period of relative affluence. Crawford (1999) points to the fact that research findings began to suggest that the formal processes of criminal justice-through the detection, apprehension, prosecution and sentencing of offenders-had only a limited effect in controlling crime. Further, the work of Hough and Mayhew (1983) revealed extensive non-reporting of crime, thus highlighting the fact that for most offenders and victims of crime, the formal criminal justice system was largely irrelevant. In response to these problems, Home Office criminologists and officials appeared broadly to agree that there was no evidence to show that deterrence through punishment would have any significant effect on the rising crime rate. Further, improvements in policing or increases in police resources would have no significant effect on the rate of crime. While crime prevention through social reform might be desirable it was not a realistic possibility and there was no little or no evidence that it had any measurable effect upon reducing crime, and treatment programmes that were geared to changing the criminal disposition of offenders were unproductive. Instead, the Home Office researchers looked to other pragmatic pieces of research for a possible answer to the problem of what was to be done to reduce or prevent crime.
In particular, inspiration was found in two areas, namely rational choice theory and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

**Rational choice theory**

Rational choice theory is a vision of the crime problem that is rooted in administrative criminology. This version of criminology was largely associated with work emanating from the Home Office during the early 1980s. Gilling (1997) argues that it neither constitutes a new nor a general explanation of crime since elements of attributing the ability to make choices and decisions to criminals and criminal behaviour are present in a range of criminological perspectives. Indeed this approach is linked directly to the criminological perspective of Classical criminology. The key feature of classical criminology is its central presumption that individual criminals engage in a process of rational calculative decision making in choosing how to commit crime. This view is underpinned by two further assumptions: one that individuals have free will; the other that individuals are guided by hedonism, the maximisation of pleasure and the minimisation of pain. These ideas were important in that they shifted attention towards punishing the offensive behaviour rather than punishing the individuals social or physical characteristics. The shift had an enormous influence on changing attitudes towards punishment and towards the purpose of the law and the legal system. However, in contrast with earlier concerns with the rationality or otherwise of the offender, the concerns of rational choice theory are framed to address the central question of crime prevention. Again, it has been argued that rational choice theory refuses to address the causes of crime, but is more concerned with its management. Clarke and Mayhew (1980), the main proponents of this theory, believe that criminological theories have been little concerned with the
situational determinants of crime. Instead, the main object of previous theories has been to show how some people are born with, or come to acquire a disposition to behave in a consistently criminal manner. Consequently, they believe this bias has had unfortunate consequences for the issue of crime prevention. They state:

"These difficulties are primarily practical, but they also reflect the uncertainties and inconsistencies of treating distant psychological events and social processes as the causes of crime. Given that each event is in turn caused by others, at what point in the infinitely regressive chain should one stop in the search for effective points of intervention?"

(Clarke and Mayhew 1980: 44)

Rational choice theory suggests that effective intervention can be established by understanding the criminal as an economic decision-maker. The idea of treating human beings as driven by the motive of profit maximisation is one that has a long-standing tradition within the discipline of economics. Further, the work of Pyle (1995), which builds on the earlier work of Anderson (1976), points the way to intervention in the criminal cycle by focusing on the market place itself, and disrupting the factors affecting supply and demand. For example, the disruption of street level drug trading by the police appears to have met with some measure of success by disrupting the economic trading that takes place. The economic approach rests on the assumption that most potential criminals are normal individuals. The early work of Becker (1968) and Ehrlich (1973; 1975; 1977) argues that an individual will commit crime if the expected net benefit from committing the crime exceeds the expected benefit derived from legitimate activity. It is inherently risky because of the possibility of being caught. For Becker (1968), criminals were deterred from
committing crimes by increases in the probability of being caught and punished and by the amount of punishment if caught. Both reduced the expected utility from criminal activity. Ehrlich (1973), on the other hand, used an allocation of time between criminal and legitimate activity, indicating that other economic factors, such as earnings in legitimate work, returns to criminal activity and the probability of employment could affect crime rates. The interventionist idea in the cycle of crime has been extended by Felson (1998) and Clarke (1997). They argue that the placement of a capable guardian within the cycle of crime is an essential element to prevention. As Clarke and Felson (1993:3) point out when discussing this role:

‘Indeed, the most likely persons to prevent crime are not policemen, (who seldom are around to discover crimes in the act) but rather neighbours, friends, relatives, bystanders, or the owner of property targeted. The absence of a suitable guardian is crucial.’

Thus the rational choice process of decision-making is used to account for not only the decision to commit crime but also the time and the place in which such a crime is committed. However, some effort is made to recognise that such decision-making may be limited by the availability of information or inaccurate information. So this theory, whilst influenced by the assumed rationality of the economic human being, contains within it an appreciation that such rationality is limited. The greatest value of this perspective lies in its crime prevention potential. Making crime riskier or harder to carry out may often deter if many offenders and predatory offenders in particular weigh at least some of the potential risks against gains they anticipate from lawbreaking and criminal acts. This illuminates the central problem of rational choice-displacement of crime. It begs the question, if target hardening deters the criminal, what happens to the motive of profit maximisation once the decision not to
commit a crime has been made? Is this transformed into something else?

Displacement is referred to by Gilling (1997:64) as the Achilles heel of rational choice theory. Displacement can take the form of inducing temporal or spatial changes in the commission of a criminal act, as well as the replacement of one type of target for another. Clarke (1980) points out that displacement seemed most likely among professional or highly motivated offenders, and least likely among opportunists, although since there are so many unguarded opportunities available then there are always likely to be rich pickings available elsewhere. In defence to the argument of displacement, it has been stressed that its effect is likely to be only partial, (Clarke 1997: Hesseling 1994), whilst it is now more broadly accepted that displacement depends upon such factors as the relative ease, risk and attractiveness of other targets. Gilling (1997:183) also points out that, on occasions, it is not crime that is displaced but crime prevention where, for various reasons, small crime prevention initiatives may have an effect beyond their temporal and spatial confines.

Rational choice theory is not centrally concerned to address the underlying causes of crime, so it could be argued that the question of displacement is of little consequence. However, every crime prevention policy carries with it some costs whether these costs can be quantitative (resource led) or qualitative (social fear of crime), and these need to be weighed against the potential gains of the kinds of situational measures that this theory proposes. This theory attracts its critics. It has been argued that by focusing attention on preventing the behaviour of the individual criminal it detracts from alternative policies or initiatives that might be considered more expensive.
The second strand to the situational crime prevention theory lies in the concept of crime prevention through environmental design. This theory owes its origin in work conducted into territoriality and defensible space by Newman (1972) and carried on through the title of ‘Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design’ (CPTED) (Jeffery 1971; Allat 1984).

Newman’s work concentrated upon an attempt to use architectural form to rescue public housing in the USA from the depredations of crime. Newman believed that the design of public housing developments discouraged residents from taking responsibility for public areas and from exercising their normal territorial instincts to exclude predatory offenders.

However, in his later work, Newman (1976) reported some successes in reducing crime in public housing developments in the USA through application of this procedure. A major component of CPTED involves the prime concept of natural surveillance. This enables the introduction of “guardians” into potential areas of criminality which, it is argued, substantially reduces the risks of criminal acts being carried out.

As Hughes (1998) points out rational choice theory and CPTED are popular in public policy making circles because it appears to offer an economical answer to an array of questions. Rock (1989: 4) notes:

‘It resonates with common sense, being most in accord with the everyday explanations of crime and misbehaviour. It lends itself to neat, effective and attractive action. It cuts through all complexities
and qualifications of sociological theorising and substitutes simple principles in their place.’

Situational crime prevention, therefore, comprises opportunity reducing measures that:

a) are directed at highly specific forms of crime;
b) involve the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent way as possible;
c) make crime more difficult and risky or less rewarding.

In stark contrast with positivism’s obsession with aetiology, primary emphasis is placed on the immediate features of the environment or situation in which an act might be committed. There is also a direct, if unacknowledged, debt to the classical school of criminology. In common with classicism this approach views crime as the actions of rational, reasoning people making psychological judgements or calculations in response to specific situations or circumstances. The two guiding techniques to this thinking are target hardening and surveillance. Target hardening is intended to make the commission of crime more difficult, often by very practical nuts and bolts measures of strengthening and making more secure the technology of everyday devices like doors or telephone coin boxes. Surveillance, on the other hand refers to the controls exerted by people in everyday life. Attention for example, is given to the design of the built environment and how this might either hinder or be redesigned to help people control their own environment. This concern draws on the early work of Jacobs (1962) and Newman (1972) in the USA and can be seen in this country in the work of Coleman (1985) in redesigning the architecture of housing estates.
Situational crime prevention success stories in the UK

Much of the advice on crime prevention given to crime prevention partnerships in England and Wales comes directly from the Home Office and therefore, given the history of its development as a theory, concentrates on situational crime prevention. It has become a favourite approach for many government sponsored crime prevention initiatives, such as the Safer Cities programme (Tilley 1994). In particular, target-hardening initiatives that look at burglary prevention and car crime (Forrester et al 1988; Bennett and Durie 1999) are circulated as being best practice and worthy of repetition. The driving force behind many of these initiatives lies in the recognition that many victims are repeat victims of the same type of crime (Anderson et al 1995; Bridgeman and Hobbs 1997). Consequently, many initiatives revolve around the fitting of locks and alarms on the homes of burglary victims soon after the initial offence occurs. These documents appear to be based firmly in rational choice theory and revolve around a crime being examined from three perspectives, namely the location of the offence, the offender, and the victim (Felson and Clarke 1998). However, it appears that the area that receives more attention from most partnerships involves that of the location of the offence. Felson and Clarke (1998: 4) reinforce the belief that it is the absence of some form of capable guardian at or near the location that is a prime cause for concern.

‘Guardianship is often inadvertent, yet still has a powerful impact against crime. Most important, when guardians are absent, a target is especially subject to the risk of criminal attack.’
The drive for an increase in neighbourhood watch and the introduction of many closed circuit television systems throughout the country may be seen in the light of providing capable guardians in the absence of formal policing arrangements.

By focusing on the criminal event, it is claimed, there is a much greater chance to reduce crime immediately. This aspect of situational crime prevention is very important for partnerships. The 'quick win' approach, coupled with effective use of the media to publicise good results, is seen as vital if crime prevention partnerships are to attract funding from EC grants, as well as central and local government funding, and sponsorship from private businesses. (Hough and Tilley 1998b; Crime Concern 1998)

However, no partnership crime prevention activity could possibly be a success without the cooperation of the local police. This applies not only to the supply of up-to-date information regarding crime patterns and victims, but the implementation of a policing style that complements the aims of the crime prevention programme. The main policing styles are worthy of closer examination.

**COPs, POPs and Zero Tolerance 'Type' Policing**

**COPS (Community Oriented Policing)**

Community oriented policing, or community policing as it is more commonly referred to in the UK, appeared in the mid-1970s as a topic of discussion among police administrators and academics, since when it had spread world-wide as the credo of enlightened thinking. Fielding (1995) describes the 1970s attempts as short term
tactics to repair police/public relations, a largely cosmetic exercise masking reluctance to make major changes when entrenched patrol and investigation methods failed. More recently, it has embraced the concepts of problem solving within the community, attempts to reduce the fear of crime and targeted foot patrols. Braiden (1992) goes back further and argues that the re-emergence of community policing can be traced to the philosophy promulgated by Sir Robert Peel in his famous ‘Principles of Policing’, in particular Principle Number 7 which states:

‘The police shall at all times maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police.’

(Peak & Glensor 1996: 8).

The enormous influence of the community policing approach raises the question of what it is and also why it is claimed to be successful. Herein lies the first problem with community policing. As Friedman (1992) and Green and Mastrofski (1988) point out, it is not easily amenable to a particular definition, even though it is a highly appealing concept. In an attempt to provide an answer to this, Friedman examines community policing from three perspectives, namely the police, the community and a combination of both. For the police, he argues, it is a vehicle used to improve ties with the community for the purposes of relying on community resources to assist them, e.g. neighbourhood watch; to improve intelligence gathering and to increase the legitimacy of the police within the community. For the community there is a realisation that it deserves and should receive improved police services with greater accountability and an increase in the power sharing in police decisions. In combination, both the police and the community, it is argued, assume that crime is produced by societal factors over which the police have little control, and that crime
control needs to focus on these factors. Policing needs to assume a more pro-active stance, with greater emphasis on quality of life issues, with greater consideration for human rights and civil liberties, which are essential to successful democratic policing. This is again reinforced by Kelling and Moore (1988) who see diverse tactics used by the police as a way of improving quality of life and increased citizen satisfaction.

In summing up his view of Community Policing, Friedman (1992: 4) attempts to provide a working definition:

‘Community policing is a policy and a strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life, improved police services and police legitimacy, through a proactive reliance on community resources that seeks to change crime causing conditions.’

Fielding (1995) continues the theme that community policing is not a single concept, adding that it means a contrast to rapid response and enforcement-oriented policing (Reiner 2000), so that officers are closer to the community and can represent its norms, a process by which crime control is shared with the public or as a means of developing communication with the community and interest groups. However, Fielding (1995:25) also provides us with a warning regarding perceptions of community policing:

‘The term community policing evokes images of police community relations in stable, consensus based and homogenous communities where crime is a mere irritant and disorder largely consists in minor vandalism.’
In Fielding's view, social control is based on public/police agreement and consent, an idealised view in which the police define and strive to enact, a posited 'common good'. In reality, it is argued, this is seldom the case.

The implementation of community policing, in whatever form it takes, is again problematic. One of the main influences in the implementation of community policing programmes both in this country and the USA has been Robert Trojanowicz (1983; 1986; 1990a; 1990b). Trojanowicz based his work upon policing experiments in Michigan USA and provides guiding parameters for community policing. These include the realisation that it is a philosophy and a strategy in one; that it requires a new type of police officer, who can work pro-actively and independently of police supervision yet able to work in partnership with many other agencies. Importantly, says Trojanowicz, community policing rests on the philosophy that those law-abiding citizens deserve an input into the policing process and that solutions to problems require freeing both police and residents to explore creative options.

Thus far, the idea of community policing has, in the main, been greeted in a positive light. A review of community policing evaluation studies in twelve locations portrayed the schemes in a favourable light with both police and local residents expressing more positive attitudes after programmes had been implemented. (Lurigo and Rosenbaum 1994).

However, despite the official support and apparent success of community policing schemes, it is not without its problems. Waddington (1999) suggests three recurring reasons for the failure of community policing schemes in the UK. Firstly, the level of
emergency demands from the public, which swamp police resources, prevents proactive style policing. Secondly, the opposition of middle management who face additional burdens and responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with consultation style policing, and thirdly, an organisational culture that is often antagonistic to a community policing orientation. A slightly different explanation for failure is put forward by Sadd and Grinc (1994). They found patrol officers ignorant and unenthusiastic about what they perceived as 'top down', 'flavour of the month' initiatives. Also the need for more effective inter-agency collaboration is not always forthcoming. Finally, a major problem to improved police community relationships can be the history of fear and suspicion by residents.

Whatever the reasons put forward for the failure of some community policing initiatives, there is a key assumption that it can play a major part in resolving crime and disorder.

A separate approach, involving an inter-agency collaboration is also known as Problem Oriented Policing (POP).

*Problem Oriented Policing*

Problem Oriented Policing (POP) is a recent innovation that is closely associated with the concept of community policing and is inspired by the work of Herman Goldstein (1990). POP seeks to replace the call for service from the police with the problem as the basic unit of police attention. Thus, POP focuses on the crime event and analyses its immediate determinants, which Pease (1997) argues will stimulate a growth in primary crime prevention.
Tilley (1997:1) attempts to explain the philosophy behind Goldstein’s work by using the following story taken from Goldstein (1990):

‘Complaints from passengers wishing to use the Bagnall to Green Fields bus service that drivers were speeding past bus queues of up to 30 people with a smile and a wave of the hand, have been met by a statement pointing out that it is impossible for the drivers to keep to their timetable if they have to stop for passengers.’

This is a simple example of the perceived problem with modern-day policing. Preoccupation with the smooth running of the organisation for its own ends can come to take priority over the fulfilment of the purpose for which the organisation is there in the first place. Goldstein’s (1990) work on problem-oriented policing is concerned with ensuring the police keep their ‘eye on the ball’ and that the ball encompasses the concerns that the public brings to them. Indeed, Goldstein is quite critical of the police, and stresses that all business the public brings to the police is police business not just crime. POP, therefore is about taking seriously all the problems the police are there to deal with. This involves looking out for problems systematically from police data, other agency data and contact with the communities served; trying to analyse the problems to find their underlying causes; attempting imaginatively to intervene to address underlying causes that are realistically open to change; setting up systems to learn about what works, how, for whom and in what circumstances in dealing with problems; and feeding lessons back into growing problem-oriented wisdom within the police service.

This is an important development for the police. Based on their image of omnipotence, the police are thought to need very little, if any, assistance. In reality,
the police cannot get their job done by themselves. They need all of the social networks that contribute to behaviour control. As Goldstein (1996:3) rightly points out, ‘They (the Police) need the help of the community’.

Against this background, police officers are given licence to explore new avenues, to explore creative alternatives in their use of a wide range of methods for preventing or reducing problems. This includes altering the physical environment, mediating disputes involving the community, employing civil law and bringing other local authority services or regulatory agencies to bear.

Several police forces in this country profess to have adopted Goldstein’s philosophy of Problem Oriented Policing including Surrey (Beckett 1998), Leicestershire (Tilley and Brooks 1996) and Cleveland (Romeanes 1996). All report that the initiatives are extremely successful. Mulraney (2000a), for example, cites the work carried out in Stoke that addressed the problems of inner-city begging. Here a scheme to remove beggars involved the identification of known beggars, the identification of legitimate begging pitches that could be set aside for legitimate use, and a fast track drug rehabilitation programme. This coupled with a new drop-in centre, and regular meetings with all agencies involved in the scheme, allegedly reduced the number of beggars by two thirds. Interestingly enough, a very localised ‘zero tolerance’ approach to begging was utilised in the vicinity of cash point machines with offenders being arrested when found committing offences in these areas.

There also appears to be a concerted drive by the Home Office to implement POP throughout the country. The documents produced by the Home Office concentrate on
the perceived benefits of POP, highlighting a better service to the public (whose concerns are attended to at source) and officers with enhanced job satisfaction from bringing the public real benefits. More importantly, perhaps, more manageable demands on the police are achieved because underlying problems are solved, reducing the large number of repeat calls to the police (Leigh et al 1996; 1998; Read and Tilley 2000).

Despite the drive from the Home office to implement this style of policing and the reported success from around the country, there are several areas of concern regarding its implementation. Mulraney (2000b) highlights some of the more important issues. In order to identify repeat problems and to implement an action plan involving resources, scanning technology and the ability to use it must be of the highest order. This, apparently, is not available to most police forces in this country, leading one to assume that whilst the will to be involved in problem-solving may be present, the capacity to deliver it is not. This is emphasised by Read and Tilley (2000) who highlight the weakness in the ability to analyse information and data sharing limitations as being major obstructions to successful problem-solving.

Waddington (1999) points out that this approach poses problems for the police culture, as it is in opposition to the law enforcement model that predominates policing. Resistance from individuals can thwart good intentions. As Goldstein (in Mulraney 2000b:p22) says:

'Over and over again I have seen first line supervisors whose relationship with their subordinates reinforces the notion that the
police function consists of going in and getting out as fast as you can.'

What is needed, argues Goldstein, is a new form of supervision that makes it legitimate to take the time to get beyond simply applying the ‘band aid’.

Finally, Pease (in Mulraney 2000b) points out that the implementation of POP is under threat from modern policing’s tendency to look at indicators such as performance league tables. Performance indicators, Pease argues, have reduced the ability of Chief Officers to promote problem-solving because in a culture that is driven by performance indicators the room for manoeuvre at Chief Officer level is substantially reduced. Overall, therefore, despite the almost universal espousal of problem-solving by the police service, high quality problem-solving is still exceptional.

In a further effort to address crime and disorder problems a distinctly separate style of policing evolved during the 1990s. This new approach, zero tolerance policing, was piloted in several areas of Britain after being imported from America. Zero tolerance policing fuelled a great debate about how policing strategies should evolve as part of the partnership approach to crime prevention.

Zero Tolerance Type Policing

‘Don’t tell us it can’t be done because some of you are doing it already. Don’t show zero imagination, help us have zero tolerance of crime.’

(Tony Blair 1998)
'The Prime Minister and I have made clear our support of the principle of zero tolerance and of making communities less tolerant of criminal behaviour.'

(Jack Straw 1999)

That there appears to be substantial political support for a zero tolerance style of policing can not be in doubt. Politicians of all persuasions appear to have climbed on board a political bandwagon in support of what appears to be a revolutionary approach to tackling crime. The current government has given its full support to the concept of zero tolerance policing and is committed to promoting it (Labour Party 1997). However, the precise origins of the term zero tolerance policing appears to be obscure. That said, it has become most famously associated with New York City and other parts of North America. It has also been used to describe certain policing initiatives in the UK, in particular in the Kings Cross area of London, Hartlepool, Middlesborough and Strathclyde. The particular strategy is rooted in the 'Broken Windows' theory developed by Wilson and Kelling (1982), based on a study of police foot patrols and community interaction in Newark, New Jersey. This theory developed an earlier idea by Zimbardo (1969) that made a connection between the neglect of an area and criminal activity that takes place over time. In essence, if a window is broken and remains unrepaired this will be taken as a sign of neglect and other windows will soon be broken. The air of neglect will start to develop as more vandalism occurs in an ever-widening circle. This has led to the theory being called the 'broken window' theory. It was argued that public toleration of routine, minor incivilities on the street such as drunkenness, window breaking, vandalism, aggressive begging, drunkenness, public urination, generated fear, encouraged a spiral of
community decline and ultimately increased the risks of more crime occurring. Fear of crime is greatest in these disorderly neighbourhoods, which prompt respectable citizens to leave, and this undermines the community’s ability to maintain order and decline follows. For that reason it was important for the police to arrest peddlers, drunks, vandals and others committing the so-called quality of life offences. The reasoning continues that as it is easier to prevent a neighbourhood sliding into crime at the beginning rather than trying to rescue it once the slide has taken hold, the theory demands that even the most minor misdemeanours must be pursued with the same vigour as more serious crimes to create a deterrent effect. As Palmer (1997) points out, it appears that incivilities such as these undermine communitarian bonds, lead to further disorder and a downward spiral into lawlessness occurs, creating communities of ‘no-go’ areas of criminality.

Perhaps the biggest influence in the implementation of zero tolerance type policing throughout the world is the model allegedly introduced by the chief of police in New York City, William Bratton.

*The New York City Model of Zero Tolerance Policing*

Crime is down in New York City; Blame the Police  
(Bratton 1998a)

Bratton’s claims for the introduction of his policies of policing in New York City are worthy of examination. During the period 1990 to 1996, the number of murders dropped from 2245 to 983 - a 56% decline. The sharpest fall was in the period 1994
to 1995, with falls of 20% and 24% respectively. During this period, it is claimed, the
general crime rate was reduced by 37%, whilst burglary had declined by a quarter
over a two-year period, with total robberies being reduced by 40%. (Crawford 1998).
It is small wonder, then, that such attention was directed to New York City.

Much of this apparent success has been attributed to more police officers on the
streets, a more aggressive approach to so-called squeegee merchants (individuals who
engage in windscreen washing at traffic lights), and tackling aggressive begging.
Consequently, the argument continues, New York City has turned from being the
crime capital of the world, to being lauded as one of the safest big cities in the world.
Much of the perceived success concentrates on the street level activity of the New
York police in being visible and apparently tackling quality of life issues. It is this
highly confrontational model employed by Bratton that has attracted such attention.

However, perhaps a more subtle approach introduced by Bratton, but rarely
highlighted, should be examined. Whilst it was true that an extra 7000 police officers
were also employed in New York City in 1990 and where the existing ratio of police
was already high, it seems that Bratton was also able dramatically to improve the low
morale that had existed in the force at this time. By doing so a sense of purpose and
self worth was re-established (Crawford 1998)

Prior to being the head of the New York Police Department, Bratton had been in
charge of the city’s underground transit police. It was here that he first experimented
with the ideas of Wilson and Kelling (Bratton1998b), and where he first introduced
the management techniques that are the driving force for the apparent success of the scheme.

The New York City scheme is the product of several organisational changes. The first is based on the introduction of eight specific crime control strategies to address drugs, guns, youth crime, auto theft, corruption, traffic, domestic violence and quality of life issues. Prior to the introduction of these specific documents, there had been little or no direction for local police commanders. The second innovation was the introduction of a system to measure the success of the crime control objectives called the COMPSTAT process (Comprehensive Computer Statistics). This has been described as a crime management tool that uses weekly crime statistics, computer mapping and intensive strategy sessions to direct the implementation of crime fighting strategies (Pearce and Harrison 1997). This entailed four basic premises, namely the availability of accurate timely intelligence data; the rapid response of resources; effective tactics; and relentless follow-ups. Silverman (1998) points out that the COMPSTAT system supports the various strategic approaches, of which zero tolerance is just one. The main measure of performance in New York, says Silverman, is the crime rate. If a precinct’s arrests, search warrants, parking tickets have increased and the crime rate is still up, local police commanders need to do something about it. Burke (1998) describes the process. Police commanders for each Borough have to give periodic briefings to the senior management of the NYPD. These take place weekly in the central command room of the department that is set out like a wartime operations centre. Whilst the crime statistics are displayed on screens behind the commander, and are selected by the management team, the commander is called to account for them. It is argued that there can be little doubt...
that these often brutal periodical interrogations by senior management have provided sufficient motivation to achieve success in fighting crime.

This process, it is argued, coupled with a restructuring of the Internal Affairs department, and more computer access for detectives from different Departments that encouraged cross fertilisation in cases, has resulted in creating an environment that has led to crime reduction.

However, the claims for zero tolerance policing in New York City are not without their critics. Crawford (1998) points out that crime fell in most big American cities, albeit less dramatically. The fall came about on the back of an incredibly steep rise in crime rates, particularly homicides in the late 1980s, together with the demise of the crack cocaine epidemic. It is this, it is argued, coupled with a general aging in the population that has resulted in fewer young men in their late teens, the group disproportionately likely to be involved in crime. The decline in gang violence related to drugs, whilst acknowledging it is part of a wider and more complex set of factors, is a vital point for Bowling (1996:11):

‘By the time Bratton took office and unleashed the cops, much of the drug war had already been won and lost and murder was on the decline.’

The problem of causality is obviously a major factor in alleging the success of any social experiment. In the New York City model, claims for the Broken Windows or zero tolerance style policing are open to different interpretations. However the major influence lies in the perceived increase in the number of police officers on the street,
coupled with aggressive policing aimed at quality of life offences. It is this aspect of the model that has influenced several police forces throughout the world, no more so than in Britain, and this aspect is discussed in full below.

*Zero Tolerance policing in Britain*

'Police saying they can't reduce crime is like footballers saying they can't score goals.'
(Mallon 1997a: 22)

'I think the police service has forgotten it can reduce crime.'
(Mallon 1997b: 16)

The spectacular fall in New York City's crime statistics is cited world-wide as evidence for zero tolerance tactics. The apparent success led the British police to reconsider their impact upon crime and disorder, as championed by the work of Detective Superintendent Mallon in the Cleveland Constabulary (Mallon 1997a; 1997b; Dennis and Mallon 1998; Romeanes 1998) and in other forces such as Strathclyde Police's Spotlight Initiative (Strathclyde Police 1996) and the Metropolitan Police's Welling Garden initiative (Griffiths 1997). As Johnston (2000) reminds us, the popular American image of zero tolerance policing as a robust enforcement led strategy directed against quality of life offences committed by young males in public places has been reinforced by politicians and the media in this country. This, coupled with the well-recorded cultural preference of the police for action and excitement (Holdaway 1984; Reiner 2000; Choong 1997), has meant that zero tolerance policing is regarded as a possible antidote to the problems of British
society, as well as satisfying the action-centred policing approach. Strathclyde’s approach claimed to be the first of its kind in Britain and based its zero tolerance policy on four major areas. These are addressing public concerns, exploiting a corporate approach, addressing serious crime through concentration on minor crime and maximum presence of uniform officers on the beat. However, in none of the British examples, is there any evidence of the COMPSTAT management and information approach that is so central to the New York City model (Neyroud 1998).

The enforcement-led approach is nowhere more visible than in the Cleveland example. Here Supt. Mallon declared in 1996 that if crime did not fall by 20% within 18 months he and his two detective inspectors would ask to be relieved of their duties. Within 3 months of the strategy being adopted in Middlesborough it was claimed that rates of recorded crime had fallen by 22% in anti-social behaviour by young people, house burglary and ‘quality of life’ crimes. In Mallon’s view the commission of minor offences predisposes offending at a young age, not by burgling but by:

‘Hanging round on street corners...[doing] anti social things...[then] he allows himself to be carried in a [stolen car]. Next time he steals the car himself. Then he does his first break-in.’

(Mallon 1997b: 16).

Consequently, the Cleveland Constabulary approach to zero tolerance has involved a blanket approach to such issues as stop and search, coupled with so-called intelligence-led policing. Because the focus is on burglary, anti social behaviour and quality of life offences the broader objectives of the programme are to reduce all recorded crime, to reduce fear of crime to increase police performance and to increase public confidence in, and support for, the police. Intelligence-led policing,
involving the use of informants, analysing intelligence and targeting criminals has much to commend it when it is controlled and supervised strictly (Wilson et al 2001; HMIC 1997). It certainly involves a high degree of ethical behaviour, what Alderson (1998) would call principled policing.

However, when it appears that this is not the case, the police are open to a number of allegations, including corruption. Thus it was. Following an allegation of misuse of informants involved in the zero tolerance-policing programmes, Supt Mallon and several other officers were suspended from duty. This in turn, led to severe criticism of the zero tolerance tactics employed in this initiative (Wainwright 2000).

Police corruption, however, is just one major concern of zero tolerance type policing. Enforcement-led policing in Britain has shown that this approach can be the spark for large-scale public disorder as witnessed in several inner cities during the early 1980s (Benyon 1984; Benyon and Solomos 1993; Waddington et al 1989; Della Porta et al 1998). Lack of consultation, heavy-handedness and the poor relationships between the police and many minority ethnic communities who felt marginalised, led to rioting in Brixton, Toxteth, Bristol and at the Broadwater Farm housing estate in Tottenham, London.

A separate and equally important problem as far as zero tolerance type policing in Britain and elsewhere is concerned, revolves around the issue of civil liberties. Wadham (1998) argues that the use of these types of initiatives are likely to target primarily those individuals who are more likely to be the marginalised section of communities. Given that the majority of zero tolerance initiatives in this country
appear to have an emphasis on street offences, and the so called quality of life offences, argues Wadham, the young and homeless will become prime targets for criminalisation. Similarly, street culture engaged in by certain groups, for instance Afro-Caribbean young men 'hanging out' on the street, the homeless and beggars literally living off the street, makes them a focal point and legitimate target for zero tolerance type policing.

Zero tolerance type policing in Britain, therefore, has been limited to a number of highly publicised initiatives that all claim some success. However, there are disadvantages to this style of policing, not least in the name itself. It induces apprehension in many individuals and conjures up a picture of unaccountable police activity. Criticisms such as these may be responsible for a change in the names used in the implementation of these types of initiatives. Certainly, Cleveland Constabulary have softened their media hype over their zero tolerance activities. As Johnston (2000) points out, there is now an official reluctance to use the term zero tolerance policing, substituting instead terms such as 'Here and Now Policing', 'Confident Policing', and 'Positive Policing'. The phrase has itself become something of a politician's media sound-bite, perhaps more attractive than the rather anodyne term 'Crime Prevention'. Further, as Griffiths (1998:126) reminds us:

'[Zero Tolerance]...is a somewhat dangerous shorthand for the police in this country to use. It could be that our own police officers would hear in the term a call to introduce intolerance in the discharge of their duties.'

It would appear that zero tolerance policing offers politicians and senior police officers the ability to engage the media in a positive manner. As Crawford (1998)
states, the term zero tolerance as a rhetorical device is sufficiently open-textured for use as a slogan by many groups and individuals. However, by holding out the belief that the police alone can solve the problem of crime, this may serve to undermine the notion that the police need the support and trust of the local public and other agencies. The rhetoric and emotion underlying zero tolerance is both confrontational and aggressive and poses problematic implications for civil liberties and the rights of certain marginalised groups of people. It trades on nostalgia, and in reality as a policing strategy, it is a misnomer. In fact, it does not entail the rigorous enforcement of all laws, which would be impossible let alone tolerable, but rather involves the highly discriminating enforcement against specific groups of people in certain locations.

Conclusion

As a response to an increasing crime rate in society the notion of pulling together various agencies directly and indirectly involved in the criminal justice system in this country certainly seems a sound one. With many reported successes and initiatives from around the country, which appear to support the concept, it has now developed into a statutory obligation as enshrined in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

This Act and the initial implementation of partnerships owe a great debt to the influence of the Morgan Report that placed so much emphasis on the idea that the problem of crime and disorder should not be a problem that the police should or could deal with in isolation. In doing so, however, the partnership approach must overcome many perceived ideas about how to deal with crime problems as well as tackling the
many internal and external difficulties inherent within different organisations that have as their basis for existence, differing aims and objectives.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on local delivery of this type of service, wrapped up in the easily accepted title of community safety, may have some influence on the issues of crime and disorder in particular areas. The irony is, however, that despite the emphasis on local delivery of service coupled with local consultation, the vehicles suggested for solving the crime and disorder problems are based on central Home Office or administrative criminology.

Situational crime prevention techniques tackle the environment of the potential crime scene, with little attention to the individual characteristics of the person who may commit crime. Its roots lie in the classical school of criminology, whereby an individual weighs up the choices available before committing crime. This theory is not new, and is seen in the field of economic decision making quite regularly. However, coupled with increased surveillance and crime prevention through environmental design, there is some basis for belief that good results can be obtained using these methods and this is now a standard approach for Safer Cities schemes throughout the country.

Coupled with situational crime prevention concepts, a distinct policing style appears to be emerging. The attempt to change policing philosophies from being reactive (that is waiting for a call, attending and returning to the station) to proactive (dealing with problems at source) dove-tails nicely with the partnership ideal. However, this is not without its problems, particularly in the field of information-sharing between
agencies. Further, this new philosophy flies in the face of traditional policing whereby the police regard themselves as experts in the field of law enforcement, advising amateurs and encounters great cultural resistance to change. More in line with the action-centred idea of policing is the so-called zero tolerance approach, which, if the concept is taken to its ultimate limit, involves the absolute enforcement of the law for any infraction, however trivial. This idea is, it is argued, unworkable in a democracy, where the police depend upon the consensus of the public to carry out their duties and where individual discretion of the Constable is the greatest weapon in fulfilling that role.

Overall, therefore, it appears that there is a danger of misunderstanding important concepts such as zero tolerance policing and partnership priorities as well as considerable power imbalances between parties, which have to be incorporated into the whole process. Critics also point to the limited inclusion in the partnership approach of the views of victims of crime and, indeed, in many cases the full involvement of the community.

Yet despite these shortcomings and problems, partnerships to reduce crime and disorder are flourishing throughout the country. The emphasis appears to lie in the 'quick hit' of the situational crime prevention approach, with perceived high levels of policing in a different style to tackle crime problems. This approach was the preferred strategy for the Merthyr Tydfil Crime Prevention Partnership, and is a major contribution in the discussion revolving around the particular inputs by the varying agencies in Chapter Four. However, how this research was carried out, and the
particular problems encountered and overcome, is discussed in depth in the following chapter.
3 Research Methods and Methodology

'Researching social life is partly about having the right knowledge; for instance, how to design samples, when to take field notes and how to analyse data; and partly about practical skills: how to lay out questionnaires, how to get access to historical archives and how to get the co-operation of an interviewee.'
Gilbert (1995: xi)

Gilbert (1995) highlights a very important point for any research of this nature; that is that good research appears to be a mixture of several research methodologies. Unfortunately, this diversity of approach and the results that are produced have not been at the forefront of policing in this country for some time. Research into the activities of the police in this country over the past decade or so has tended towards providing mainly managerial information in the never-ending pursuit of cost effectiveness. In part, this should come as no surprise, since the activities of the police are actively linked to Home Office National Key Objectives. Further, individual police forces are required to provide 'forcewide' objectives, which are those agreed with the local police authority, and local objectives, ostensibly formulated after consultation with the local community. In truth, however, these objectives are very similar and overlap one another to a great extent. However, one important aspect of policing today revolves around partnership policing and community safety.
Consequently, because of this preoccupation with managerial concepts, both internally and externally to a large extent, research into the police and other areas of the criminal justice system has lacked what Reiner (1992) believes to be a link to social theory and has lacked a diverse approach.

A matter of personal preference and style, taking account of practical possibilities and restrictions, available resources and the objectives of the research in many cases, dictates the choice of an approach to any research. This research into the concept of community safety and zero tolerance type policing would have been difficult to complete if it relied upon quantitative methods alone. Further, bearing in mind Gilbert’s (1995) words on what constitutes ‘good’ research, a number of methods of research were utilised, including fieldwork where possible, and postal questionnaire surveys providing primary sources of statistics as well as use of secondary data in the form of longitudinal crime statistics. Choosing this multi-approach course of action, however, meant that one of the main research instruments involved would be the researcher particularly in the fieldwork element of this research and this in itself would provide a challenge. The specific role of the researcher within the organisation involved in the research was to prove crucial to the evaluation of the initiative under study. The drive to remain neutral and not influence the outcome of the research findings was a difficult but necessary task. The specific area of covert observations provided the researcher with a number of ethical decisions which are discussed later, as are the methods used to try and remain detached.

The study was completed over a four year period. This period enabled the researcher to have prolonged participation in the daily lives and routines of the particular groups
under study, and assisted in developing empathy with the norms and behaviour of the people involved in the study. It also provided the researcher with the opportunity to become involved in social relationships with the subjects within the scope of the research as well as data for study.

Some fundamental problems arise in the area of criminological research. One of the main obstacles in any research involving people lies in the problem of gaining access to their particular way of life. This was overcome, firstly, by the location of the researcher in the police organisation and by the use of people who voluntarily offered information from the various agencies within the crime prevention partnership involved in the initiative. Further, the researchers experiences in the field over a considerable period of time led to the compilation of field notes on the subject.

The design for the research therefore consisted of several methodologically distinct approaches to evidence collection:

1. Covert participant observations of the interactions between police officers, other agencies such as the local authority and its crime prevention ‘arm’, the Safer Merthyr organisation, and the public;

2. A comparative ‘before-and-after’ study of the impact of the initiative using responses to a postal questionnaire survey designed to obtain data on individuals’ perceptions of levels of crime within the community. This also includes the initiative’s impact upon issues that make up perceptions of fear of crime, and the level of confidence displayed towards the local policing agencies.

3. Secondary statistical data derived from the various census surveys and other data obtained from such surveys conducted by the British Crime Survey, the South Wales
Police and other agencies operating within the research area, including records published by the erstwhile Welsh Office and the Local Authority.

Consideration was given to the use of more overt methods such as interviews with members of the public during the initiative, to gauge their response to the partnership approach to crime reduction. However, by engaging in such an activity, the researcher would have put himself into the public arena, and by doing so, would have openly shown those involved in delivering the initiative that they were being studied. This in turn may have had a dramatic effect upon the individual members of the partnership involved in the day to day delivery of the initiative, particularly the police, who it is alleged, are renowned for closing ranks when under scrutiny (Reiner.2000)

Before discussing these methods individually, it is necessary to discuss several important areas of the research involving the ethical considerations involved, access, privacy and informed consent.

**Ethical Considerations**

The area of covert participant observation as employed as part of this research provided some of the greatest ethical problems, and it is this area, and how these problems were overcome, that is explored in this section.

Several commentators have provided definitions of covert participant observation and in order to understand some of the criticisms levelled at this type of research, it may prove helpful to examine them.
Bulmer (1982:4) defines it as:

‘Research using participant observations methods, where the researcher spends an extended period of time in a particular research setting, concealing the fact that he/she is a researcher and pretending to play some other role.’

Lee (1995:143) simply puts it this way:

‘When research participants are not aware that they are being studied.’

In the case of researching this particular initiative, it did not take long for the realisation that the area of human interaction under study - the police, the community and partnership, and zero tolerance type policing - all presented their own unique problems. The first of these was access.

**Access**

One of the areas of concern was one of the main organisations under study, the police. The closed culture of the police has been highlighted by other writers (Bradley et al. 1986; Reiner 2000), whilst previous researchers have commented on the reaction to overt research by the police (Holdaway 1984). Indeed, as pointed out by Glover and Rushbrook (1987) many workers react in differing ways when they are aware they are under observation.

Holdaway (1984) believes that any effective research strategy in this area would have to pierce the protective shield of the police if it was to be successful. During his research into police malpractices for example, Punch (1985:216) soon found that:
‘People were lying to me, or spreading misinformation. I also glimpsed the ‘informal’ system of manipulation at work...Clearly my informants had been less than open and knew a great deal more than they were prepared to tell me.’

Having been a police officer for twenty eight years, this researcher knew from his own experiences how protective the culture of the police service could be when it sees itself under scrutiny. There does indeed exist a wide disparity between the public presentation of police work and, to use Goffman’s (1990) analogy, the backstage reality. It was this backstage reality that needed to be explored in conjunction with the way people are dealt with by the police, and the interactions that take place between the different agencies when delivering a partnership approach to community policing and so-called ‘zero tolerance’ style policing.

Reynolds (1982:185) seems to sum up the position of covert research quite succinctly. He says:

‘For some types of deviant or illegal behaviour it may be the only way to develop accurate descriptions that are not affected by deliberate distortions, biased recollections or outright denial.’

By conducting this type of research, therefore, it is hoped to avoid the problem of reactivity (Lee 1995). In essence, because individuals do not know they are being studied, research participants are not threatened by the research and do not change their behaviour even though to outside eyes it may be regarded as deviant. Indeed, covert research is often said to offer an inside view of those being studied. In order to
carry out part of the research, therefore, it seemed that the only way forward was to adopt a covert participant observer style.

Field research is about observing the world as a stranger (McNeil 1990). One has to make the world strange, to try and separate oneself from getting embroiled in the "happening", the event being observed. By doing so, the element of objectivity is maintained.

There is a danger that participant observers may become too close to their subject and risk "going native"(Punch 1985) and therefore not objective enough for research. It could be argued, however, that in many circumstances, covert research is impossible unless one is already a member of the organisation to be studied. To a certain extent, as Punch (1985) points out, single person research often entails easy access, low intrusiveness in the area to be studied and a high capacity for personalised relationships (Hammersley, 1993).

However, any organisation that is part of, and represents the power structure in a society, is reluctant to let people see exactly what occurs during its interactions with society (Holdaway 1984). Despite Reiner's (1994) belief that the police and academics have come closer together over the years, gaining access to the subject under research from the police perspective may have proved difficult (if not impossible) owing to the 'natural' suspiciousness of the police to being studied. Defensive as police are to criticism, the research could be viewed as another attempt to discredit the police or even provide false good results to please political masters, by 'another sociologist' or a "do gooder", even though this researcher is a member of the
police service. This highlights another problem. It is possible in research of this nature to suffer censure of notes and findings; to have certain conditions attached to their use; or conceivably have influence brought to bear in an effort to include certain items. This position, of course, would have been intolerable for the successful completion of this research.

Access to this research arena, then, could be fraught with problems. It was a conscious decision, therefore, to conduct the studies as covertly as possible.

*Privacy*

Privacy is related to personal freedom in the sense that certain aspects of the self are seen as inviolable or subject to discussion only under the most restricted conditions. Warwick (1982) when discussing Humphreys' (1975) 'Tea Room Trade' raises the question of how far the social scientist can intrude into the inner reaches of the self without jeopardising freedom. Here Warwick concludes that Humphreys intruded much too far into the lives of the men he observed and studied, as they indulged in homosexual activities in public toilets.

However, whilst the argument that all individuals have the right to privacy is strong, perhaps it should be qualified when applied to the police (Holdaway 1980). The police are said to be accountable to the rule of law, a constitutional feature which restricts their right to privacy, but which they neutralise by the maintenance of a protective occupational culture. When such an institution is highly secretive and protective, its members, it could be argued, restrict any right to privacy they already have. It is crucial they are researched, and the covert researcher of the police has to
be reminded he/she is working within an extremely powerful organisation which requires that its public and private practice be revealed on the basis of first hand observation.

In this research, the researcher found it necessary to remind himself of the invasion, to some extent, of people's privacy.

From discussions conducted with individuals in this research, it was discovered that by far the majority was in favour of being spoken to, although some stipulated the guarantee of anonymity. Some even indicated that they did not care if they were identified, although they were always treated with the same careful anonymity as everyone else.

This approach was commenced immediately the researcher became aware of the role he was due to play in the initiative. The preliminary meetings about the proposed initiative took place in November 1997, and as the role of the researcher was that of Performance Review officer for the police division, and responsible for monitoring the performance of the division in relation to performance targets, it was considered imperative that this role be represented at all meetings. Therefore, this researcher was present at the initial fortnightly, then weekly steering group meetings, as well as at the public meetings set up before the initiative. Further, the individuals who were responsible for the delivery of the initiative, both police and other agency staff, used the researcher as a focal point for gathering information and statistics during the initiative. Further, as the researcher had worked closely with the police officers involved in the initiative over a long period of time, they showed no reluctance in providing their views and other information. Consequently, this meant that the
researcher was continually at the centre of the administration of the initiative which provided a wealth of information from all the participants. This situation continued until after the conclusion of the initiative in April 1999, when the researcher undertook different police duties.

This information, along with field notes, was jealously guarded under lock and key. In conclusion, it was still felt that the covert participation method was one of the primary ways of seeing the interaction between individuals, agencies and community in their natural settings, and the police reaction to it, as of vital importance for the research.

_Informed Consent_

In covert participation observation the subjects of research have no opportunity to give their informed consent to being studied. Voluntary informed consent is an ongoing, two way communication process between subjects and the investigator, as well as a specific agreement about the conditions of the research participation (Sieber 1992:26). Lee (1995) therefore asserts that covert research violates important ethical principles. In particular they negate the principle of informed consent, since research participants in covert studies cannot refuse their involvement. If this position is accepted, then informed consent is, practically speaking, unworkable as some sort of observational research. Punch (1985) states that if subjects are aware that they are being investigated this would prevent covert research. If strictly applied, there is the danger that such a belief would abolish a great deal of participant observation research, while, ironically, serving to protect the powerful.
Reynolds (1982) believes that informed consent is but one procedure for demonstrating respects for the rights and welfare of participants. Other procedures may be used to demonstrate these. For example, anonymity, full disclosure following research or treatment with respect. A full and formal informed consent may, in fact, provide only a marginal contribution to protecting the rights of the participants.

One suggested answer to the ethical problems presented by covert research is that of the development of a code of ethics. Reynolds (1982) suggests that what is needed is to encourage the development of principles and standards to guide the implementation of covert participant observation, i.e. the establishment of a code of ethics. Such a focus, of course, reflects the hope that there are universal yet specific moral and ethical principals that will serve as a satisfactory guide for all time.

However, it is debatable whether a code of ethics would be suitable for this type of research. It could severely restrict access and as such would have a major impact on the type and amount of research material that could be used. As Punch (1985) points out,

‘If I employed BSA and ASA codes of ethics in fieldwork, it would have destroyed my research.’

(Punch 1985:219)

Rather than using a fixed code of ethics, Punch suggests that the researcher should make use of 'situation ethics' of the field, in which the researcher is obliged to act responsibly and make up his/her own mind in the light of professional codes of ethics and the specific circumstances in which he/she is faced. Therefore, a professional
code of ethics is beneficial as a guideline that alerts researchers to the ethical dimensions of their work, particularly prior to entry into the research arena. Again, it has to be stated that this is the stance undertaken with this research. Several times the research method prompted ethical decisions about whether or not to record actual events that could possibly harm individuals and on other occasions lead to their identification. These decisions, whilst resolved at the time, still cause the researcher to reflect upon them.

The question of validity

Flexibility in relation to the theoretical and substantive problems encountered in field research appears to be the hallmark of a researcher. However, as Burgess (1993) points out, this may lead to the research work being branded as subjective, biased and impressionistic. The question of validity is one that often confronts the field researcher. As Webb (1966:172) puts it, 'If reliability is the initial step of science, validity is its necessary stride.'

One solution to this problem and encouraged throughout this research, is that of a multiple approach to field strategies or, to use the term found in most literature on the subject, "triangulation." (Burgess 1993). Triangulation in this sense refers to the use of a number of different data sources and to a number of different accounts of events. As such, details of how various interpretations of 'what happens' are assembled from different physical, temporal and spatial situations. To overcome the problem of validity it was resolved to use a multiple approach to the research, by combining several methods in order to validate the findings. Burgess (1993) refers to this type of
triangulation as "methodological triangulation". This involves 'within method', or the same method used on different occasions and 'between methods' when different methods are used in relation to the same object of sampling for triangulation purposes. Burgess (1993) discusses the problem of researchers conducting work objectively within their own society and asks the question: how far can sociologists understand their own society? Objectivity assumes the independence of the knower and the known. An important goal of method is to limit whenever possible the effects of the researcher bias where bias is defined to be a deviation from some empirical truth or fact (Hammersley 1993).

**Objectivity**

In the area of police work, objectivity can be a particular problem. As Punch (1985), in his study of police activity in Amsterdam suggests, one of the main problems with being a covert participant observer is that of the danger of 'going native'. This was a major area of concern for this research, with the researcher's background in the police service. To assist in this area it was decided to attempt something slightly different: something that was outside the normal way of doing things, that would constantly be a reminder to be objective in the research and observations. Several sticky-back notices were placed in various places where only the researcher could see them. Inside the door of the personal locker, which had strictly limited access and opened at least twice a day, inside the top drawer of the desk which was locked during absence and constantly in use when at work, and inside the cover of the notebook used for recording notes taken in the field, were placed the words:

"THINK LIKE AN ALIEN"
These notes greatly assisted in maintaining objectivity and were a reminder to observe the world not only as a police officer, but also as a person determined not to 'go native' and jeopardise the research. It was found that after a short time, at every incident or meeting concerned with this research, these words were recalled and enabled the matters under consideration to be scrutinised far more objectively than would otherwise have been the case.

With regard to the compilation of field notes, there are several accounts of researchers' hastily made excuses to visit the toilet and other secret hideouts in order to scribble coded messages, which they later rewrote fully into their journals (Hobbs 1992; Fielding 1995; Holdaway 1984). Here it was felt that the location and access of the researcher was a great advantage. The bureaucratic nature of the police service is such that to see a police officer not writing when in the police station, or at the scene of an incident, is rare. The police service operates under a system of highly visible and centralised authority, with each rank member looking to a number of ranks above him/her to whom work must be referred. The amount of time and effort spent attending to regulations and procedures, and therefore the paperwork, increases. The Constable is instructed to commit to writing an account of a large number of his/her encounters, and Sergeants and Inspectors are overwhelmed with the resultant paperwork. Indeed, it seems that the paperwork involved inside the police service often draws comment from both inside and outside the job (Bradley et al 1986).

To this end, the researcher was constantly scribbling away in a small book chosen to look similar to the regulation police pocket book. This drew no comment from
In relation to the choice of carrying out part of this study by means of fieldwork, Rose (1991:129) sums up the reasons for adopting this method of research. The major successes of this approach often lie in the fact that it concentrates on research involving social organisations and on looser-knit social groups, where the focus of the enquiry is the 'here and now' of group dynamics, the ideology or world view of the group or a specific process or experience.

Evaluation research

This research emanated from a decision to change a policing style and by doing so, it was hoped, reduce reported crime and the fear of crime in a given locality. That decision was made by the Merthyr Tydfil Crime Prevention partnership, who believed that by adopting a so-called zero tolerance approach and changing established policing practice and policy, success would be guaranteed. Further, because of the location of the researcher inside the police organisation, the evaluation of this change of policy became one of the prime functions. This type of research is referred to as evaluation research and because of its foundation for this work, is worthy of closer discussion.

Evaluation research is the form of policy research devoted to assessing the consequences (intended or unintended) of either a set of existing policies or a new programme. It has particular focus on the measurement of the extent to which stated
goals and objectives of policies and programmes are being or have been met. A more formal definition is provided by Rossi et al (1999:4):

‘Program evaluation is the use of social research procedures to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs. More specifically, evaluation researchers use social research methods to study, appraise and help improve social programs in all their important aspects, including the diagnosis of the social problems they address, their conceptualisation and design, their implementation and administration, their outcomes and their efficiency.’

The distinctive features of evaluation research lie in the fact that it is a broad body of research findings focused on testing and measuring ‘what works?’ in terms of the outputs and outcomes of initiatives, and programmes of intervention and policy innovation in criminal justice and crime control. This type of research in the criminal justice arena has been the catalyst for the publication of important and influential works both in the UK and in the USA (Home Office 1998; Sherman 1998), concentrating on the areas of offending and crime reduction. These publications attempt to provide an answer to the question of ‘what works?’ and provides examples of where apparent policy intervention causes reductions in reported crime and hence an improvement in the quality of life for members of the communities in question. However, there are areas of concern with this type of research. For example, most evaluative research is sponsored by the bodies who themselves are responsible for the particular programme or innovation. It is often in-house in character and is generally based on short-term funding. Such was the origins of this research. The Merthyr Tydfil crime prevention panel, through its Chairperson, the local divisional police
commander, decided that the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative would be the subject of evaluation by the local performance review Police Inspector.

However, much evaluation research has been criticised by criminologists for being compromised by its dependency on the sponsorship of the very agencies whose work it is asked to evaluate (Hughes 2001). Stakeholders include policy makers, agencies etc but it is patently obvious that it is impossible to satisfy everyone. For example, an evaluation showing that community policing does not reduce crime in a particular area might delight traditional law enforcement supporters and anger police reformers. Even when an evaluation is conducted in-house by an agency with its own activities, various stakeholders within the agency might appraise the report differently.

That said, independent academic evaluation research is not flawed per se and should not be considered insignificant to both criminology and the policy process. What evaluations can offer, it is argued, is a way of establishing over a period of time what works in producing varying outcomes, at least for a while, for whom and in what particular circumstances (Tilley 2000).

The worst aspects of evaluation research are that of being short termed in character, poorly funded, and often undertaken by poorly trained employers of one of the agencies concerned in the programme. The lack of adequate and proper evaluations in criminal justice and crime reduction is widely recognised and remarked on by academic commentators. Tilley (2001) believes that evaluation studies need to be realistic if they are to be informative, with such studies requiring theoretical sensitivity as well as technical skills. Most commissioners of evaluation research
require the facts, but it is acknowledged that facts do not speak for themselves in research and they are often contested. However, the attractions of evaluation research to both public and policy makers lie in its concern with discovering just what works and what doesn’t in specific contexts and processes. It is difficult to argue with efforts to reduce crime in the most efficient, effective and economical fashion which evaluation research attempts to establish. Indeed, all those involved professionally in criminal justice circles would probably want to know if the work they are engaged in is actually having an impact. An added impetus to the continuance of evaluation research lies in the broader context of a managerialised audit culture within the criminal justice system, with its emphasis on monitoring measurable outputs. Given this background it is unlikely that evaluation audits will decrease in scope and size.

Evaluation research should capitalise on existing theory and empirical generalisations from the social sciences, and advances in local social policy would be irrelevant without the interest and support of policy makers. Indeed, other interested parties, including the Home Office in this instance, who believe that social programmes should be accountable and that evaluation research can provide empirical evidence about programme accountability, are equally supportive. Without interest in and funding from organisations and agencies that have a stake in it, evaluation research would soon lose its importance.

Essentially, therefore, evaluation research differs from the social sciences more broadly in its goals and audiences. Rather than having the policy community as its most direct and important audience, social science research generally has social scientists as its most direct and important audience.
Rossi et al (1999) point out, in defence of this type of activity, that much greater care may need to be taken in the conduct of evaluation research on many occasions than in the conduct of its academic cousin, basic research. He bases this argument upon the fact that critical stakeholders will welcome slipshod procedures that render evaluation reports vulnerable, whilst alleged methodological errors are easy targets, even when they could not materially affect the evaluation.

The perceived methodological problems of evaluation research are highlighted by Pawson and Tilley (2000) when discussing Bennett’s (1991) evaluation of a police patrol initiative. This work was chosen for examination by Pawson and Tilley because in their view it represents the best of the experimental tradition (Pawson and Tilley 2000:54). Bennett’s work involved the evaluation of two experimental areas in Southwark, London and in South Birmingham. These were estates comprising about 2000 households and were expected to be characterised by high levels of fear of crime on the basis of high and comparable existing victimisation rates and on the basis of site visits which revealed similar visual indications of disorder such as graffiti, broken windows, criminal damage and amount of litter. The primary aim of the exercise was to determine if the programme reduced fear of crime whilst the secondary consideration revolved around measuring any effect upon the general quality of life in the community. The results of this programme included an increase in the number of residents in both areas who noticed the police, no positive net changes in the fear of victimisation, whilst satisfaction and contact with the police improved substantially in both experimental areas. (Bennett 1991:6-11)

Pawson and Tilley conclude that too much emphasis on the measurement of quantifiable outcome measures can lead to a programme being perceived by those
responsible for its implementation as nothing more than a loose collection of mechanical procedures. The danger is that the evaluator can fail to grasp the social context that produces these results. For example, what is it about the nature of the increased frequency of contact between the police and the public that brings about an improved sense of community? Secondly, a particular crime reduction programme may be successful because of the prevailing conditions within a given community or area. For Pawson and Tilley, Bennett’s evaluation missed out on a range of causal agents, the lack of which rendered the research findings arbitrary and inconsistent. Pawson and Tilley argue that communities differ from one another in a myriad of ways, for example in terms of social structure, demographic profile, ethnic composition and cultural background. A suggested solution lies in an approach where due consideration is given to both the mechanisms through which it is felt the desired programme outcomes will be achieved and to the contextual factors considered most likely to produce programme success. Clearly, there is considerable scope for the use of social research techniques in evaluating policy and practice at various points in the criminal justice system in general and in evaluating crime reduction and fear of crime initiatives in particular. In conclusion, therefore, it is important to note that both crime and crime control are not closed systems and are subject to internal and external sources of change, which can undermine the predictability of future effectiveness on the basis of past performances. While it is fair to say, perhaps, that policy makers and practitioners in criminal justice need to err on the side of caution in just what evaluation research can offer, it must be remembered that, however objective, academic evaluations cannot provide the sole basis for deciding on policy and practice.
The Dowlais Pilot study

Prior to the implementation of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative, a smaller pilot initiative had been undertaken in an area situated to the north of Merthyr Tydfil known as Dowlais. The area was chosen specifically by the Safer Merthyr agency due to the fact that it had a high level of recorded crime. The area can be broadly separated into two distinct areas. The first, Old Dowlais comprised mainly old terraced houses built during the last century for housing workers in the coal and steel industries flourishing at the time. This part of the community is, in the main, established with generations of families residing in the same houses or nearby. Most of the people who live in this area are owner/occupiers of the houses. The second part of the area is known as Dowlais Flats. As the name suggests this comprises three large blocks of council owned property, which had undergone recent major external renovation. The flats were occupied on a rental basis and are an example of the type of public housing erected during the 1960s and 1970s.

The pilot project consisted of the appointment of two regular police officers to oversee the initiative, coupled with the use of special constables when required. It was at this time that the phrase 'zero tolerance policing' became prominent. This was a phrase provided to the media by the local Safer Merthyr agency to try to explain what the initiative would be like. There is no doubt that the phrase was intended as a media sound bite to try to simply explain what is, after all, a complex process. This, coupled with the high profile of the term and the then media focus on the police practices in New York City, gave the pilot scheme added newsworthiness. The media were also provided with other information about the scheme and several meetings
were held with the community to outline the initiative. Consequently the initial three-month pilot was undertaken attempting to target vandalism and perceived youth disorder, whilst also addressing recorded crime in the area. During the course of this initiative no thought had been given to the evaluation of the scheme in a scientific manner, the measurement of success being that of recorded crime in the time of the initiative compared to the same spatial period of the previous year. The early results showed that there had been an overall decrease in recorded crime of 6%. However, this translates to a total reduction in crime of 7 recordable offences. Claims that theft from vehicles had declined by 44% seemed impressive but actually relate to a numerical figure of a reduction of 8 recordable offences! Whilst the reduction in any crime figures is welcome it could be argued that there is insufficient significance in these figures to warrant claims of a major success in dealing with reported crime.

Further, no attempt to contextualise these results was undertaken. The wider context of what was actually being achieved in Dowlais at the time was not considered a major concern. For example, newer and better housing was being built in Dowlais by a local housing association in conjunction with the local authority. This meant that the Dowlais flats were slowly being emptied and that those that were being occupied were done so on the basis that they were being used as transit accommodation until the newer houses became available.

Despite the claims that there would be higher police visibility and activity, no attempt was made to capture this information, nor was the measurement of reduction of fear of crime addressed. Therefore, on the basis of this pilot, which contained many methodological mistakes and lack of empirical research, a decision was made to
expand the programme throughout the local authority, commencing with the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area.

**Use of Official Statistics**

One of the main sources of data concerning the particular area in which this research took place came from the various official statistics, mainly published by central Government. These included such documents as the 1991 Census returns, Social Trends publications, various Home Office publications, and other documents, which had been published by the erstwhile Welsh Office. They contain demographic data referring particularly to the socio-economic background of the area under investigation.

The sheer volume of material that is collected on a routine basis by the government and its agencies provides a rich resource for the social researcher to analyse. However, there is a temptation to use such databases without due consideration to their weaknesses, as well as strengths. Official statistics, for example, often employ unexamined assumptions about social life which researchers, if not cautious, can inherit and reproduce in their studies. They are not social facts but social and political constructions, which may be based upon the interests of those who commissioned the research in the first place. Before using such statistics, the researcher therefore needs to understand how they were constructed. A large part of this research utilises the recorded crimes in the particular geographical area subject to the implementation of zero tolerance type policing. Therefore, it seems only right to discuss the construction of crime figures.
Williams (1994) reveals that the statistics collected by the police are a poor indication of the full extent of criminal activity in the United Kingdom. There are a number of reasons for this. Although the police detect some crimes for themselves, such as drug-related offences and public order offences, the majority of offences come to light because the victim(s) report them. Furthermore some crimes may never come to light. The police may not record all the activities, which are reported to them, or may not record them as crimes e.g. they may be recorded as lost goods instead of being stolen. During the course of this particular research, the Home Office guidelines in relation to the recording of offences changed, requiring the police to record all crimes with different injured parties as separate crimes, thus notionally increasing the number of criminal offences occurring within certain categories of crimes such as theft of and from vehicles and assaults. For the purpose of this research therefore, a dual system of recorded crimes had to be maintained by the researcher in order to compare recorded crimes in the geographical location over a long period of time.

Also there are many crimes that are not controlled by the police but which fall under the auspices of some other authority such as Customs and Excise. It could be argued, therefore, that official statistics are a better reflection of society's attitude towards crime and criminals rather than an objective measure of criminal behaviour.

A salient feature of this raw material and the use made of it is the predominance of numbers as a descriptive medium. In political and media debates trends in aggregate crime figures are often put forward as evidence of failures or successes in criminal justice policy, or are treated as a sort of social barometer, supposedly indicative of declining standards of parenting or schooling for example.
Arguments for an initiative in response to a particular form of crime or activity such as 'youth annoyance' are unlikely to cut any ice without a convincing numerical representation of the scale of the problem. Therefore, not only can they be highly misleading if used incorrectly, but if presented in a mechanical fashion without any deeper comprehension of their relationship to the reality they purport to represent, they can grossly distort the social meaning of events as understood by those experiencing or witnessing them. However, if their limitations are fully recognised crime related statistics could offer an invaluable aid to understanding and explanation.

Due to the location of this researcher within one of the major organisations involved in the particular partnership initiative, access to the official statistics used to record any effects the inputs had were easily accessed. Indeed the researcher was the primary person responsible for the collection of recorded data and their dissemination to partnership leaders. The primary source of statistics used to measure the possible effects of the initiative was as follows:

a) Recorded crime statistics for the area concerned
b) The number of situational crime prevention fittings such as 'homesafe' fittings carried out
c) The number of neighbourhood watch schemes established;
d) The number of positive media articles published by the local press following partnership press releases
e) Demographic information provided by census returns.
In order to address the area of causality, particularly in the area of crime statistics, a comparison was made with a control site from within the same police division. This site was chosen as it roughly equates with the site under investigation and was an area that had not received any significant change in policing before or during the period of this initiative. Also, the location of the control site was some distance from the initiative area. In order to address the question of possible displacement, shifting of crime or a diffusion of benefits from the initiative area to surrounding areas a statistical analysis of recorded crime in these areas was undertaken.

All of these sources, whilst readily available, have their strengths and weaknesses, and there is a temptation to use such databases without consideration to this fact... Much of the success claimed for this partnership scheme revolved around the reduction of recorded crime over the 12 monthly period of the initiative. In view of this, therefore, it seems appropriate to discuss how these statistics were compiled.

**Crime Statistics**

Crime statistics provide policy-makers with an indication of the types of crime being committed and the extent to which crime is increasing or decreasing according to the implementation and impact of criminal justice policies. Reports of new crime waves contribute to a fear of crime which may alter the habits of society's vulnerable groups: for example elderly people locking their doors, not going out at night and avoiding certain areas. However, how can we be sure these statistics provide an accurate picture of the extent and nature of crime? As Kidder (1991) states, to have confidence in official crime statistics they must fulfil the criteria of validity and reliability.
In terms of validity and reliability, therefore, a similar incident or act of breaking the law must be categorised in the same way by those responsible for compiling crime statistics. There should be little room for the discretion of personnel in recording such information and what discretion there is should be exercised in exactly the same way to produce the same clarification. Further, statistics must be mutually exclusive so that two different occurrences cannot be categorised in the same way. If two different incidents can be categorised in the same way, then the statistics cannot be reliable, that is accurate and repeatable.

A major problem encountered during the course of this research lay in the fact that approximately four months into the period under study, new Home Office rules for the recording of crime statistics came into being. This meant that the categorisation of crimes formally recorded by the police changed, with old classifications being altered. For example the recorded category of Domestic Burglary no longer included outhouses attached to homes; rules for recording numerous incidents as a continuing offence were amended. A continuing offence meant incidents of reported crime where an officer believed the series of offences occurred at the same time or in the same location, or with the same person responsible. Thus, if a row of ten parked and unattended motor vehicles suffered criminal damage overnight, only one crime number would be allocated and given to each separate vehicle owner. Under the new rules the maxim 'one injured party – one crime number' came into use. To use the previous example, therefore, ten separate consecutive crime numbers would be allocated to each of the ten vehicle owners. This of course had the potential for having a tremendous effect upon the number of crimes recorded by the police, and
seriously affects any research using these figures. In order to overcome this, arrangements were made with the local Crime Management unit covering the area of the initiative to double record reported crime. Thus when a person reported a crime, it was recorded under the new rules and checked to see if the category of crime was one affected by the changes. It was then entered onto a separate database still operating under the old counting rules system using the previous category that it would have been allocated. It was therefore possible to use the database constructed for recording new crimes under the old counting system for comparative research purposes. The researcher had to ensure the accuracy of the information and any mistakes were rectified and results checked within these data.

Notwithstanding the practical difficulties encountered within this research, the use of such data still draws criticism as it is still possible to lie or distort with statistics (Huff 1981) due to their susceptibility to manipulation. It must be acknowledged that official statistics, and crime statistics in particular, do not simply exist independently of the actions of those who compile them.

However, Bulmer (1984) notes that while official statistics are problematic, they are still useful for research purposes. It is argued that official statistics produce interesting findings on society, which despite their shortcoming, have been used by many researchers. Further, Bulmer (1984:140) notes the considerable lengths researchers go to reduce error:

‘British data derived from birth and death registration, for instance, is probably among the highest quality data currently available.’
Whilst this assertion may be open to challenge it illustrates the point that official statistics, including criminal statistics, have a valid place in research. Criminal statistics, therefore, do not simply reflect the number and type of incidents of crime committed. From the decision to report a crime, through the police decision to pursue an investigation, to the court's decision to sanction an offender – if they are caught - a number of different practices lead to a variable outcome. However, whilst official statistics on crime should be treated with considerable caution, they can provide the researcher with a valuable indication of certain events occurring within society.

The Questionnaire Survey

To assist in establishing what effect, if any, the introduction of zero tolerance type policing and other partnership inputs achieved upon the fear of crime and the community perceptions of the police and crime and disorder within the area under study, a before and after questionnaire survey was conducted. Before and after survey designs (McNeil 1990) have been developed in an effort to overcome the disadvantage of not being able to determine true cause and effect. However, it cannot be legitimately argued that all the before and after differences are attributable to the experimental variable that is being investigated until it can be ascertained that without it, such changes would not have occurred or would have been smaller or different. It is always possible that some changes in the expected direction may take place even without the impact of the experimental variable.
Several other research methods were considered as an alternative to gather information about the initiative, particularly with regard to individuals’ fear of crime. The approach involving semi-structured interviews with individuals from within the research area initially proved an attractive proposition. By using this technique the interviewer can clarify questions and the presence of the interviewer can encourage participation and involvement. However, the interviewer would need to be extremely skilled in this type of research, needing to establish what material collected would be irrelevant to the research. In depth interviews are difficult to record without using a tape recorder and usage of such a machine brings with it different sorts of problems including inhibition and ethical considerations. Interpretation of the data collected could also be considered a difficult task and subject to subjectivity on the part of the researcher, whilst respondents may feel that their answers are not anonymous and are less forthcoming or open.

Consideration (albeit brief) was also given to conducting a street survey inside the geographic location of the initiative. This would mean the researcher locating her/himself in a known location such as a shopping area in an attempt to interview individuals at random to seek their views. This process is often used in market research to determine individual’s views on certain products and services. The immediate problem for this researcher was how to inform the respondent of the basis for the research whilst not making them aware that it was being carried out by a police officer, which may or may not have influenced their opinions particularly about questions relating to levels of police visibility. It was considered that it would have been unethical and dishonest to lie about one’s interest in the research and professional background. Further, there were practical considerations regarding this
type of research that quickly assisted in reaching the conclusion that this form of research was not a viable option on this occasion. These included the fact that it is difficult to engage individuals in the type of stop and question session that would have been required. The process would have been extremely time-consuming, and perhaps even more important, there was no way to ensure that samples were representative of the population in general. It would also have been virtually impossible to check the reliability of answers obtained by revisiting individuals one had met in the street and whose identity was not known or could not have been established. Ultimately, having considered several options it was decided that the way to obtain the information required in this research was by way of postal questionnaire survey.

However, there are also problems associated with the questionnaire type survey. If people are aware that they are participating in a survey or an experiment, they may become more alert or aware, and may develop expectations about the outcome. Further, with all the extra attention they are receiving they may try to respond ‘extra well’ (the so-called Hawthorne effect) (McNeill 1990). As Oppenheim (1996) points out, all too often, surveys are carried out on the basis of insufficient design and planning, or on the basis of no design at all. During this research it was realised quite early in the initial phases of the initiative that the instrument that was to be used would need careful planning and testing if meaningful results were to be obtained. Williams (1994:71), whilst pointing out the usefulness of surveys in criminological research, highlights some of the major deficiencies of this research method. These include:
i. Respondents may be mistaken about crimes, particularly less serious ones, which gives undue weight to serious crimes and reduces the usefulness of the survey as an indicator of the real level of criminality;

ii. Respondents may be mistaken about when the incident occurred. They may be therefore including incidents, which occurred before or after the relevant dates or may exclude items, which occurred within them;

iii. Respondents may remember an incident but not wish to reveal it to the survey e.g. a sexual offence, which the respondent found embarrassing;

iv. Respondents may not fully understand the question, or may not consider that an incident falls within the terms of the question;

v. Better educated respondents are more likely to recall relevant events and this may give the survey a respondent bias.

As can be seen a survey of this type runs the risk of having certain inevitable inaccuracies, which are beyond the control of the researcher. On balance, it is argued, the inaccuracies are thought to undercount offences rather than over count them (Skogan 1986). However, the advantages of running this questionnaire survey lie in the fact that in general it was cost effective to run, with administration costs revolving around postage and photocopying. When dealing with sensitive or confidential information anonymity of self completion questionnaires can be an advantage. It must of course be reinforced to the respondent that the questionnaire is anonymous, and this was clearly stated on the instrument. Consequently, by adopting the approach of complete confidentiality, it meant that follow up letters reminding individuals to return uncompleted questionnaires could not be adopted.

The Questionnaire

It was acknowledged that questionnaires do not emerge fully-fledged. They have to be created, adapted, fashioned and developed to maturity after many abortive test
runs. In fact, every aspect of a survey has to be tried out beforehand to make sure that it works as intended, as each survey presents its own problems and difficulties and expert advice or spurious orthodoxy are no substitutes for a well thought out approach involving organised pilot work. As Hibbert and Bennett (1990) rightly point out, producing a questionnaire, if it is done properly, is complicated, as there are many factors to consider. A good questionnaire should be able to be understood by the respondent in the way it was intended by the researcher. In other words, the question must state clearly what it means, and not confuse the respondent in any way. Secondly, the respondent must be told clearly what to do, which questions to answer, which to miss out, how to answer them and so on. Misleading instructions can be as bad as misleading questions. Finally, the questionnaire must show consideration for the respondent. Ultimately, the respondent is actually providing time to complete and return the questionnaire. In recognition of this the instrument should be made as clear and as easy to complete as possible. Consequently it is important to ensure that the questionnaire, as a goal-centred instrument, which enables the collection of information needed for analysing a specific research question, should arise from the problem definition. In this instance, the main research question revolved around the concept of fear of crime and this in itself poses many concerns and problems.

**Measuring fear of crime**

Whilst any social study presents particular problems and difficulties, a study involving the concept of ‘fear of crime’ presents additional complexities. The idea that contextual variables might explain individuals’ behaviour grew out of the social control perspective formulated in the 1920s by the Chicago school sociologists (Lewis and Salem 1986). This approach, whilst a general social theory and at the same time
a theory of social problems, concentrates on the impact of social disorganisation through incivility and disorder within the community. Consequently, 'Fear of Crime' is a generic term used to describe fear of incivility, those offences defined by law as criminal, and any other type of behaviour deemed deviant. It is this point that presents a major problem in designing a survey to measure this concept. The term itself, in the British context at least, is a label given to anxieties and worries about becoming a victim of crime (Home Office 1995).

The prospect of becoming a victim of crime probably prompts enduring fear in only a small proportion of the population; on the other hand, anxiety about being burgled, raped or robbed for example, is both commonplace and destructive in its consequences. Whilst Garofalo (1981) argues that fear should be used to refer to only the emotional response of fearfulness which accompanies the anticipation of physical harm, such pleas have been ignored and fear is now routinely used as an all-encompassing shorthand to refer to anxieties about crime. A further confusion lies in equating perceptions of the risk of crime with the fear of crime. Questions about perceived risks are obviously relevant to the explanation of fear but can hardly claim to measure either peoples fearfulness in specific situations or their anxiety about unwanted events. There is a correlation between perceptions of risks and anxiety and it is possible not only that perceptions of risk fuel worry, but also that worry may amplify perceived risks. However, worry and perceptions of risk are conceptually distinct.

The problem of measurement and causality is compounded when one considers the influence the media may play in helping to shape the perception of fear of crime
within individuals. Williams and Dickinson (1993) conclude that the reporting of crime by the British daily press, whilst varying enormously, has an influence upon individuals. Those papers that reported most crime (particularly crimes involving personal violence and in the most visual and stylistically fashion) were found to have readers who have the highest fear of crime levels. However, the causal link between fear of crime and newspaper readership is not clear and, of course, newspapers only represent one source of information people receive about crime. However, it is important to recognise that external factors can have a substantial impact upon survey results.

A separate area of concern when designing fear of crime surveys is to distinguish fear of crime from disinterested concern about crime. People can regard crime as a very serious social issue without themselves having any concern about becoming a crime victim. In practice one would expect a high degree of correlation between self-interested anxiety and concern for the state of the country.

Surveys are undeniably blunt instruments for assessing people's anxieties about crime. Worry can range from mild fretting to stomach churning anxiety. Inevitably people use different language to describe similar levels of worry, and the same terms to refer to very different levels of worry. Some people are given to exaggeration, others to understatement. Some such differences may vary systematically between social groups. Emotional under-statement or denial, for example, tends to vary between the sexes and is part of the cultural fabric of some social groups. The problems thus posed to survey research have to be recognised, even if they cannot be solved.
These issues were instrumental in helping to formulate the design of the questionnaire for the purposes of this research measuring perceptions of fear of crime, visibility of police presence and perceptions of crime and disorder within the community.

Once the concepts to be measured were formulated, it was necessary to operationalise them into questions which would be understood by respondents. Questions were drafted first in a rough format with no real thought given to how they would require answering at this stage. All that was needed was an approximate wording that appeared to be easily understandable. For example, a question relating to contact with the police used in the questionnaire started off as, ‘When did you last have contact with a police officer?’ This is clearly a very imprecise question for three reasons. First, it assumes that the respondent has had contact with the police officer; second, it doesn’t specify what contact means and third, it gives no timescale for the answer. However, by expanding upon this first rough draft question and resolving the problems inherent within it, the question evolved not only to become more precise and easier to understand for the respondent but easier to measure by the researcher. This process was repeated throughout the questionnaire until the first draft was completed.

Being careful at an early stage will surely pay off later, and after checking for omissions, mistakes or badly expressed questions, it was typed and checked thoroughly. Even after all the detailed preparation that had gone in to the evolution of the questionnaire up to this stage, there were still some badly worded questions that had not been appreciated until they were seen in typed print. Included at this stage
were the instructions for completion of the questionnaire. The most important instructions were those telling the respondent which questions to answer and those that said how the questions should be answered. Once this process was completed an initial printing of ten copies was made and this initial questionnaire was then tested upon friends and acquaintances from within the immediate work environment as well as those who had no particular knowledge of the crime prevention initiative. Several of these individuals pointed out areas where improvements could be made, but in particular one area was singled out. This revolved around the question of the description of the respondent's household make-up. It was clear that whilst attempting to cover any combination of possible response several responses had been included such as single, single with children and so on. However, the category for a couple with non-dependent children had not been included. This was pointed out quite forcefully by some of the respondents who had tested the instrument and fell into that category and felt discriminated against! That was a lesson well learnt and a return to the questions and possible responses to them was undertaken.

Following these amendments to the instrument, it was felt it necessary to test it again on a sample of individuals for accuracy, understanding and clarity. It was tested on a sample of twenty-five Criminal Justice degree students at the University of Glamorgan. The information gained by this exercise, which pointed out some typing errors, not only gave an idea as to how the instrument would be received but allowed the coding of the questionnaire responses for the purpose of analysis. As the results of the surveys were to be analysed using SPSS this gave me an opportunity of creating a pilot analysis of the responses to ascertain if the coding of results worked and could be usefully analysed using this method. The coding of responses and the use of SPSS
appeared to work quite satisfactorily and it was determined that the survey would progress using the finalised questionnaire.

Thus it was found that piloting in this manner not only assisted in the wording of the questionnaire, but also affected the style and type of question to enable the respondent to understand, complete and (hopefully) return the instrument.

The final instrument used in this research is shown in Appendix A.

In order to ensure impartiality in the research and provide reassurance of confidentiality of the responses, an accompanying letter was designed for each questionnaire. This letter of introduction not only explained what the survey was about, but emphasised how important the respondent’s views were. This, coupled with the inclusion of a pre-paid envelope, would it was hoped, assist in the return rate of the survey.

Having undertaken a long, and at times, complex process in designing and testing the questionnaire, the process of whom the questionnaires were to be sent to was addressed. This was achieved through the process of sampling.

**The sampling procedure**

Particular attention needs to be given to people sampling. There are some surveys where it is feasible to survey the whole of the population. A national census attempts to achieve this and there are occasions when the population of interest is manageably small e.g. pupils in a school.
In principle, a representative sample of any population should be drawn so that every member of that population has a specified non-zero probability of being included in that sample. Usually this means that every member of the population has a statistically equal chance of being selected. The best way of ensuring this is by means of a completely random sampling method. Randomness in this case does not mean some arbitrary process. It is a statistically defined procedure that requires a table or set of random numbers, which can be generated by a computer or found in research textbooks.

For the purpose of this survey the sample was chosen as follows. The area under consideration has a population of just over 4000 individuals of 18 years or over. Using the latest electoral role, a ten per cent sample was selected by use of a computer generated random sampling list consisting of four numbers, and was seen as the most straightforward way of obtaining the sample. The percentages of the sample required were chosen having consideration to the amount of analysis that would need to be undertaken given a favourable return rate.

As Gilbert (1995) points out, the electoral register is the most widely used sampling frame of the adult population in Britain. However use of the electoral register is not without some problems. It may not, for example, include all the people who live in the area for a variety of reasons including those who are under the age of 18 years, or those who have not returned completed census forms. At the same time the very nature of its construction, it precludes those individuals who are under the age of 18 years. That said, the electoral register is particularly well suited to using systematic selection. Each elector has a unique identification number and is listed within their
dwelling, dwellings listed in number order within each street, streets are listed alphabetically within each polling district and polling districts can easily be amalgamated to form wards and constituencies. It is therefore easy to work out a sampling interval for the systematic selection of a fixed number of individuals from a polling district or ward.

Having selected the individuals by this method the questionnaires were posted to the randomly sampled population. Included in the envelope was a stamped addressed envelope, which it was hoped would assist in the return rate. Also included was an explanation letter, which outlined the purpose of the research and explained how useful the information provided could be for future policing in the area. To encourage the sense of independence in this study and to reinforce the issue of confidentiality, the letter was issued on official University notepaper.

The return rate for both before and after surveys was very encouraging at 38% (n=96 out of 250 questionnaires and 54% n=164 out of 300 questionnaires) respectively. This reflects perhaps the popular local interest that was generated by the media and several high profile meetings at the local community centre prior to the commencement of the initiative.

The data provide by the questionnaires were coded, created into a database and analysed using SPSS.
Conclusion

Any research process is fraught with difficulty and contains many areas of concern for the researcher. In particular the location of the researcher within an organisation that is very sensitive towards its public image yet agrees to be researched contains some very peculiar problems. This can be magnified somewhat by the limitations of evaluation research, where the sponsorship of the organisation requires a result based upon finding out what works in researching crime prevention methods. Validation research should not be dismissed out of hand, though, as it does provide useful results for policy-makers in certain circumstances. However, it is only right that powerful organisations that are responsible for social control activities such as the police and other agencies involved in the partnership delivery of policing activity, are open to examination. If the future of policing lies in the multi-agency approach of partnerships with non-elective agencies and organisations, the question of accountability and power structures, coupled with the effectiveness of service delivery, needs to be researched. By employing these research methods what has been achieved, it is believed, is a picture of the interactions and results obtained in a partnership approach to community safety in an economically deprived area of the South Wales valleys.

The methods chosen presented ethical problems for the researcher, which had to be thought through very clearly if the research was to progress. Access, although not a problem in itself due to the position of the researcher, brought its own problems concerning the choice of research methods. Ultimately, the choice of covert fieldwork as one method was decided upon, based upon the fact that to do otherwise would have invited results that would not have been realistic. An intimate knowledge
of the organisations and individuals involved within the crime prevention initiative was an obvious deciding factor here as was the collection of data from other methods and sources.

There were several areas that caused the researcher some concern even though the methods used were thoroughly considered. Using the electoral register for example meant that not all the people on the receiving end of this initiative were consulted prior to and after it had finished. The youth of the area, who were in some respects regarded as the recipients of the so-called zero tolerance schemes had no input into its design and implementation. Indeed, they were the marginalised individuals who should have been involved from the start, and this is one area that would need exploring should this type of research be undertaken again. A separate area of concern for the research lay in the pilot study, upon which the main initiative was based. This could never be considered a valid pilot study in any true sense and merely provided the flimsiest evidence for pursuing the main crime prevention initiative.

However, in terms of the questionnaire design and layout, much work went into providing the final instrument for measuring any perceived effects of the initiative and it is believed that it was due to this painstaking procedure that the postal returns for the questionnaire survey were reasonably good. In terms of reliability of the research, there is no doubt that this research using the methods employed could be replicated and produce valid results. However, it must be recognised that the wider social context within this type of research is placed, may have had an effect upon the issue of causality.
For the researcher, the research process itself was a journey of discovery. It became necessary to know and respect many people who one would not have ordinarily have met. Many of the people observed and spoken to were people who were involved in what was considered by many at the time as ground-breaking activities. Whether what they perceived they achieved can be justified will be examined in the findings of this work but this attitude was the driving force for some key players in the initiative.

What this research also revealed was the realisation that what was, in fact, being witnessed was not a "snapshot" of partnership policing in action. Rather, as Whyte (1975) might have put it, this was the viewing of a 'video recording' or 'film' of the social interactions taking place around the research area. These interactions, steadily moving along with time, were affected by diverse happenings, constantly responding and reacting to changes. Here was a form of policing that was, in a sense, fragile and dependent upon a level of commitment not previously witnessed, showing individual preferences of agencies and a local political groundswell, which are usually outside the control of the police officer at ground level and the community involved.
4 The Merthyr Tydfil Partnership Crime Prevention Initiative

'The Merthyr Tydfil Crime Prevention partnership vision is to improve the quality of life in Merthyr Vale and Aberfan. We will achieve this through an innovative Zero Tolerance Community Safety Strategy and measures that will reduce crime and the fear of crime.'

(Safer Merthyr 1998:1)

This bold statement issued by the Safer Merthyr agency in its strategic document not only provides an indication as to what this particular crime prevention partnership wanted to achieve in terms of reducing crime and the fear of crime in the future, but it also provides an opportunity to consider how such an agency should reach a position whereby it felt it could issue such a confident declaration. In order to do so, it is necessary to place the issue of policing, crime control and crime prevention into context.

The Context of Partnership Policing

In the past two decades there has been a growing rejection of what Manning (1977) refers to as the impossible mandate of central government responsibility for social order. Where once the state was expected to hand down an authoritative answer for the problems and needs of society, now we are increasingly witnessing a situation in which those same problems and needs are rebounding back on society, so that society has become implicated in the task of resolving them (Donzelot 1991).
contemporary appeals to 'community' and partnerships, crime control is no longer conceived of as the sole duty of the professional police officer or other criminal justice agents. Rather, it is becoming more fragmented and dispersed throughout the state institutions, private organisations and the public. Responsibility for crime problems, according to current government strategies, is now everyone's. It is shared property (Crawford 1999).

Going hand in hand with this has been an appeal to greater 'lay' consultation and citizen involvement in the processes of policy formation and service delivery. At the heart of the current political and management revolution, it is argued by Crawford (1999), lies a proclaimed shift from the hierarchical decision making power of bureaucrats and professionals towards consumer power. A language of partnerships has been introduced. In contrast to reliance upon rigid, autonomous bureaucracies, networks of diverse group interests have become the dominant ethic. They have been accompanied by a greater emphasis upon the desirability of a more holistic rather than specialist approach to social problems, such as crime. Simultaneously, there appears to be a new found emphasis on informal mechanisms of social control rather than the formal systems of processing offenders. Loss prevention and security management have been moved to the centre of the stage of the crime control agenda. There appears, in fact, to be a move towards a much broader conception of policing and security, which rises above the capabilities of single institutions. At the centre of this conceptual change, particular areas have been constructed (Crawford 1999). These areas include the concepts of crime prevention and multi agency partnerships.
Crime Prevention

Outside the rhetoric of crime prevention being a central aim of policing, prevention has remained a peripheral activity of the police (Crawford 1999). By the mid-1980s crime prevention officers comprised on average 0.5% of force strength (Weatheritt 1986) whilst Harvey et al (1989) suggested that this figure was still under 1 per cent by the end of the 1980s. Harvey et al also provide a useful analogy by suggesting that calling a police unit a crime prevention department is like calling a goalkeeper a goal prevention officer. By doing so, they argue, this absolves his or her team-mates from the task of preventing goals being scored. With the evolution of crime prevention as a specialism and the increased use of covert methods within crime detection and prevention, the vision of overt crime prevention as a holistic and general feature of police work as outlined by Robert Peel would appear to have been forgotten.

Outside the police a new interest in crime prevention emerged in the early 1980s. The criminal justice system, that had evolved over the previous two hundred years, appeared to have failed in its own terms, had lost direction and had become an increasingly crippling financial burden. Research findings began to converge around a consensus that the formal processes of criminal justice, through the detection, prosecution and sentencing of offenders have only a limited effect in controlling crime (Clarke and Hough 1984). The findings of the British crime surveys revealed the extensive non-reporting of crime, thus highlighting the fact that for most offenders and victims the formal criminal justice system is largely irrelevant. Meanwhile, official crime rates continued to soar and the prison population mushroomed. It was in this environment that three landmark contributions to the development in the field
of informal processes of social control in crime prevention began to have major influence. These are discussed below.

The first is the influential work of Newman (1972) who elaborated upon previous work around the concept of defensible space. Arguing that the nature of certain built environments can have a suffocating impact upon natural social processes, which prevent or lessen the likelihood of crime, Newman stated that through design modifications, defensible spaces can be reconstructed and consequently processes of informal control revived. At the same time, the concepts of territoriality, surveillance and environment would be emphasised. This work has been a major thrust in identifying that poor physical design causes social breakdown due to the process of destroying community and letting outsiders in at will, and has influenced British government thinking in terms of the built environment and crime.

The second major contribution as we have seen, was that of the broken windows thesis of Wilson and Kelling (1982). Here, it is argued that a breakdown of informal social control, due to high levels of incivilities and signs of disorder, produces further crime and cycles of urban decline. Put in simple terms, their thesis runs as follows: incivilities and signs of disorder (from unrepaired broken windows and graffiti to drunks and groups of youths hanging around the streets) create a sense that no one cares leading in turn to a heightened feeling of insecurity on the streets. This then results in social withdrawal or flight from the area, thus decreasing the powers of social control, which further increases crime. Therefore, securing and supporting the informal control mechanisms, through aggressive policing of disorder and incivilities, is the central means of stopping the downward trend of community breakdown and
disorder. This theory ultimately leads to the concept of zero tolerance policing as a means of controlling street disorder.

As previously discussed the third major contribution to the debate was that of opportunity theory and situational crime prevention as postulated by Ron Clarke (Clarke and Mayhew 1980; Clarke 1980). Here it is argued that most crime is opportunistic, and therefore it is believed most criminals can be deterred from committing a particular crime, at a given time and in a particular way, by altering the management or design of the immediate environment so as to reduce the opportunities for crime. Opportunity reduction can either reduce the attractiveness of the object of crime (increasing the risk of being caught through surveillance for example) or by reducing the physical opportunity for crime by making it harder to commit. Reward reduction is another area that can reduce the probability of a crime being committed. Probable rewards are the economic value of the property and money a criminal is likely to obtain if the crime is successful. Informal expectations or careful screening of targets will lead to expectations of how much they are likely to obtain. Frequently offenders will consider the ‘cash’ value of goods after resale. Offenders also take into account an estimate of the likelihood that they will be able to take the stolen property and get away from the crime scene. Careful planning and preparation prior to entry into the crime scene may increase the probability of success and may further reduce the probability of detection and arrest. Therefore, through simple modifications in the physical environment - like replacing coin operated public telephone boxes with magnetic swipe cards - the opportunity for rewards for the criminal can be significantly reduced and crime can be prevented.
These three criminological developments produced a considerable degree of interest. They all appeared to have an appeal, which has proved attractive to politicians and policy makers alike.

**Multi-Agency partnerships**

The development of the partnership approach is intrinsically bound up with the growth of crime prevention. In the past decade agencies have become an important and growing part of the map of British government generally, and the criminal justice arena in particular. Central government initiatives, including the Urban Programme, City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget, have all acted as stimuli to a ‘partnership’ approach across areas of social policy and urban regeneration. Consequently, there has been a proliferation of a diversity of structures designed to bring together representatives of relevant statutory bodies, private corporations, voluntary organisations and sometimes representatives of the community. The expansion of partnerships may be seen to constitute a quiet revolution in the nature and shape of the administration of British government. However, the partnership approach and its variants are to be found not only in Britain but also across Europe and North America (Crawford 1999). It has even acquired an international status with the recognition of the resolution of the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in August 1990. This resolution reiterates the fact that crime prevention is not simply a matter for the police but must:

‘bring together those with responsibility for planning and development, for family, health, employment and training, housing and social services, leisure activities, schools, the police and the justice system in order to deal with the conditions that generate crime.’

(United Nations 1991: 14)
In Britain there has been a growing body of opinion that there is a greater need for multi-agency co-operation at a local level, as providing the most effective means of policy formation and service delivery. Young (1992) argues that the need for multi-agency partnerships lies in the realities of crime and social control. Social control in modern industrial societies, it is argued, is by its nature multi-agency with different agencies having a different perspective on a given crime problem due to their particular expertise. Different agencies interact in divergent ways in relation to specific crime problems. Criminal justice agencies therefore are both interconnected and mutually dependent. It is in the area of lack of co-ordination that failings can be identified in the criminal justice system.

The idea for partnerships against crime is not restricted to the rhetoric of the political Right of Conservative governments. For some years, the Labour Party’s official policy has been to make all of us partners against crime. (Labour Party 1987, 1994). Politicians are under immense pressure to be seen to be ‘tackling crime’ and consequently, crime preventing has often been presented as the new panacea within criminal justice. (Crawford 1999)

However, it is not just the field of crime prevention that partnerships have been promoted. Lord Justice Woolf’s report into the prison disturbances at Strangeways and elsewhere in the country in 1990 recommended closer co-operation between different parts of the criminal justice system. (Woolf and Tumin 1991). Similarly the probation service has also been encouraged to become more integrative with other agencies as this is seen as a key means of providing that service. In other diverse
fields of criminal justice, including racial harassment and domestic violence, the importance of multi-agency work has been repeatedly stressed (Crawford 1999).

The recent growth and extensive reception of the partnership approach across policy fields in general, and in crime prevention areas more specifically, in such short a period of time is quite exceptional, and in terms of crime prevention, is now encapsulated in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

**The Kirkholt Anti-Burglary project**

One of the most notable, and often cited, examples of multi-agency success is that of the Kirkholt Burglary Prevention project in Rochdale (Forrester *et al* 1988; 1990). Indeed, as Hughes (1998) suggests, this anti-burglary project has become almost an icon of the ‘some things work’ approach with hard facts such as 75% reduction in the incidence of burglary on Kirkholt estate over a three year period, from 1985 to 1988, and the substantial reduction of repeat victims. This project was extremely influential in the formation of Safer Merthyr’s policy of providing free locks and other security devices for victims of domestic burglaries, as well as for other individuals identified as being ‘vulnerable’ such as the elderly. The Kirkholt project involved a package of interventions, concentrating on previously victimised dwellings primarily by means of physical security improvements to properties in the immediate aftermath of a burglary. The measures included:

i. The installation of ‘up-graded’ security hardware, such as window locks and strengthened doors;
ii. A scheme of post coding;
iii. The removal of coin fed gas and electricity meters from all the properties. These had been identified as particularly attractive to burglars.
iv. 'Cocoon' neighbourhood watch schemes set up around victimised properties. This involved the residents of the five or six homes around a previously victimised dwelling being enlisted and encouraged to keep a special watch on it;
v. Community support for burglary victims on the estate, whereby project workers visited victim’s homes offering support and advice.

(Hughes 1998:88)

In sum, the package of measures introduced in Kirkholt incorporated elements of the three major concepts of crime prevention that has so influenced the topic in recent years including target hardening, increased surveillance and target removal.

Repeat burglary victimisation was found to have declined by 80 percent during the seven months after implementation in comparison with the seven months prior to the implementation. Within three years the level of burglary on the estate had been reduced to 25 per cent of its pre-implementation level. Further, there was little or no evidence of displacement to other areas or other crime categories. On the contrary, other forms of acquisitive crime also showed a reduction in comparison with neighbouring areas. Thus, the Kirkholt approach to burglary prevention has become the template of good practice, which has been replicated elsewhere, almost to the point that it has now become the dominant model for burglary prevention. Despite the success claimed, the project is not without its critics. Crawford (1998) suggests that the researchers failed sufficiently to describe or evaluate the wider contexts in which the changes were introduced - a common criticism of those involved in evaluation research. In particular, the substantial programme of environmental improvements undertaken by the Housing Department at the same time is not acknowledged, even though the effects of this programme may have had an effect upon the estates crime problems. Furthermore, the number of recorded burglaries
began to rise quite sharply again in early 1990 and had returned to pre-1988 levels by early 1992, although not to the very high levels evident in 1987 (Osborne 1994). This would seem to question the capacity of situational interventions to have a durable impact.

Demonstration projects such as the Kirkholt project also tend to encourage a top-down implant as well as a project-oriented approach to crime prevention. This is why Crawford and Jones (1996) argue against the use of the term ‘replication’, as strict replication in the experimental sense is unrealistic. Instead they advocate the use of a concept of transferability, which acknowledges the importance of contexts. This requires evaluators to identify relevant contextual elements which may have influenced the success or otherwise of a given crime prevention mechanism. Failure to do so renders it very difficult for those who attempt to transfer these mechanisms into new contexts, as they not know if they are comparing equivalents.

Yet despite all the known shortcomings of the Kirkholt project it is still regarded as living proof that the multi-agency partnership approach to crime reduction can be extremely successful. However, nowhere in the criminal justice system can the thrust for a partnership approach to crime prevention be more obvious than in the Safer Cities Scheme in Britain.

The Safer Cities Scheme

The Safer Cities scheme traces its beginnings to a governmental inter-departmental working group and the Home Office during the early 1980s. The subsequent Home Office circular 8/1984 (Home Office 1984b) is considered as a prime mover for the
introduction of non-police agency involvement in crime reduction.

The Home Office followed this circular with the establishment of the Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention in January 1985 and subsequently with the introduction of a centrally organised medium for delivering the new message. Initially this took the form of an experimental ‘Five Towns’ initiative set up in 1985. The more extensive and enduring Safer Cities Projects succeeded this in 1988. As the flagship of central government thinking on crime prevention, the Safer Cities Projects combined the focus on crime prevention with a partnership approach. They provided pump-priming resources over a three year period, for a local coordinator plus limited administrative assistance and supported by an inter-agency steering committee, to run grant funds to assist local crime prevention partnerships in designated areas (Ekblom 1992; Tilley 1994). The stated aims of Safer Cities Programmes are to reduce crime, to lessen the fear of crime, and to create regeneration where economic enterprise and community life can flourish. Since its establishment, the Safer Cities programme has gone through two phases. The first supported twenty Safer Cities projects between 1988 and 1995, by the end of which it was claimed to have initiated in excess of 3600 crime prevention and community safety schemes at a cost of £22 million, plus £8 million in administration (Crawford 1999). Originally the Safer Cities programme was provided with Home Office funding to the sum of £250,000 per project each year, although, by contrast the second phase projects received on average £100,000 per annum. It was hoped that this money would act to lever in other local funds (Tilley 1992:2).
The second phase was announced in 1992 although the projects did not begin to be set up until 1994. At the same time the funding was transferred from the Home Office to the Department of the Environment. The programme was destined to run until 1998 and was extended to cover a further thirty-two towns and cities around the country. Whilst funded by central government they were externally managed by non-profit making organizations, including the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO), Crime Concern, and the Society of Voluntary Associations (SOVA). Central government, however, maintains a considerable degree of control over the process. The structure implemented by phase two of the Safer Cities scheme is illustrated below.
The Phase Two structure of Safer Cities

Department of Environment

Regional Offices

Management Committees (NACRO, Crime Concern)

Safer Cities Project Co-Ordinator

Steering Group Multi-Agency

Private Sector

Funded Schemes

(Source: Crawford 1998:54)

The Role of the Co-ordinator

Co-ordination is considered a key feature of a competent partnership. The absence of a co-ordinator can be wasteful and ineffective, it is claimed, resulting in a situation in which different interest groups do not co-operate with each other (Sampson et al 1988). Local ownership of community safety problems among participating agencies can require a motivation for involvement which co-ordinators are ideally well placed to promote (Liddle and Gelsthorpe 1994a). Given the tensions and problems within partnerships the role of the independent co-ordinator can be instrumental in
negotiating conflicts and mediating power differences between the parties. Tilley (1992) in his review of the first phase of the Safer Cities projects identified the pivotal role of the co-ordinators. The success or failure of some of the projects was in large part dependent on the ability of the co-ordinator. Gilling (1994) suggests that the professional background of the co-ordinator may be an important influence on the conception of what crime prevention is about and hence the type of schemes prioritised. However Sutton's (1996) analysis of Safer Cities co-ordinators suggests that there was no simple relationship between a co-ordinators professional background and the proportion of money spent by a project on different types of crime prevention initiatives. Nevertheless the influence of the steering committee and the co-ordinators relationship with it remains a significant issue. For Tilley (1992) a prime function of the co-ordinator lies in the areas of overcoming initial suspicion, building trust between agencies and getting local credibility. However, there is a danger that once co-ordination has been established, the partnership agencies will become too reliant on the co-ordinator and devolve tasks and responsibility that should rightly be their own. This problem is very real and becomes complicated when one realises that the Safer Cities projects were envisaged to have a life span of three years only, after which they had to develop their own succession strategy which may or may not have involved a continuing role for a co-ordinator.

Role of the Steering Committee

The Safer Cities programme represents a classic trickle down process whereby central government has sought to implant a particular model of policy formation and implementation, and to stimulate its spread through 'seed corn' funding. Despite its problematic structure and short-term project orientation (Crawford 1998), it has
impacted on grass roots projects, as well as voluntary and statutory organizations and business, raising the profile of crime prevention and inter-agency partnerships. Further, it has caused projects, agencies, and groups to establish procedures that continue to endure beyond the funding period and to reconsider intra-organisational working patterns, which had been taken for granted.

Tilley (1994) argues that there is no single factor that can explain the emergence and subsequent shape of the programme. In fact, Tilley contends that a key role was played by the administrative criminologists both within and outside the Home Office who shaped the crime prevention programme within the constraining structure offered by the particular Conservative administration of the day and its ideology (Tilley 1994:42). Tilley (1994) views the Safer Cities programme, therefore, as one expression of a new policy. That policy stems from the fact that traditional responses to rising crime in the last 20 years in the UK have failed. In order to complement the Safer Cities approach the government has nourished similar activities in other social fields. In line with its commitment to incorporate the business sector into the provision and resourcing of crime prevention, the government established Crime Concern in 1988. Crime concern was given the task of encouraging the private sector to examine its own crime problems and actively enlist corporate support for crime prevention and community safety initiatives. It is a national organisation, which, as a registered charity, raises funds and provides assistance on a consultancy basis to local partnerships. As well as the money it raises for itself to pay for its activities and its staff, the Home Office provides an annual grant of half a million pounds. Its aim is to act as an ‘independent’ catalyst to local activity and to disseminate good practice in the field of crime prevention. In addition, Crime Concern has managed many Safer
Cities projects and supports a number of other City or Borough wide crime reduction programmes. In the intervening years since its establishment, Crime Concern has firmly marked itself as a major player in the spread of community-based and inter-agency crime prevention, being particularly influential in the formation of Safer Merthyr Tydfil.

With regard to the role of aims and objectives for the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative, the role of the Multi-Agency Steering Group was quite influential. Following the results of a local crime audit (Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council 1998) and consultation with the local community, two major areas were selected by the Multi-Agency Steering Group as being of prime concern. These factors were considered as being the main areas where success could be measured and were the numbers of reported crimes within the area and the fear of crime factor. Consequently the targets for the initiative selected by the Steering Group as follows:

i. To reduce reported crime in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale by 25% after 12 months

ii. To reduce the fear of crime in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale by 25% after 12 months.

(Safer Merthyr 1998)

The selection of these particular objectives, however, is quite interesting and worthy of closer inspection. A small pilot project in Dowlais showed that the scheme possibly had the potential to influence crime and disorder in that area. However, the results were never scientifically evaluated and contextualised to their fullest extent. The steering group on the basis of untried and untested results therefore perceived this initiative as being successful. The belief permeated that by adopting methods
involving a heavy media campaign coupled with the use of so-called zero tolerance style policing with special constables and inputs from Safer Merthyr, dramatic results in the reduction of recorded crime, and in the levels of fear of crime, could be obtained. This misplaced confidence in this type of initiative led to the two dominant members of the steering group, the co-ordinator from Safer Merthyr and the local police commander, arbitrarily to announce the objectives for the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative. In many senses the figures of 25% in the reduction of recorded crime and 25% in the reduction of levels of fear of crime were literally plucked out of the air, with no scientific basis. This was as a result of over-confidence in a small untested pilot scheme, coupled with a belief that those entrusted to deliver the scheme at street level, would do so with the same levels of commitment and confidence as themselves.

Setting targets is a challenging task as success or failure of a project may be judged according to whether or not that target is achieved. However, it is important that targets are set as they provide challenges. Hough and Tilley (1998) rightly suggest that targets and objectives should be chosen adopting the SMART outcome targets. These are:

- S Specific
- M Measurable
- A Achievable
- R Realistic
- T Time Scale attached

It is also recommended that these targets, requiring total commitment from all members of the project team, should cover short, medium and long-term sessions.
When comparing the targets for the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative against the SMART objective criteria, it appears there are several areas that did not really conform to this model of best practice. With regard to the objective for recorded crime reduction, no specific category of crime was targeted. Instead a generic phrase indicating that all recorded crime was to be reduced by 25% was put forward as an objective. Whilst this target was measurable, it was neither achievable nor realistic given the history of many crime prevention initiatives, that had not included specific targets of crime reduction.

The driving force of the local divisional commander in establishing the initiative, coupled with the working relationship with the Safer Merthyr agencies was paramount in this crime prevention scheme. During the build-up to the scheme a personnel problem occurred involving the police officer seconded to Safer Merthyr, which amounted to interpersonal conflict between that officer and a member of Safer Merthyr staff. The resultant decision by the divisional commander was swift and decisive. The police officer was immediately removed from the position. The divisional commander’s view was quite simple:

“This project is bigger than any one individual. I will not jeopardise my relationship with executive officers over an incident such as this, so she will have to go”

(Field Notes)

His belief was that the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative was so important to the future of policing, not only at a local level, but also nationally that office politics would not interfere with the attempt to prove that this type of initiative would work.
His vision of the future of policing was also useful in understanding why he saw the relationship with executive officers from other agencies as being so important.

"The more I think about all this, the more I can see the police getting less of the cake. Money is going to go to other agencies away from us. In a couple of years there won’t be a Chief Constable, just a community safety executive.”

(Field Notes)

Thus, the views of one the prime figures in the initiative had already started to influence the crime prevention scheme by the imposition of his beliefs and vision of the future of policing in this country.

**Partnership inputs into the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Initiative**

One of the bases for success in this type of project has to be the fullest commitment and co-operation of all agencies concerned. A steering group comprising representatives of these agencies was formed to discuss the approach to the initiative and to provide a forum for discussion regarding the concerns of the community. This section describes the inputs and commitments of the main agencies in this initiative.

**The Area involved in the study**

The geographical and social location of this particular study is a typical valley community in South Wales. It comprises two small, yet joined, communities, called Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. They make up the electoral ward in the County Borough Council of Merthyr Tydfil. This area is situated in the Taff Valley area of South Wales, approximately 4 miles south of the main town, Merthyr Tydfil.
Historically, it depended economically upon a colliery situated between the two villages, which has been closed since the late 1980s. Collieries in nearby villages, as well as a large factory specialising in the production of washing machines had provided further employment.

The two villages in question are surrounded by other smaller communities, separated by about 2 miles in either direction, with their own sense of identity.

Traditionally, therefore, the male workforce was employed in heavy industries such as mining, steel and iron works. However, these industries have disappeared during the last decade or so, leaving only remnants of coal tips and empty colliery and steel work sites. The area suffers from high unemployment, particularly amongst young people in the 16 to 28 age group. Recently, however, the local Development Agencies have succeeded in gaining inward investment into several factories in the area, bringing the prospect of some unskilled employment in light industry.

The housing stock reflects the heavy industrial commitment in the area with the majority being older terraced houses, built in the vicinity of the colliery, and reflecting the once held importance of this type of employment. In recent years, other types of houses have been built, normally on the periphery of the villages, owned and rented by housing associations. As a result, the newer houses appear to contain families and individuals who may not be from the immediate vicinity, and whose stay in the properties may not be permanent. The older terraced houses, however, contain many families who have lived, often in the same houses, in the village for generations. Owner occupation of these older houses account for some 67.5% of all
households in the area, whilst Local Authority and housing association properties account for 26.55% of housing stock. Pensioners comprise some 35% of all households in the two villages (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997).

The condition of the households in the area was the subject of a special report following complaints by the community (Wales and West Housing Association 1998). Among the general housing problems, which included damp and broken windows, residents expressed concern over other types of environmental issues. Graffiti and vandalism were considered a problem by 23% of the respondents, with graffiti being considered the greater problem of the two. The report suggested that this was limited to empty units in a part of the villages that were subject to abuse by the youth of the area. The report tended to highlight the role youth played in the area in terms of vandalism, graffiti and general disorder. A lack of community spirit was highlighted as being a major problem by 41% of respondents, whilst 82% of respondents thought that the perceived transient population had a detrimental effect.

The total population for the area is recorded as 4,298 individuals (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997). The geographical make up of this figure is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberfan</td>
<td>2,591</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Vale</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,298</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of gender, the make up of the area is a surprisingly even split as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>50.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2,118</td>
<td>49.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of nationality of the population the vast majority of the people in the area consider themselves Welsh with 93.3% falling into this category. The remaining individuals considered themselves to be originating from the rest of the UK or the old or new Commonwealth countries. (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997) The population of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale is almost exclusively white (99.9%).

In terms of economic activity, that is those individuals considered fit for work, this political ward has one of the lowest categories in the County Borough, with figures for males in this category being 73.5% and females being 51.3%. This is also reflected in the overall figure for the total working population in full time employment, which is 37.6%. Also reflecting the economic profile of the ward is the fact that it has a higher percentage of households with no motorcar (46%) which is higher than the Welsh average (38%), with 25% of those travelling to work doing so by public transport. This figure is by far the highest number of people in this category in the County Borough. (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997)

Consequently, the profile of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area is such that it has been able to attract regeneration funding from the European Community Regeneration programme. This funding was partly used to assist in the resourcing of the Crime Prevention initiative.

Despite the importance of the contribution of the community, however, the constitution of the agencies involved within the initiative and the direction the
scheme took cannot be fully understood without reference to the history of one of the main partners, the Safer Merthyr Agency. The origin of this catalyst for change lies within the Safer Cities scheme introduced during the 1980s, and its pivotal position within the Merthyr Tydfil Crime prevention partnership is worthy of further exploration.

The Safer Merthyr Tydfil Agency

A Home Office funded Safer Cities project commenced in Merthyr Tydfil during 1994 and was the first scheme in Wales but part of the second wave roll-out of Safer Cities crime prevention projects from the Home Office. Its main role included an attempt to unite public and private resources to fund crime prevention initiatives in the borough of Merthyr Tydfil. At the end of three years a thriving partnership was in situ, with three significant initiatives having been undertaken. There had been approximately £2 million partnership money from the Home Office for core funding of the scheme and £300,000 to assist with funding for local projects being undertaken by other agencies. The funding for the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Zero Tolerance Policing initiative was obtained from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and amounted to £240,000.

More significantly, there appeared to be universal support for the continuation of the community safety work with core funding provided by Merthyr Tydfil CBC. Safer Cities was not destined to be a three-year limited project in Merthyr Tydfil but the starting point for a permanent community safety project.

Safer Cities work, therefore, has been carried forward by a new organisation, Safer
Merthyr Tydfil, which is now a charitable company which styles itself as an ‘arms length’ community safety agency for the local authority. Upon becoming the Safer Merthyr Agency many of the original Safer Cities steering committee became trustees, and the chairperson, from Groundwork Merthyr Rhondda Cynon Taff, remained as head of the Board. Further, all staff continued their employment to deliver key programmes of work in the successor body, Safer Merthyr Tydfil. Consequently the structure of Safer Merthyr reflects its change from a Safer Cities project. This is illustrated below.

**Structure of Safer Merthyr as Community Safety arm of Local Authority after 1997**

[Diagram of structure]

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Director of Safer Merthyr

Multi Agency Steering Group

Funded Schemes
The influence of Safer Merthyr on the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention partnership cannot be under-stated. Within a few years of its inception, the agency had grown from being staffed by three individuals to a team of fifteen. Several members of the Agency had attended Home Office administered crime prevention courses, and a considerable administrative unit was established within accommodation in the centre of Merthyr Tydfil itself. Merthyr Tydfil CBC provided this accommodation free. To a large extent this rapid expansion was due to the character and drive of the co-ordinator. With a background in education within the Merthyr Tydfil area, the co-ordinator was able to summon considerable support not only from the Local Authority itself but also local businesses and voluntary groups. Several sub committees were established involving such agencies as the Victim Support Scheme and local community action groups. However, it was in the local authority owned housing estate of Gurnos to the north of Merthyr Tydfil that the Safer Merthyr agency first drew attention to itself. The housing estate suffered the highest crime rate in the area with a large number of repeat victims of domestic burglaries. Working closely with the local police (for whom they were dependent upon receiving information about victims of crime), Safer Merthyr implemented a scheme to fit locks and bolts on doors and windows of recently burgled homes, as well as targeting perceived vulnerable individuals such as the elderly. The results were encouraging with a large decrease in reported domestic burglaries and an almost total removal of repeat victims of the same crime. Whilst this initiative was never scientifically evaluated, the results were widely publicised in the local press. This was sufficient to place Safer Merthyr as one of the prime influences in crime prevention matters for the local authority.
Consequently, as a result of the Gurnos Homesafe programme, coupled with the perceived expertise of some of the staff in the field of crime prevention, the co-ordinator found herself in a strong political position within the local authority. This appeared to suit both the local authority and Safer Merthyr who entered into a symbiotic relationship. Safer Merthyr relied heavily on the local authority for its continuance through resources and funding, whilst the local authority could point to the agency and its work as their fulfilment under any community safety obligations required of them. This coupled with the co-ordinator's skill at applying for grants and funding, meant that the agency flourished in the material and political sense.

A strong ally of the co-ordinator of the Safer Merthyr Agency was the local divisional police commander. In an unprecedented move, certainly within the South Wales police, this divisional commander appointed a police officer to work alongside Safer Merthyr staff within their office. This ensured continuity of information flowing from the police to Safer Merthyr, as well as allowing the police to have some informal influence on crime prevention matters at a lower level of the Safer Merthyr Agency. It also provided a visible symbol of support to the Safer Merthyr Agency, which conveyed the message of partnerships throughout the local authority area. However, whilst this move was seen as a positive step towards the implementation of a partnership approach against crime, it could be argued that the message it gave may have been perceived in a negative manner. By placing a police officer who was the divisional crime prevention officer in Safer Merthyr, it appeared to many inside the local police division that crime prevention was no longer a matter for the police per se. Consequently, this vital function of the police was seen to be abrogated to Safer Merthyr, with decisions in this area being heavily influenced by the Safer Merthyr co-
ordinator, in consultation with the local police commander. Both these individuals were strong-minded characters, who now saw their role as experts in the field of crime prevention partnerships and therefore acted as the major influence on any members of the local crime prevention steering group.

This led to many problems within the delivery of crime prevention in the area, not least of which was within the steering group itself. Discussions and disagreements between members over the influence of the Divisional Commander and the Co-ordinator of the Safer Merthyr scheme resulted in two resignations and the local steering group quickly became composed of individuals who appeared to support the philosophies of the two most influential members. Therefore the balance of decision-making and power within the steering group appeared to rest with the two most powerful members, the local police commander and the co-ordinator of the Safer Merthyr Agency. Consequently Safer Merthyr's influence and input to this initiative was considerable, and consisted primarily of the Homesafe Scheme, the opening of a one-stop crime prevention shop, an attempt to introduce new neighbourhood watch schemes and community volunteers. These important contributions are discussed below.

The Homesafe Scheme

Safer Merthyr considers the Homesafe Scheme as its most important contribution to local community safety initiatives. It involves the implementation of the targeting of vulnerable individuals and premises, thus employing situational crime prevention techniques for victims of burglary.
Homesafe is a home security service offered free to burglary victims, other victims of crime, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups and to anyone living in a zero tolerance initiative area. This area of work has been recognized by the Home Office and Crime Concern and has been cited as Best Practice by the Audit Commission (Safer Merthyr 2000)

Consequently the Homesafe scheme offers to individuals free of charge the following:

i. A security survey and if necessary high quality standard equipment installed by experienced and police vetted security fitters;

ii. Crime prevention advice packs and community safety leaflets;

iii. Long life smoke detectors for the elderly;

iv. The safe and sound temporary intruder alarm for certain elderly/vulnerable people.

Another important aspect of the service is less well known. The staff involved act as an information gathering service, obtaining information from victims and witnesses after a crime has occurred. By doing so they have the ability to involve other agencies such as the Victim Support Service and the police, where appropriate.

The stated aims of the Homesafe scheme are as follows:

- To prevent and reduce domestic burglary
- To reduce the fear of crime and its associated anxieties.
- To improve the quality of life for the residents of the borough
- To improve community life.

Claims for its success prior to the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative involved 6,500 households having received the service, which, it is claimed has led to a reduction of
22% in domestic burglary throughout the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil (Safer Merthyr 2000). Funding for the Homesafe scheme was initially provided by the Help the Aged organization, but in 1998 Safer Merthyr Tydfil received £188,883 from the National Lotteries Charities Board, which it is believed would fund this part of Safer Merthyr’s work for up to four years.

The Crime Prevention Shop

Plans for the introduction of a one-stop crime prevention shop in the village of Aberfan, providing a meeting place for locals as well as an advice centre, was considered early in the project’s planning. Here, it was envisaged, local people could purchase crime prevention items such as personal attack alarms, at discounted prices.

The location and leasing of suitable premises was left primarily to Safer Merthyr as the introduction of the shop was seen as being required to support the work of the Homesafe scheme and the issue of crime prevention packs. Initially it was intended that Safer Merthyr members staffed the shop but as time went on, it was believed volunteers from the community would take over.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

The concept of Neighbourhood Watch emerged during the late 1960s in the USA as one of a number of collective responses to crime control. Its origins in the UK are reported to be in 1982 in Mollington, a Cheshire village, where following high value burglaries in the area, residents arranged to watch over each other’s homes. The police gave their support, the number of burglaries reduced, and the idea spread as what seems to have been a police led initiative (HMIC 1998).
In 1988 the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit defined Neighbourhood Watch as a community based activity supported by local police that is directed towards crime prevention. It involves residents becoming more responsive to the risk of crime and taking action to protect their own and neighbours, property. Such action may include marking property, reporting suspicious activities and improving security, which reduce opportunity for crime and increase the risk of detection. It is on this broad basis reinforced by the 1991 Morgan Report that Neighbourhood Watch has grown to such a level that McConville and Shepherd (1992) consider that so far as the public image of British policing is concerned, the decade of the 1980s could be seen to be the age of Neighbourhood Watch. The expansion of Neighbourhood Watch in Britain has been a remarkable development. It can be explained as a consequence of increased concern about crime, increased emphasis on community based preventative initiatives, vociferous support from politicians and a willingness amongst the public to adopt the idea. However, as Husain (1990) points out, it is clearly unrealistic to expect every Neighbourhood Watch to be successful in preventing crime since schemes will vary in quality and the local conditions will influence the potential benefits that can be gained. However, in 1995, the National Neighbourhood Watch association was formed and in September 1997 a new description of Neighbourhood Watch was launched. This description was as follows:

'Neighbourhood Watch is defined by the action communities take to make their communities safer, not just by the name alone. The Neighbourhood Watch is an inclusive concept fulfilling three criteria:

i. It is a community based organization involving residents who are working together;

ii. A key purpose is making the community safer by tackling
crime: and

iii. The community works in partnership with police, local authorities or other agencies’

(HMIC 1998)

On the basis of this definition, part of the Merthyr Tydfil crime prevention strategy for Aberfan and Merthyr Vale involved the setting up of Neighbourhood Watch groups in consultation with the local Crime Prevention Panel. Local elected representatives were canvassed to provide suitable individuals, and advertisements were placed in the local newspapers as well as a leaflet campaign in prominent places in the area. Prior to the introduction of the initiative, there was no active Neighbourhood Watch scheme in this particular area.

Other Significant components of the Initiative

In consultation with the Merthyr Tydfil Crime Prevention panel, Safer Merthyr organised the delivery of around 1000 crime prevention packs to householders in the area. These packs contained leaflets offering advice about suspicious people, watching out for neighbours and their property, stickers for property and advice about car alarms, etc. Volunteers from the Merthyr Crime Prevention Panel, alongside Special Constables, delivered these to households. In an attempt to provide activities for the youth in the area and to enhance already existing projects, small grants administered by Safer Merthyr to provide funding for community safety projects such as youth development were made. These grants provided income for several local youth projects already in being, including the running of a cybercafe where local youngsters could gather and use equipment to explore the Internet, and a scheme diverting potential auto-crime offenders to car repair and building activities.
The Police

The area involved in the initiative consisted of two beat units within the smallest Basic Command Unit (BCU) of the South Wales police. The total number of police officers within the BCU was 97 uniformed officers and 16 detective officers of all ranks. Whilst the local BCU commander had overall strategic command for the policing of this and other areas the responsibility for the implementation of day-to-day policing in the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area was the Sector Inspector. This officer was based at the main sector station of Treharris, two miles south of the initiative area. Both the BCU commander and the Sector Inspector were part of the strategic board directing the initiative. The Sector Inspector was ultimately responsible for delivery of the initiative at street level, being an important link between the delivery of the scheme and a conduit for communication with the steering group. Further, the functional level of this role would mean an almost daily contact with representatives of the community involved. Therefore this role was vital if the initiative had any chance of success.

The role of the police in supporting this initiative was intended to be quite considerable. They organised consultation meetings with local people to explain the concept of the initiative and the role of the police and other agencies in the implementation and development of the scheme. Further, the local divisional commander pledged an increase in police visibility in the area, regular attendance of the South Wales police crime prevention caravan, and police clinics for residents to air their concerns and grievances. This work was to be overseen and augmented by the work of the Community Safety Department based at the main BCU station. This
unit consisted of an Inspector, Sergeant, Crime Prevention Officer, Community Safety Officer (attached to Safer Merthyr for liaison purposes) and a Licensing Officer. The role of the Crime Prevention Officer and Licensing Officer was considered vital and both were given pro-active briefs. These included visits to licensed premises to speak to license-holders regarding crime prevention advice, in particular relating to crimes of violence, and to remind them of their obligations under The Licensing Act 1968.

However, the area where the police felt they would have the greatest visible impact was in the day-to-day policing carried out by local community constables supported by the use of Special Constables.

The Community Officers

The normal policing of this particular area is carried out by one Community Constable, working alone from an office situated alongside former police houses at a location on the northern periphery of Aberfan village. This officer’s shift pattern was mainly dictated by the needs of the Sector and Division, with little attention paid to the actual needs of the villages themselves. Mobile officers from Troedyrhiw (to the North) and Treharris (to the South) also covered the area whenever the community officer was not on duty. They were, however, mainly a reactive policing resource, responding to calls within the area.

The Community Officer himself was not a native of the area, and lived in an adjoining valley. However, he had considerable police experience and was dedicated to his role as a Community Constable.
Consequently, this police officer was assisted in the initiative by the temporary transfer of a second Police Constable, initially for six months, to assist in delivering the requirements of the scheme. Again, this was an experienced officer, who had worked in the area previously. It was emphasised, at the outset, that the other reactive police officers in the area would support the initiative whenever they had occasion to deal with anything in the area that occurred when the community officers were unavailable. Further, reactive officers were instructed to patrol the initiative area whenever possible and not attending calls elsewhere, in order to enhance high visible policing in the area. Both community officers were given the responsibility of working the area according to the needs of the community and the initiative. In order for this to be successful neither officer was seconded to a particular shift of officers or regular work pattern, but were given the freedom to work their own shifts according to their discretion. They were especially tasked with gathering criminal intelligence for pro-active targeting of suspected individuals believed to be involved in illegal drugs activities and burglaries. Besides this, high visibility patrolling, an emphasis on contact with the local youth and vulnerable groups, and tackling issues such as school truancy were to be given priority.

The Special Constabulary

The Special Constabulary is a volunteer body designed to assist the regular police, drawn mainly from the communities served by each force. Special Constables perform constabulary duties and exercise constabulary powers under the supervision of, and supported by, regular officers. They are expected to achieve and maintain a level of proficiency, which enables them to assist regular officers in solving local policing problems, and thereby enhance the overall contribution and effectiveness of
their local force. In the BCU where this initiative took place there were 24 such Special Constables.

These volunteer police officers were expected to provide a large amount of the targeted high visibility patrol that was required to take place in the initiative area. Both regular officers and special constables were used to target specific problem areas identified by the community consultation program. The allocation of officers to beat patrol duties had been identified previously as being a major concern for the public (South Wales Police Authority, 1996). Invariably these problems revolved around youth annoyance at specific locations. Consequently, uniform officers could address these problems of annoyance and disorder.

The Criminal Investigation Department

As part of the high profile policing strategy the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was expected to target individuals believed to be involved in illegal activities, particularly illegal drugs offences and domestic burglaries. They were to work closely with the local community beat officers for intelligence purposes and also, along with Special constables, to assist in carrying out the execution of search warrants.

The Local Authority

The Local Authority, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, was also a major partner in this scheme, providing resources that addressed lighting issues, the removal of graffiti, and litter campaigns to tidy up the area. Skips were placed throughout the area and any additional cleaning work was to be carried out immediately. The Housing
Department also arranged for broken windows to be repaired as soon as possible, whilst the cooperation of the Probation Service allowed the use of community service volunteers for various tasks. This included such work as painting over graffiti on walls.

**The Media**

The crucial political significance of media presentations of policing has long been recognised by police officers. There have been examples of use of the media by the police to construct 'crime waves' as devices for accruing organisational prestige and resources (Hall et al 1978). Recently they have begun to use the media more systematically as a means of presenting a desirable image. Indeed, one of the standard works on police management devotes an entire chapter on the use of the media in 'managing the image' (Berry et al 1998). So important is the role of the media seen in the context of promoting community safety issues that many police forces are building media protocols into their community safety plans. A good example of these protocols is that of the West Yorkshire Police (2001), whose stated aims of this policy are:

i. To achieve an effective working relationship between local authorities, the police and other partners in respect of media relations.

ii. To present a professional well-informed and consistent image to promote community safety and reduce fear of crime.

iii. To enhance public confidence in individual agencies or organisations and in the partnership as a whole.

iv. To ensure members of the partnership organisations are well informed about issues of mutual interest.

v. To avoid unauthorised or unexpected disclosure of information which might be damaging to the reputation of individual partners and the
partnerships as a whole.

As can be seen from the protocol, one of the prime functions of this type of agreement appears to be the control of just what the media publish in respect of the community safety partnership.

The control of what the media publishes in relation to activities such as community safety partnerships is worth exploring. People obtain their information about crime from a number of sources, but a major one is the media. The media are a powerful way of getting messages across to citizens.

The role of the community safety partnerships in terms of the media therefore, appears to be one of a primary definer of news production (Negrine 1994) In terms of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative, there appears to have been a ‘source domination’ (Negrine 1994) in terms of news about the initiative and the success or otherwise of the scheme. Press releases were issued by the Safer Merthyr Agency as often as possible, but the target was at least one positive piece of news related to the Agency’s work in general or to the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative in particular. By doing so this means that although the source may not ultimately determine the news, it may still be able to influence the perspective from which it is viewed. It could be argued that the media’s dependence on ‘legitimate’ sources of information such as the police, courts and politicians ensure that they reproduce the definitions of the powerful, or at least those involved in running crime prevention initiatives.
It was therefore realised prior to the start of the initiative that the role of the media was vital. Not only was it important to achieve quick wins in the initiative area, but also there was a need to ensure these successes were publicised, so that support for the partnership initiative was maintained (Crime Concern 1998). In order to inform the public of the initiative and how the partnership could affect change, the use of the media, it was believed, played a large part in people's reaction to crime and the fear of crime. Consequently, in order to promote the initiative and inform an individual of what was being attempted in the initiative area, the main local newspapers were targeted. The local newspaper bought by the majority of the local population was the Merthyr Express that was published locally each Thursday/Friday in the initiative area. The local newspaper publishers of this and other various local newspapers were contacted and asked to provide the circulation figures for the newspaper per month in the Crime Prevention initiative area. These were as follows: Merthyr Vale 744 and Aberfan 1536, giving a total of 2280.

With such information the Steering Group considered the roles of positive articles in these newspapers very important in the overall scheme of the initiative, given that the total adult population in the area was given as 4,298.

An examination of some of these newspaper articles is quite revealing. Several state that extra police officers would be on foot patrol within the area of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale invoking a 'tougher line' against nuisance teenagers as well as being involved in crime prevention activities (Merthyr Express 20/2/1998; Western Mail 19/10/1998). Prominent amongst the headlines of most of these articles is the phrase 'Zero Tolerance', with most stating that this programme would be tough on crime and
criminals. The message put across by these news stories, particularly before and in the early days of the initiative, it could be argued, was one of intolerance of anti-social behaviour, coupled with a very high presence of police officers.

As the initiative progressed, the fact that Safer Merthyr had received substantial funding for the creation of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale scheme prompted it to release a story pointing to this fact and highlighting the success of a pilot scheme at Dowlais in the year prior to the Aberfan scheme. One of the main reasons, it appears, for the publication of this story was to encourage elected representatives from other wards in the borough to canvass for the zero tolerance scheme (Merthyr Express 6/3/1998).

As each input phase of the initiative became ready for implementation, press releases were issued by Safer Merthyr highlighting the new schemes. The plans for the initiative involved the recruitment of locally based community safety volunteers who would be trained by Safer Merthyr with the result that they would staff the Crime Prevention shop when it was opened. This was part of the overall plan to 'hand over' to residents once the zero tolerance initiative had finished. Subsequently several articles appeared highlighting the need for volunteers and the opening of the shop by the Mayor of Merthyr in a high publicity opportunity. (South Wales Echo 10/3/1998; 20/8/1998; Merthyr Express 14/8/1998).

Many of these articles, particularly after some months of the initiative, contained details of the recorded crime for the areas involved. Much was made of the fact that there appeared to be some excellent reductions in crime within the area, though no
attempt to contextualise these was made. It was merely sufficient perhaps, to continue providing good news about the initiative and its outputs, thereby ensuring that the public at large, and the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale community in particular, would not anticipate any shortcomings in the initiative. A selection of these articles published by local newspapers is contained in Appendix 2.

Conclusion

The concept of partnership policing has, it appears, been introduced to encourage multi-agency partnerships to ensure urban and rural areas are safe for people to live, work and visit. The Merthyr Tydfil Crime Prevention partnership, comprising of different groups, provided an opportunity to make an impact on issues that are of the greatest concern to the public, in terms of crime and disorder.

Crime prevention partnerships appear to involve the mobilisation of local communities, police and other agencies in attempting to tackle the rising crime and disorder that society has witnessed for a number of years. This mobilisation involves moving central government's responsibility for crime prevention to the local arena, being driven particularly by initiatives such as the Safer Cities programme.

That many of these agencies of social control do not appear to have clear accountability structures in place appears to be a minor matter as long as evidence of 'good practice' and purported success is provided to an eager media. The government-sponsored initiatives have also produced their own networks, concentrating upon holistic approaches to crime prevention. It is in the area of crime prevention based upon the Home Office criminology of situational crime prevention
techniques and rational choice theory that the influential success stories, such as the Kirkholt Project, lay. Perhaps there should be no surprise in this. For many years the role of crime prevention, upon which the modern police was founded, appears to have been forsaken by the police of this country. This less than glamorous part of the occupation has been overlooked by the reactive, action-centred style of policing (Reiner 2000; Holdaway 1984). Crime prevention was not really considered ‘real policing’ and those officers who undertook those duties were considered not ‘real’ police officers. Very few resources, in real terms, were placed into this vital police function with the result, it could be argued, that a gap appeared in the crime prevention market. This has eagerly been filled with agencies keen to exploit a market devoid of police attention for many years, yet attracting large amounts of money from diverse regeneration funding from central government as well as the European Union.

Consequently, with the rise of crime prevention agencies, and being belatedly nudged in the crime prevention partnership approach by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, police forces throughout the country are to an extent playing ‘catch up’ in this area. What can be said of the Merthyr Tydfil crime prevention partnership however is that it appears to have been one step ahead of many other partnerships in this country by setting up the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative when it did.

The role of the co-ordinator has rightly been pointed out as being crucial for the success of any crime prevention partnership. Such was the case in Safer Merthyr. The strong will of the co-ordinator played an influential part in directing the steering group in many areas. With the co-operation of the local police commander, many of
the decisions reached in terms of the structure and inputs to the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative seem to have been foregone conclusions. This is evident in the manner in which the objectives of the initiative were decided upon. Further, the implementation of schemes such as the crime prevention shop, the community wardens and Neighbourhood Watch are all dependent upon a good working relationship with the community. This is achieved by close consultation with all sections within the community to establish need and willingness to implement the schemes. This close consultation and therein close understanding of needs of the community does not appear to have been forthcoming. It appears that the area in question suffered from high unemployment, poor housing stock and had many environmental problems. These problems do not appear to have been addressed within any of the plans and inputs for the crime prevention scheme. It is difficult to imagine that high media profiles of schemes as envisaged by the partnership would have had any long lasting appeal for many within this community. Ultimately, it would appear this was the case. Not one single community volunteer or Neighbourhood Watch materialised within the area during this initiative despite the high media appeal. The Crime Prevention shop, despite all its promise as a drop-in centre in the first few weeks, closed some two months later due to a lack of support from within the community itself, and the inability of Safer Merthyr staff to resource it. However, these were not the only areas that appear to attract some criticism.

The use of the concept of zero tolerance policing as a vehicle for delivering the ground level police activities within the initiative was, it could be argued, a mistake. The model of zero tolerance as seen in New York City and elsewhere was to bear no resemblance to the style of policing that was used within the initiative in Aberfan and
Merthyr Vale. The policing presence in the area was only increased by one community constable (and that for a period of six months only) whilst the use of special constables for high visibility patrols soon disappeared due to pressure to work elsewhere and an apparent lack of support from regular officers and the local command team. The high media interest approach, engineered by the crime prevention partnership itself may have backfired in its purpose of reassuring the public of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. By use of the media sound-bite ‘zero tolerance policing’, the community’s perception of policing in the initiative was bound to have been influenced by the national and international arguments that were in being at the time regarding such an aggressive style of policing.

Instead of seeing substantial numbers of police officers aggressively dealing with the community’s perceptions of disorder, which appears to have revolved around the youth of the area in the main, occasionally the community was aware of the local community constables giving talks to youth clubs. On no occasion did the local CID or plain-clothes officers conduct ‘stop and search’ exercises upon believed illegal drug users, contrary to what the community expected or were led to believe. A major facet of the zero tolerance style policing in New York City also revolves around the accountability of local police commanders to account for successes and setbacks in initiatives. This is seen in the weekly ‘COMPSTAT’ meetings where watch commanders are expected to explain what they are doing to combat certain crime and disorder problems within their areas. Should the watch commander not be able to explain why certain initiatives were successful or otherwise, then pressure is exerted to ensure that the results expected are forthcoming in the next week’s meeting. Whilst this may not seem to be ideal in dealing with street level crime problems,
particularly from the perspective of the watch commander, it does focus the delivery of police services to particular problems. Ownership of a particular crime initiative is not enough. Accountability for the actions taken, or not as the case may be, is a vital component if crime prevention schemes such as the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative are to be successful. In this instance, the local sector commander was never held fully accountable for the success or failure of the initiative. This is surprising given the high media attention generated by the steering group who would have been anxious to report long term success as well as short term achievements. At no time was this individual spoken to regarding his apparent negative attitude towards the project, and he was never asked by the steering group to attend the group meetings to update them on the progress of the initiative. Consequently, his role in the scheme, which was vital if it was to receive the support of the street level police officers, remained negative.

The initiative was seen as an opportunity for a local partnership to develop innovative approaches, energising the community and agencies concerned to bring about real change as well as short-term amelioration. This depended largely on the inputs promised by the differing agencies coupled with a vigorous media campaign that it was hoped would also encourage the community to act to stop crime and disorder. This was to be achieved on the part of the community through the implementation of Neighbourhood Watch schemes, local community volunteers and the use of a local crime prevention shop. Therefore, despite the promises, aims and objectives of the partnership, the whole initiative seems to have had inbuilt flaws from the very beginning. How these inbuilt problems may have affected the results of the initiative in the short and long term for the communities of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale will be
discussed in the following chapters.
5 Crime Statistics Analysis

Target: To reduce recorded crime by 25% after 12 months in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale as part of the Zero tolerance project.  
(Safer Merthyr 1998:1)

Introduction

The empirical data most often used by criminologists, as well as by policy-makers in the Home Office and elsewhere, derive mainly from the statistical records routinely compiled by the police and criminal justice agencies. The use of numbers as a descriptive medium is a central feature of this material, and despite the known shortcomings of crime statistics, have a considerable impact upon our perceptions of crime.

It should come as no surprise therefore that a major claim for the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative should revolve around the statistical reduction of crime. The claim itself was straightforward. The inputs of the initiative over the 12-month period (1998) would reduce all recorded crime in the area by a total of 25% over the previous 12 months.

Consequently, this chapter will examine this target using longitudinal crime data from the area concerned, to examine the success or not of this claim. It will also examine the data in a multi-layered approach in an attempt to contextualise the results. However, it must be remembered that in many cases the figures recorded as
percentages are quite small in numbers, and that it is difficult to make significant claims about the results because of this factor.

Further, as a major criticism of this type of crime prevention initiative hinges on the question of displacement of crime, an analysis of crime data for the same period of time in the surrounding areas will be carried out to gauge whether or not displacement of crime took place into these areas. This data was also analysed to see whether or not a diffusion of benefits had occurred. As a further comparison, crime data from an area similar in size to Aberfan and Merthyr Vale will also be examined. This particular area, Heolgerrig, is situated some miles away from the initiative area, and received no extra policing or partnership inputs whatsoever.

The chapter will firstly examine the issue of total recorded crime in the initiative area, moving into a deeper analysis of particular types of crime, namely domestic burglary, auto-related crimes and finally crimes of violence.

Total crime figure analysis

The collective term “recorded crime” refers to notifiable offences recorded by the police according to Home office rules on counting and classification. These cover a wide range of crimes from homicides to minor thefts and damage. Table 1.1 illustrates the total recorded crime in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale for the years 1996 to 2000.
In the 12 months ending December 1998 the police in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale recorded a total of 352 offences. The trend in recorded offences for 1998 showed a 6.3% increase compared with the previous 12 months. An examination of the percentage change in recorded crime over a five-year period surrounding the 12 months of the initiative is shown in Table 1.2 below.

### Table 1.2 % Change by Year in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>-14% (n=-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>+6.3% (n=+21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-4.8% (n=-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>+17.9% (n=+60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the above table the percentage change fluctuates from year to year with no discernible pattern emerging.
However when the data are analysed more closely using a 6 monthly time scale the following underlying picture is revealed. When recorded crimes in the first six months of the initiative period (1998) are compared with the first six months of the previous year, there is a reduction of 15% (n = 29) in recorded crimes. However, when this is compared to the same time period in the year previous to that (1996), recorded crime in 1997 fell by 11% (n = 24) indicating that the trend in reduction of total recorded crime was in place well before the initiative took place.

Examination of the total crime statistics for the first six months in the year following the initiative (1999) reveal that there was an increase of 16.3% (n = 27) over the same period in the initiative.

In order to see if the initiative resulted in any obvious displacement in total crime into surrounding areas analysis of total crime figures was carried out for the beats adjacent to Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. The data obtained for this exercise are shown in Table 1.3.

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>January</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage change in total recorded crime in the displacement areas reveal that during the year of the initiative, total crime recorded for these areas rose by 4.2% (n=21) over recorded crime in the same areas for the previous year (1997). The percentage change in these areas over the same 5 year time span as the initiative is shown in table 1.4 below.

Table 1.4 % Change of total recorded crime by Year in adjacent area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From 1996 to 1997</th>
<th>No change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>+4.2% (n = 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-13.6% (n = -71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>+5.3% (n = 24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One interpretation for the increase for 1998 may have resulted in displacement of crime from the initiative area, as this result may be construed to be against the underlying trend.

The control area was chosen due to it being similar in size and population to the initiative area.

Examination of the data for total crime reported in the control area reveals a broadly similar pattern and is shown in Tables 1.5. and 1.6. A discernible downward trend from 1997 to 1999 is followed by an upsurge in 2000.
Table 1.5  **Total Recorded Crime in control area**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.6  **Control area trends for total recorded crime**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>+18%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>-24%</td>
<td>-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>+50%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To place the data obtained from Aberfan and Merthyr Vale into context, it is necessary to examine a larger data set from which this data is extrapolated. Consequently crime data for the whole of the police division in which Aberfan and Merthyr Vale is located needs examination to ascertain any comparative trends.

Table 1.7 shows the recorded crime figures for the whole of the police division within which the initiative took place for a period two years before and two years after the initiative.
Table 1.7  Total Recorded Crimes for A (Merthyr Tydfil) Police Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6889</td>
<td>6327</td>
<td>6625</td>
<td>6570</td>
<td>6035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these figures are examined it can be seen that total recorded crimes for the police division as a whole actually increased during the 12 months the initiative was in place by 4.7% (n=298). The percentage change in total recorded crime for the whole division is seen in Table 1.8.

Table 1.8  % change in total recorded crime in Merthyr Police Division

| From 1996 to 1997 | -8% (n = -562 crimes) |
| From 1997 to 1998 | +4.7% (n = 298 crimes) |
| From 1998 to 1999 | -0.8% (n = -55 crimes) |
| From 1999 to 2000 | -8% (n = -535 crimes) |

Examination of these data suggests a general trend of reduction in reported crime throughout the whole of the police division, with the only anomaly being seen in 1998. To examine whether or not the initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale had been as successful as projected, the total crime figure for the area was calculated as a percentage of the total crime figure for the whole police division by year. If successful
the total crime for the initiative as a percentage for the total crime for the police
division should reduce for the year 1998. The results are seen in Table 1.9.

Table 1.9  Recorded Crime in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale (% of total divisional
Crime)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberfan/Merthyr Vale</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above reveal that the only decrease witnessed in this analysis took place
during 1999, the year following the initiative. During the year of the initiative no
change in the total crime of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale as a percentage of the total
crime for the police division took place. This may indicate that the initiative had
little or no effect upon the recorded total crime for the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale
area.

In order to place local trends into a larger contextual meaning, it was necessary to
compare these with the national trend. The national trend in percentage terms is
shown in Table 1.10. The general trends show a similar pattern to that already seen in
local and divisional analysis.

Table 1.10  National trends for total recorded crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From 1996 to 1997</th>
<th>-4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Source: Home Office 2000)
Interestingly enough, as Barclay *et al* (2001) point out, total recorded crime across the whole of the European Union shows a general downward trend since 1995, with England and Wales showing one of the largest reductions at 10%.

A useful way of showing these trends is by graphical means, showing a comparison of recorded total crimes across the geographic areas already discussed. This is illustrated below:

Line Chart indicating recorded crime by geographical area

![Line Chart indicating recorded crime by geographical area](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control area</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-24%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trend</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Division</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>-0.80%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent Areas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>-13.60%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberfan/Merthyr Vale</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen the graph components are fairly consistent with a downward trend in the category of total recorded crime. However, as is the case with all the analysis undertaken, an increase has occurred in the total crime categories for 2000 when compared with 1999. There appears to be two main reasons for this. Firstly, 1999 was the first full year that saw the publication of figures compiled under new counting rules that allowed for an increase in the number of crimes that could be recorded by the police. Secondly, the Ministerial priorities for 1999 and 2000 focused police resources upon specific targeted offences that meant an increase in the number of reported and detected offences in many categories such as drugs offences.

Generally speaking, there was, in all geographic areas analysed for recorded total crime, a downward trend that commenced prior to the zero tolerance initiative in the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area. This general downward trend continued until an increase was seen across the board during the later periods in 1999 and into 2000.

2. Domestic burglary analysis

One of the major criminal offences that was targeted by the initiative was that of domestic burglary. It appears that if success were to be achieved in reduction of crime by 25% in the area then, given the resources injected into the prevention of domestic burglary, this would be the area that would show most improvement.

The Homesafe scheme targeting repeat victims of burglary and those deemed as 'vulnerable' commenced in April 1998 and concluded in April 1999.

To examine whether or not a reduction of domestic burglary took place, a longitudinal trend analysis of these particular crime figures took place. This is shown as Table 2.1 below.
Table 2.1 Total recorded Domestic Burglary offences in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above show that there was a percentage increase overall in 1998 of 4% (n=1) when compared with the figures for 1997. However, analysis of the recorded domestic burglary figures for the first six months of the initiative reveal a decrease of 43% (n=9) when compared with the first six months of 1997. A broader longitudinal analysis however, reveals that whilst the year prior to the initiative showed a marked decrease (1997) in domestic burglaries (-45.6% n=21), there was in fact a slight increase in domestic burglaries during the initiative year (1998). The results are seen in full in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 % Change by Year in the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>-45.6% (n = -21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>+4% (n = +1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>+19% (n = +5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>-22.5% (n = 7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This analysis tends to confirm the small increase of domestic burglaries during the period of the initiative despite the Homesafe scheme.

A separate analysis of domestic burglary in areas adjacent to the initiative was also undertaken to ascertain whether any patterns that might indicate displacement of this type of crime might have taken place. The full data for this category is shown below in table 2.3.

Table 2.3  Total recorded Domestic Burglary in Areas adjacent to the Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the first six months of the initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale had shown a decrease in the number of domestic burglaries over the same temporal span from the previous year, an analysis was undertaken of the same time period for the adjacent areas to Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. The resultant analysis appears to show an increase in this category of offence in the first six months of the year in question
(1998) of 69% (n=9). When the whole 12 month period of 1998 is compared to the
previous year, an increase of 70% (n=17) is observed. This increase is seen more
sharply when compared to the year following the initiative that showed a decrease of
58.5% (n=-24). This may be attributed to a possible displacement of crime from the
initiative area.

The full results are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4  % Change by Year compared to previous year in adjacent area

| From 1996 to 1997 | -60% (n = -37) |
| From 1997 to 1998 | +70% (n = +17) |
| From 1998 to 1999 | -58.5% (n = -24) |
| From 1999 to 2000 | +35.2% (n = +6) |

To examine whether or not this apparent anomaly was confined to the areas adjacent
to the initiative, a similar analysis was carried out using figures from the control area.

The results for the control area are shown in Table 2.5

Table 2.5  % change domestic burglaries in control area

| From 1996 to 1997 | -20% (n = -4) |
| From 1997 to 1998 | +50% (n = +8) |
| From 1998 to 1999 | -87.5% (n = -21) |
| From 1999 to 2000 | +166% (n = +3) |

The data show that there appears to be an increase of reported domestic burglaries in
the control area during the initiative period, albeit not as dramatic as that seen in the
areas adjacent to the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area. Indeed the general year on year
trend for the control area mirrors that of the research area.

To establish how these trends equate to the police division as a whole the data for
domestic burglaries for the whole area is next examined and seen in Table 2.5.
The data analysed seems to suggest a downward trend in reported domestic burglary throughout the whole police division. This is indicated in Table 2.6.

Table 2.7  % Change by Year in Domestic Burglaries in the whole Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>-18.4% (n = -135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>-5.8% (n = -35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-31.9% (n = -179)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>-1.5% (n = -6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2.6 shows, there has been a downward trend in domestic burglaries in the whole police division over the five years under examination. Some years have produced quite large reductions, (1999 saw a reduction of 31.9%), whilst others have seen smaller reductions. This probably reflects the focus brought to bear on this category of offence by the Home Office and the introduction of performance indicators into the police service, whereby detections and reductions of domestic burglary were used as a measure of effectiveness. This may also account for the national trend in domestic burglary as seen in Table 2.7.
Table 2.8  National % Change in Domestic Burglary Offences by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, at a national level, one can see a steady downward trend in this category of offence. Whilst this appears to be the case at a higher level of analysis, there are obvious differences at a local level. Disappointingly for the partnership, the number of domestic burglaries in the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area actually increased during the initiative (albeit by only 1 offence compared to the previous year). However, what was interesting was the large percentage of increase of domestic burglaries during the initiative in the areas adjacent to the Zero Tolerance project. This is particularly so, when compared to the dramatic reduction in domestic burglaries in the areas during the following year.

3. Crimes of violence analysis

This particular category for examination includes three main offences that are recorded as ‘Crimes of Violence’ - robbery, any category of physical assault and any type of sexual offence. As reports of crimes of violence can shape an individual’s perception of crime and fear of crime, and also indicate the cohesiveness or not of a particular community, an examination of this category is extremely relevant to establishing the success or otherwise of this initiative.

Table 3.1 below shows the total recorded crimes of violence in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale for the five years under scrutiny.
Table 3.1  **Total Recorded Crimes of Violence in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data reveal a steady trend of increase in recorded crimes of violence with the only change being seen in the figures for 1999, and that showing neither an increase or decrease in the numbers. The best that could be said about the impact of the initiative on this category of offence is that, of the years that showed a percentage increase in this area, the initiative in 1998 showed the lowest increase of 24% (n=11). The full percentage change by year in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2  **% Change by Year in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>+41.6% (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>+24% (n=11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>+77% (n=35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, to establish whether an effect of displacement may have taken place in adjoining areas, an analysis of data from these areas was carried out. The full data are shown in Table 3.3.
Table 3.3  Total Recorded Crimes of violence in area adjacent to the Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>February</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the overall trend for this category of offence in adjacent areas is one of increase from 1996 to 2000, it is noticeable that during the year of the initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale, the number of recorded crimes of violence was reduced by 20% (n=10), followed by no change in the figures for the following year. However, the following year showed a large increase of crimes of violence being reported to the police. The percentage change by years in adjoining areas is seen in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4  % Change by Year in Adjacent area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>+41% (n=+14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>-20% (n=-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>+100% (n=+38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using data from the control area, the following pattern in percentage change by year for this category of offence is seen.
Apart for the year 1998, there appears to be a steady increase in the number of these offences recorded by the police in the control area. Of particular interest is the similarity in increase for year 1999 to 2000 in both adjacent and control areas.

In order to place the data examined at a lower level into context, an examination of statistics for the whole police division was carried out. The full list of data is seen in Table 3.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the general trend of this category of offence is that of an increase over the five years of data. Interestingly, the year that showed the least percentage increase was
1998, the year of the initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale with a percentage change of +0.6% (n=3) over the 1997 figure. The largest increase in this type of offence took place during 1999, which saw an increase of 34.7% (n=179)

This increase slowed dramatically to 2% (n=13) during the following year.

Table 3.7  % Change by Year Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+16% (n=+67)</td>
<td>+0.6% (n=+3)</td>
<td>+34.7% (n=+179)</td>
<td>+2% (n=+13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a national level, whilst the overall trend of increasing recording of crimes of violence is seen, contrary to the previous data, a decrease in this category of crime was recorded for the year 1999, which saw a 6% reduction over 1998 results. The national percentage change for recording of this offence is seen in Table 3.8

Table 3.8  % Change by Year National figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+9%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
<td>+16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative, the results are again less than would be expected. Whilst the initiative area saw an increase of 24% during 1998, the adjacent area saw a reduction of 20% during the same period. It may be that perceptions of what was happening within the initiative area may have had a form of positive residual effect in surrounding areas. However, the fact that an increase occurred within the initiative area must lead one to assume that whatever
measures were taken by the partnership to tackle crimes of violence did not have the desired effect.

Overall, when all the data are examined the general picture for recording of crimes of violence is one of increase. The reasons for this may be many and complex, possibly linked to changes in the counting rules for certain offences such as common assault. However, an increased awareness of the rights of victims of violent crimes, the creation of support networks for victims of sexual abuse coupled with high media publicity, and a more positive approach by the police to dealing with perpetrators of domestic violence probably helped to ensure an increase in recording more crimes of violence.

4. Auto-crime analysis

This category of crime includes theft of and theft from motor vehicles. It is regarded by police as 'high volume crime', that is much of the crime recorded by the police relates to this type of offence. Apart from being an offence that appears to occur more frequently than other types of recorded crime, there are subsidiary disadvantages for a community that can affect perceptions of crime and fear of crime. Whilst most of the losses that occur because of these offences are recoverable from insurance companies, this, in turn, can increase premiums to insurance companies for those residing in high auto-crime areas. Further, whilst there is a high emotional impact attached to being a victim of any crime, Kershaw et al. (2000) report that 83% of victims of auto-related crime experienced emotional reactions with 46% stating they were affected to a high degree. Most commonly, this response was anger (89%
stated they felt this), followed by shock. Fear, crying/tears and difficulty sleeping were reported, with victims of thefts of vehicles being the most affected.

If the zero tolerance crime prevention partnership was to have success in achieving their objective of reducing crime by 25% over a 12 month period, then the high volume auto-crimes had to be addressed. If they were successful, this would show in the data for the area. The full statistics for the five-year period under examination is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Total recorded Auto-crime figures for Aberfan and Merthyr Vale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data recorded by police appear encouraging with what seems to be a steady decrease for the first three years of the statistics followed by an increase for the years 1999 and 2000. It is in this area that the initiative appears to have been successful, with an overall reduction of 24% in 1998 to the previous year. However, this must be tempered somewhat with the knowledge that there was a downward trend for the
years prior to 1998. The percentage change by year for this category of offence is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2  % Change by Year Aberfan and Merthyr Vale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
<td>-21% (n=-20)</td>
<td>-24% (n=-17)</td>
<td>+20% (n=+11)</td>
<td>+9% (n=+6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale was successful in reducing auto-crime offences, then this may have produced an increase in auto-crime in those areas adjacent to it. Table 3.4 shows the full data for those areas.

Table 4.3  Total recorded Auto-crime figures for adjacent areas to the initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of these data reveals that during the initiative period (1998), there was a slight increase of 1.5% (n=2) over the previous years figures for auto-crime in the areas adjacent to the initiative. However, this increase appears after a general trend
of reduction of this type of offence reported in the previous two years, which saw a reduction of 65 (n=9) in 1997 compared to the 1996 figure. The full percentage change by years is seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4  % Change by Year in Adjacent area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6% (n=-9)</td>
<td>+1.5% (n=+2)</td>
<td>+4.8% (n=+7)</td>
<td>-21.8% (n=-33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for the police division as a whole suggest that the areas adjacent to Aberfan and Merthyr Vale follow the divisional trend. These data are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5  Total Recorded Auto-crime Figures for ‘A’ (Merthyr Tydfil) police division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1558</td>
<td>1751</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>1414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After initially appearing to reduce during 1996 and 1997, there was an increase of 12% (n=193) during the year of the initiative. A further increase followed in 1999
with a dramatic reduction shown in these offences during 2000. Table 4.6 shows the percentage change by years within the police division.

Table 4.6  % Change by Year with Merthyr Tydfil police division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>-20%</td>
<td>-412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>+12%</td>
<td>+193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>+5%</td>
<td>+93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>-23.3%</td>
<td>-430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of the national figures for this type of crime reveal a consistent downward trend, with the largest reduction being 12% during the year 1998, as seen in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 National Change by Year Auto crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1996 to 1997</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1997 to 1998</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1998 to 1999</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1999 to 2000</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initially it appears that the crime prevention partnership could claim that the initiative had achieved success for the reduction of auto-crime offences by 24% over the previous 12 months. This was achieved in the face of an increase of 1.5% in recorded auto-crime figures in areas adjacent to Aberfan and Merthyr Vale whilst the division as a whole recorded a 12% increase.
Time Series Analysis of crime data from the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Initiative.

A time series is any set of data in which a well-defined quantity is recorded at successive equally spaced time points over a specific period. In this instance, to assist in evaluating what effect the crime prevention partnership had in the initiative area, the four main categories of crime shown in tabular form above have been converted into a time series analysis. The time series or blocks of time have been standardised into six monthly intervals in order to assist in discerning any patterns that may emerge. Should the initiative produce its desired effect, then this form of analysis would illustrate this.

As the initiative inputs did not start in earnest until April 1998, this analysis commences from April 1996 and finishes at the end of September 2000. The temporal data where the initiative was in being is indicated in underlined, bold italic text within the data. The table below illustrates the total numbers of recorded crime within the Merthyr Vale and Aberfan crime prevention initiative area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time series analysed</th>
<th>Total recorded crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1996 to September 1996</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1996 to March 1997)</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1997 to September 1997</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1997 to March 1998</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 1998 to September 1998</strong></td>
<td><strong>173</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 1998 to March 1999</strong></td>
<td><strong>210</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1999 to September 1999</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1999 to March 2000</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2000 to September 2000</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the above, there appears to have been no impact upon the total recorded crime in the area as a result of the initiative. Indeed the second six months of the initiative produced the highest number of recorded crimes in the whole of the time series analysis.

This is illustrated by use of a line graph. However, during the six months following the initiative the number of recorded crimes reduced to 146, the lowest in the analysis.

*Line Graph illustrating Time series analysis of Total recorded Crime in Initiative Area.*
Domestic Burglaries.

A similar analysis of domestic burglaries reveals that there was a general downward trend in this category of offence that continued into the first six months of the scheme. However, the second six months saw an increase in this type of offence that precipitated a general rise in domestic burglaries since that time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time series analysed</th>
<th>Recorded Domestic Burglaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1996 to September 1996</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1996 to March 1997</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1997 to September 1997</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1997 to March 1998</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 1998 to September 1998</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 1998 to March 1999</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1999 to September 1999</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1999 to March 2000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2000 to September 2000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The trends discussed above can be seen in the line graph overleaf.
Violent Crime.

The time series analysis of this category of crime shows a general rise that commenced before the initiative and continued unabated throughout the time period under consideration, with the exception of the time period October 1999 to March 2000. This occurred despite the high visibility and targeted policing that was promised.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time series analysed</th>
<th>Recorded Violent Crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1996 to September 1996</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1996 to March 1997</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1997 to September 1997</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1997 to March 1998</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1998 to September 1998</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1998 to March 1999</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1999 to September 1999</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1999 to March 2000</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2000 to September 2000</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once again this trend is easily discernable in the line graph shown below.

Line Graph illustrating Time series Analysis of Violent Crime in initiative Area.
Auto-Crime

Time series analysis of this category of crime appears to show that no discernable pattern although it could be suggested that there was a general down ward appearance to the figures prior to the introduction of the initiative in April 1998. However during the second six months of the scheme, recorded instances of this category of offence increased dramatically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time series analysed</th>
<th>Recorded Auto-crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1996 to September 1996</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1996 to March 1997</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1997 to September 1997</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1997 to March 1998</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1998 to September 1998</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1998 to March 1999</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1999 to September 1999</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1999 to March 2000</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2000 to September 2000</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variance in recorded auto-crime can clearly be seen in the line chart overleaf.
In order to further understand whether the initiative had any success on crime in the area, a separate index type time series analysis has been carried out. In this analysis the six monthly data is indexed against the first months figures which are given the value of 100. The results for the main categories under consideration are shown below.
The commencement date for the above time series analysis is April 1996 (1) whilst the commencement date for the initiative was April 1998 (5) and September 1998 (6). The concluding date for the initiative can be seen as point (7).

The time series analysis of recorded crime within the initiative area seems to confirm the belief that the crime prevention initiative, with all its various inputs, did little to achieve its stated target of 25% reduction in all recorded crime. Indeed, in terms of total crimes, there was a significant increase in crime recorded in the second half of the initiative, which included a substantial rise in violent crime. The results illustrated above and those contained in the tables discussed previously are considered in the conclusion.
Conclusion

Despite the fact that it is difficult to draw any meaningful statistical significance of the results in some areas of the analysis due to the small numbers involved, there can be no doubt that irrespective of the inputs into the initiative by the crime prevention partnership, the objective of achieving a reduction of 25% in all recorded crime in the area over a 12 month period was not achieved. Indeed, analysis reveals there was a small increase in total recorded crime during that time of 6.3%.

Much of the positive publicity that was generated by the crime prevention partnership and utilised by the media, revolved around a basic comparative analysis of the recorded crime figures for the first six months of the initiative with the same time period of the previous year.

Further, this data was incomplete, in the sense that crime figures may take some time to include fully the total number of recorded incidents due to the lateness in reporting by the public and the recording systems employed.

Whilst this initial analysis showed a decrease of 15% in recorded crime for the first six monthly period, the long-term analysis suggests that there was already a downward trend that actually started during the two years prior to the initiative. The general downward trend in recorded crime could be seen at a national and a local level, with reductions in the control site, adjacent areas to the initiative and in the police force area as a whole. Further, a longitudinal comparison of the total recorded crime within the initiative area as a percentage of the total recorded crime for the whole police division was conducted. This revealed that no great change occurred
during the 12 months of the crime prevention scheme in recorded crime within the
crime prevention scheme area.

One of the major efforts for the initiative revolved around attempts to prevent
domestic burglaries, as it was assumed by the Steering Group of the initiative that this
category of offence was a major problem in the area. The implementation of the
Homesafe scheme and much of the crime prevention advice and information revolved
around the reduction of this particular offence. Indeed, by using the Kirkholt Project
as a guide for best practice, it was believed by the partnership that this area would
have yielded the best chances of reaching the target of 25% reduction in recorded
crime. Despite these inputs and the attention given to this part of the scheme, no
reduction took place in recorded domestic burglary in this target area. Indeed, an
increase of one recorded domestic burglary took place. The actual numbers of
domestic burglary in question was quite small, 25 in 1997, with 26 in 1998 the year of
the initiative. Realistically, it could be argued, it is difficult to see how the 1997
figure could have been considerably improved upon, when one considers the rather
good ratio of domestic burglary to households in the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area.

However, a measure of success could be claimed, somewhat perversely perhaps,
when one examines the domestic burglaries recorded for the area adjacent to the
initiative. Here, domestic burglaries actually increased during the year long initiative
by a total of 17, indicating perhaps a displacement of this type of crime from the
target area to the surrounding locality. If this is so, this draws attention to a lack of
preparation by the partnership in preparing the adjacent areas for such an eventuality.
In terms of crimes of violence, the results seem to indicate that there was very little sign of success for the partnership initiative. Whilst the reasons for this may be complex, in terms of perceptions of safety, reductions in crimes of violence can provide considerable reassurance to the community and possibly reduce perceptions of fear of crime. This may reflect the partnerships belief that to reduce crime by its stated target, it had to concentrate mainly on domestic burglary to the detriment of other crime categories, as no major initiative took place to try to reduce the incidents of violent crime during the 12 months of the scheme.

However, it is in the area of auto-crime categories that some success occurred. Here there was a decrease in recorded crimes of this category by some 17 offences in total. Indeed, out of all the areas under consideration, including the control area, the adjacent area and the police division as a whole, the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale area was the only one that recorded a decrease in this category of offence. In truth this is somewhat puzzling as no major campaign to reduce the offence of auto-crime took place in the area. It could be argued however, that the fact that the initiative had a high media output, coupled with high visibility policing, at least in the first few months of the scheme, may have provided enough of a threat for perpetrators to move to different areas to commit this type of crime.

Overall, however, much of the data examined revealed that the trends that occurred in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale were echoed within the areas adjacent to the initiative site, where one would expect to see some evidence of displacement, if critics of situational crime prevention are correct. The fact that there appears very little evidence of this, apart from one area of crime category, would tend to suggest that the overt side of the
initiative might have had little or no effect upon recorded crime figures in the area.

Further the trends for the police division as a whole, coupled with the data for national trends, tend to suggest that on many occasions, reported decreases in crimes recorded by the police may be part of a much wider process at work, as opposed to the inputs of the partnership at Aberfan and Merthyr Vale.

Initial success claimed by the partnership after the first six months of the initiative proved false, as with the fullness of time a clearer picture emerged through the longitudinal analysis. What is obviously apparent, therefore, is that only by using a longitudinal study of crime data, coupled with a comparative and contextual analysis, can a clearer picture of the effects (or non effects) of a crime prevention initiative be fully analysed and appreciated.
6 The Questionnaire Survey Results

One of the main components of many community safety initiatives revolves around claims about reduction of fear of crime. The Aberfan and Merthyr Vale zero tolerance initiative was no exception to this approach. It was envisaged that this target would be achieved by the implementation of a variety of schemes previously discussed.

In order to assess the impact the initiative achieved in this area a comparative ‘before and after’ questionnaire survey was undertaken. The sampling procedure for achieving this has been previously discussed but briefly was based upon the entries in the electoral role, and the survey was undertaken using a mailed questionnaire comprising largely structured questions and answers. However, there were some opportunities for respondents to express their views without the restrictions of a range of pre-determined categories. Mailed questionnaires have a notoriously low response rate so it was encouraging to obtain a 38% (96 out of 250 questionnaires) and a 54% (164 out of 300 questionnaires) response rate, possibly reflecting the importance attached to and concern felt about the subject matter by members of the public.

The results in this chapter will be presented in three different, yet connected, sections. Firstly the section containing data and cross-tabulations regarding respondent data and the community will be analysed. The use of tabulations is a simple and frequently used way of showing whether or not there is a relationship between two variables. The second section will concentrate upon respondents’ perceptions about
crime in the area under concern and the fear of crime, and the last section will examine perceptions about the policing of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale areas. For ease of analysis, where necessary, percentages have been rounded up or down. Where appropriate, a deeper analysis using the Chi-Square technique was implemented. However, probably due to the small numbers involved nothing of statistical significance was observed.

**Respondent data and the Community**

As Sherman (1986) points out, there is substantial interaction between the characteristics of each community and the way it is policed. There is variation in the natural characteristics of the community, ranging from physical geography and demographics to political power. There are also variations in the decisions made by police executives and others constrained by community characteristics about policing in each community. Basic choice of policing, therefore, is affected by many variables. Some communities have substantial numbers of young people or others creating disorder problems on the streets, others have little visible crime and disorder. Some communities feature a great deal of commercial and business activity, others are exclusively residential. The physical geography of communities creates different needs and limitations for policing. Population and automobile density, type of housing structure, presence or absence of pavements and street patterns vary greatly. Some communities are highly dense, with much foot traffic and ample opportunity for surveillance of public places from private residences. Other communities are geographically spread out with few public or private places under surveillance. The important point is that these differences determine the range of choices that can be
made by populations with regard to community style policing and also creates different requirements for an appropriate mix of policing strategies.

**Gender of respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Pre initiative survey</th>
<th>Post initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42% (40)</td>
<td>46% (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58% (56)</td>
<td>54% (88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gender distribution of both samples is consistent with more male respondents than female. This is slightly biased in favour of males in the area when compared to the official returns from the 1991 census, which have been adjusted to reflect a more accurate and up to date picture (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997). This information gives the gender of the total population in the Aberfan and Merthyr vale area as follows:

- Male: 2180 (50.82%)
- Female: 2118 (49.12%)

In terms of the Merthyr Tydfil Borough area the gender distribution is as follows:

- Male: 28535 (48.1%)
- Female: 30782 (51.9%)

**Ethnic Group of respondents**

The ethnic group return from respondents suggests a community of predominantly white inhabitants and can be seen in Table 1.2. Official returns of ethnic groups for the population in the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale wards show that over 98% of
individuals regard themselves as white (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997) thereby confirming the data from the surveys in this initiative. Whilst the return for minority ethnic members is small, this in itself may present particular problems for these individuals such as lack of support and a forced tolerance of racism from within the community. This in turn may lead to criminal acts that are never reported officially and never enter the crime statistics for the area, but may affect a communities perceptions regarding fear of crime.

Table 1.2  Ethnic Group of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>95 (99%)</td>
<td>161 (98.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96 (100%)</td>
<td>164 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age data of respondents

The age distribution of the sample was slightly skewed towards older respondents as can be seen in Table 1.3 below. In both samples respondents aged over 65 years accounted for 23% of the total respondents, whilst those aged over 46 years accounted for 59% and 62% in the before and after survey. There is no suggestion that a disproportionately high number of questionnaires were distributed to such an older population so it is concluded that younger people may have chosen not to compete the questionnaire, or that in general, the population of this area is one that contains a high number of older people. Data for age distribution of population within the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil suggests this may be the case with 18% of the population within the
political ward of Merthyr Vale and Aberfan being recorded as of pensionable age. (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997). As for the low numbers of people under the age of 25 years, the older electoral register from which the sample was drawn might account for much of this phenomenon. However, the number of younger people recorded within the area as a result of the census, would indicate a lower percentage of 16 to 24 year olds than seen throughout the rest of the Merthyr Tydfil Borough area. (11% as opposed to 13%) (Merthyr Tydfil CBC 1997).

Further extrapolation of the data provides a clearer picture of the age range in conjunction with gender. 60% of all males who responded to the first survey were aged over 46 whilst in the second survey 56% of males were in this category; females provided a figure of 58% and 60% respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Pre-initiative Survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 years</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>3% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 26 to 35 years</td>
<td>21% (20)</td>
<td>15% (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 36 to 45 years</td>
<td>18% (17)</td>
<td>19% (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 46 to 55 years</td>
<td>20% (19)</td>
<td>22% (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 56 to 65 years</td>
<td>16% (15)</td>
<td>17% (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged over 65 years</td>
<td>23% (22)</td>
<td>23% (37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment status of respondents

The age skew is further reflected in the employment status of the samples as shown in Table 1.4 where it can be seen that in both surveys a high percentage of respondents (39% and 40%) respectively indicated they were retired.
Table 1.4 Employment Status of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Pre-Initiative Survey</th>
<th>Post-Initiative Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>47% (44)</td>
<td>33% (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>14% (15)</td>
<td>27% (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>39% (37)</td>
<td>40% (65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Status of respondents

The marital status of the respondents was consistent in both surveys with the majority of individuals indicating they classified themselves as being married. This category included couples that were living together but were not married. These results can be seen in Table 1.5 below.

Table 1.5 Marital Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>16% (15)</td>
<td>15% (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married*</td>
<td>73% (70)</td>
<td>74% (121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>11% (11)</td>
<td>11% (18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(includes couples living together but not married)*

Family Households

Respondents were asked to indicate the construction of the family unit within each household. This was considered important as it may influence an individual's perceptions regarding actual and perceived crime and hence their fear of crime.

Table 1.6 Make-up of the Family Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household details</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single person</td>
<td>13% (12)</td>
<td>15% (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>6% (5)</td>
<td>6% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple no children</td>
<td>17% (16)</td>
<td>12% (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with dependent child/children</td>
<td>27% (25)</td>
<td>29% (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with no dependent child/children</td>
<td>37% (34)</td>
<td>37% (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (92)</td>
<td>100% (160)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Couples predominated the results with this category being consistent in both surveys (81% and 78% respectively). This is in contrast with previous findings, which seem to indicate a predominance of single parent families in the South Wales area (Dunkerley 1999). However, couples with no dependent children i.e. living at home with them, were the highest response within this category at a consistent 37% in each survey. This is, perhaps, again indicative of the age range of respondents.

When cross-tabulations between household details and age range of respondents are carried out, the following is discovered. Of those who indicated they were a couple with dependent children 78% in the first survey and 69% in the second survey were under the age of '45 years'. However, of these individuals, no respondent placed themselves in the age range 'under 25' in the post-survey whilst only 2% of respondents in this category placed themselves in the same age range in the pre-initiative survey.

Conversely, in the category of couples with non-dependent children, both surveys were consistent in their returns, with 81% in the first survey and 86% in the second survey indicating their age as being over '46 years'.

Telephone ownership

There are several factors that can affect an individual's fear of crime. The ability to summon help or maintain contact with neighbours, friends and relatives could be an important factor in an individual's assessment of risk. It was therefore important to ascertain the level of ownership of telephones within the samples provided. There
was no discrimination made in the questionnaire for different types of telephones such as mobile or static telephones. Interestingly the first survey indicated 97% of the sample had a telephone whilst the second survey showed that 71% indicated telephone ownership.

Table 1.7 Ownership of telephones in households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone ownership</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97% (93)</td>
<td>71% (116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>29% (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (96)</td>
<td>100% (164)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vehicle ownership

Vehicle ownership can also play a part in forming perceptions about crime and also about the community. Individuals who own motor vehicles may not be as aware of community feelings and contacts as those who walk or use other forms of transport that bring them into regular contact with other members of the community.

Whilst a high percentage of respondents indicated vehicle ownership in the first survey (79%) the second survey revealed a lower response rate of 61%.

Table 1.8 Vehicle Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle ownership</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>79% (75)</td>
<td>61% (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21% (20)</td>
<td>39% (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (95)</td>
<td>100% (164)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Length of time lived in area

In order to gauge how the perceptions of respondents could be affected by their knowledge of the community respondents were asked to indicate how long they had lived in the area. The results from both surveys indicated overwhelmingly that the majority of respondents had lived in the community for over 10 years. (70% and 78% respectively). 9% and 7% of respondents indicated that they had lived in the area for less than 5 years.

Table 1.9 Length of time respondents lived in the area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time resident in area</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 year</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>9% (9)</td>
<td>7% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>21% (20)</td>
<td>15% (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10 years</td>
<td>70% (67)</td>
<td>78% (127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (96)</td>
<td>100% (163)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When further examined, it was found that in both surveys a large number of respondents in the age groups of age 46 years and above accounted for a large percentage for those who had lived in the area for more than 10 years (72% and 62% respectively). In terms of gender distribution, in the category of individuals who had lived longer than 10 years in the area, there was a fairly consistent return in both surveys, being female respondents accounting for 68% and 78% respectfully, whilst the male return measured 71% and 78% for the two surveys.
Satisfaction levels with community

In addition to establishing how long respondents had lived in the area, it was felt necessary to establish levels of satisfaction felt by individuals. Interestingly more people felt satisfied or very satisfied in the pre-initiative survey (83%) than after the initiative (71%) - a reduction of 12%. This may have been caused by the high media attention drawn to policing initiatives and community safety work that could have raised awareness and expectations amongst the community.

Table 1.10 Satisfaction rates with living in the area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction rate</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>18% (17)</td>
<td>14% (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>65% (62)</td>
<td>57% (93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>13% (12)</td>
<td>24% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
<td>5% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(100%) 95</td>
<td>(100%) 164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When satisfaction levels were further examined there was an even spread amongst the age of respondents in both surveys. Surprisingly perhaps, in the age group 65 years and over, 77% in the first survey stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with living in the area, whilst 73% stated this was the case in the second survey, a reduction of 5%.

The biggest cause for concern however, appears to be in the increase in the category of dissatisfaction which rose from 13% before the initiative to 24% following the initiative a rise of 11%. A closer examination of this category by the age range of respondents reveals that the biggest rise in dissatisfaction lay in the age range of ‘over 65 years’. Here, the level of dissatisfaction rose from 23% to 41%, which may be the
result of initiatives targeting youth in the area at the expense of older inhabitants coupled with a raising of awareness about crime by the media.

The community of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale appears in many senses to be a typical South Wales Valley community. The population, although fairly evenly spread in terms of gender, appears to be dominated by the older age ranges. This should not be the cause for any surprise as it is well documented that the region in which it is situated, that of Merthyr Tydfil, has suffered not only from a steady decrease in population, but also a negative migration of approximately 2,300 individuals between 1991 and 1996. (Dunkerley 1999). It is predominantly white comprising mainly of couples who live together with children or whose children do not live with them at present. Generally, the population is well established with the majority of people having lived in the area for more than 10 years, although there is some evidence to suggest that there is a growing dissatisfaction with living there. Further, the area suffers greatly from material and social deprivation, being the first in the most deprived district category in Wales in 1991 (Dunkerley 1999).

Perceptions about Crime and the Fear of Crime

Victim of crime data

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had been a victim of crime in the time they had lived in the area. The results in Table 2.1 below show a consistently high number of respondents who indicated that in their view that they had been a victim of crime, with 68% stating this was the case before the initiative and 67% respondents also stating this after the partnership initiative had finished.
Table 2.1 **Victim of crime**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Crime</th>
<th>Pre survey</th>
<th>initiative</th>
<th>Post initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68% (65)</td>
<td>67% (109)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32% (30)</td>
<td>33% (52)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (95)</td>
<td>100% (161)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When this information is further analysed by age of respondent who believed they had been a victim of crime, the results showed a consistent pattern in the two surveys with a fairly even spread over the different age ranges. However, in the category of ‘aged 65 years and over’, 71% of these respondents indicated they had been a victim of crime before the initiative, whilst this figure dropped to 65% after the initiative.

The gender of victims of crime revealed the following. Female victims of crime increased from 34% to 38% following the initiative, whilst male victims of crime reduced from 66% in the pre-initiative survey to 62%.

Further extrapolation of the data of victim of crime by age and gender showed some interesting and consistent results from both surveys. Of those females who stated they were victims of crime in the pre-initiative survey, 60% were under the age of 46 years whilst 27% were aged over 65 years. In the post-initiative survey the spread of data for female victims was more consistent. However, 24% remained in the category of over 65 years of age. For male victims of crime, a similar version of events was seen, with 21% in the pre-initiative survey being over 65 years of age, with the same figure being returned in the post-initiative survey.
Types of Crime

In addition to the above question, respondents were asked to indicate what type of crime they had been a victim of crime whilst they had lived in the area. As this was a multiple-choice question some respondents indicated they had been the victims of different types of crime on several occasions during the time specified in the question. Of those individuals who indicated they had been the victim of crime it is apparent that the crimes that were most prevalent were those commonly referred to as auto crimes i.e. theft of and theft from motor vehicles. Table 2.2 shows that 66% of respondents indicated they had suffered auto crime before the initiative whilst 49% indicated this after the completion of the initiative. Interestingly, the post-initiative survey showed an increase in most types of crime suffered compared with the pre-initiative survey, with the exception being in the category of autocrime which dropped from 66% to 49%. This may be due to a greater public awareness and willingness to report these incidents as a result of media reporting.

Table 2.2 Types of crime suffered by victims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Crime</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>17% (6)</td>
<td>20% (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>17% (6)</td>
<td>19% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of vehicle</td>
<td>17% (6)</td>
<td>20% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from vehicle</td>
<td>49% (17)</td>
<td>29% (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other type of crime</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (35)</td>
<td>100% (174)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these results are cross-tabulated with the age of the victim there is a fairly even spread over the type of crime. The main exception was in the category of crime ‘theft from vehicles’. The pre-initiative survey revealed that older individuals, that is, those
over 46 years of age, accounted for 65% of victims of this type of crime, whilst the figure for the post-initiative survey was 59% of this age group. Interestingly, this age group was pre-dominant in the post-initiative survey with return rates of 61% as victims of theft, 66% as burglary victims and 60% as victims of theft of vehicles.

The gender of victims of crime revealed that in the pre-initiative survey males accounted for 63% of all victims of crime, whilst 71% of victims of theft from vehicles were male. In the post-initiative survey, males accounted for some 72% of all victims of crime, whilst 83% of males were victims in the assault category. 69% of victims of theft of vehicles were male, whilst 65% of victims of theft from vehicle were male.

A further cross tabulation took place examining those individuals who stated they had been a victim of crime by the length of time the individual had lived in the area.

The results for those who indicated they had been a victim of crime in both surveys are shown below;

Table 2.3 Victim of crime by length of time lived in area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time lived in area</th>
<th>First Survey</th>
<th>Second Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
<td>3 % (2)</td>
<td>3.5% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>21.5% (14)</td>
<td>16.5% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>75.5% (49)</td>
<td>80% (87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (65)</td>
<td>100% (109)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By far the greater number of people who stated they had been a victim of crime had lived in the area for longer than 10 years.

Safety at home at night.

Table 2.4 below gives an indication of how fearful respondents felt as it is believed fear at home has the greatest impact on life satisfaction (University of Melbourne 1998). In spite of media comments and other publicity about widespread fear of crime, it is interesting to note that 90% of respondents in the pre-initiative survey and 88% in the post-initiative survey felt either very or fairly safe within their own homes at night. Nevertheless, there was a slight increase in the number of respondents who felt either unsafe or very unsafe in the post initiative survey compared with the pre-initiative sample (12% as opposed to 10%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Safety</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very safe</td>
<td>10% (11)</td>
<td>13% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly safe</td>
<td>80% (74)</td>
<td>75% (123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>7% (8)</td>
<td>9% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsafe</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>3% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (96)</td>
<td>100% (164)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results are consistent with a previous public opinion survey in the area (South Wales Police 1997) when 82% of respondents from Merthyr Vale and Aberfan stated they felt safe at home during the night. Mirlees-Black and Allen (1998) have reported similar findings in the British Crime Survey, stating that in the 1998 survey only 9% of respondents reported that they felt unsafe at home at night.
Age of respondent seemed to have an important impact upon the results. Of those respondents who stated they felt unsafe or very unsafe, 70% in the pre-initiative survey and 68% in the post-initiative survey were over 46 years of age indicating a reduction of fear in this category. However, of those who stated they felt safe at home at night, 86% in the first survey and 91% in the second survey were aged over 66 years of age. This indicates a rise of 5% who stated they felt safer, in this category.

Of those individuals who stated they felt unsafe or very unsafe, 85% were females in the pre-initiative survey whilst this figure was 68% in the post-initiative survey, a reduction of 17%.

Further extrapolation of the data revealed that the length of time a respondent was resident in the area was prevalent in some of the fear categories. Of those individuals who stated they felt unsafe or very unsafe, 73% in the pre-initiative survey and 84% in the second survey (an increase of 11%), had lived in the area for over 10 years. However, of those individuals who lived in the area for more than 10 years the results showed a remarkable consistency with 88% in the first survey and 87% in the second survey who stated they felt safe or very safe at home at night.

Safety walking alone at night

Respondents were also asked how safe they felt when walking alone at night. The results are shown in Table 2.5 below. Whereas most people felt safe in their homes at night, responses to this question showed an increase in the fear factor. In the pre-initiative survey 50% of respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe walking alone at night. Results for the post-initiative survey show a slight decrease in this percentage to 46%.
What appears to be the case, however, is a genuine felt fear of crime when outside the home at night and alone by approximately half of the respondents in both surveys.

The target of reduction of people's perception of fear of crime in this category was slightly reduced, but nowhere near the initiative target of 25%.

Table 2.5  Safety walking alone at night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of safety</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very safe</td>
<td>6% (6)</td>
<td>7% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly safe</td>
<td>44% (41)</td>
<td>47% (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>33% (31)</td>
<td>29% (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsafe</td>
<td>17% (16)</td>
<td>17% (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (94)</td>
<td>100% (161)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of respondents who stated they felt unsafe walking alone at night is quite high when compared with the 1998 British Crime Survey data, which states that 10% of respondents living in comparable areas felt unsafe walking alone at night.

When examined further the data revealed that the majority of respondents who stated they felt unsafe or very unsafe when not at home at night were female with 69% and 64% of this group stating this.

The biggest change in response rate was seen in the age category by gender category for this section. A deeper analysis revealed that males over 46 years of age accounted for 79% of all males who said they felt unsafe or very unsafe at night when not at home. There was a reduction of 15% in the post-initiative survey when 64% of males over 46 years of age fell into this category.
Interestingly, there was a consistent response by those who stated they felt unsafe or very unsafe by length of time lived in the area with 48% and 47% of those who had lived in the area for more than 10 years stating this.

Much of the data provided in the survey confirmed the concerns of the majority of community members who attended the pre-initiative community consultation meetings. It was plain to see at these meetings that there was a concern for safety at night, and the perceived needs of individuals was summed up by one resident who stated:

"We want the police when they are needed, not eleven o'clock in the morning, but on a Friday and Saturday night"

Places to avoid

In order to establish perceptions about the community, respondents were asked to indicate whether there were places within the initiative area that they regularly avoided. In terms of all respondents, there was a slight decrease in the perception that there were places to avoid. The pre initiative survey result of 52% decreased to 47% in the survey carried out following the initiative.

Table 2.6 Are there places you would avoid?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Places to avoid</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52% (47)</td>
<td>47% (72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48% (43)</td>
<td>53% (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (90)</td>
<td>100% (154)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, when a deeper statistical analysis was carried out, it was found there were differences within the sub categories of gender and age group of respondents to the general responses to this question. Females were more likely to say there were places to avoid with 52% of females in the first survey stating this was the case, increasing to 58% in the second survey. Further, older people believed there were places to avoid more than the younger groups, with 59% of those aged over 46 years stating so in the first survey, this increasing to 62% being in the post-initiative survey.

A high number of individuals have reported being victims of crime both before and after the initiative, with the predominant crime being that of 'auto-crime'. Although there was a reduction in the number of victims of theft from vehicle following the initiative, all other categories of crime increased. The older sections of the community appear to be amongst the most likely to become victims of crime, or at least more likely to report it, and they are also the individuals who feel more vulnerable when it comes to safety outside the home at night. Whilst this information was not recorded by the South Wales Police at this time, this seems to be the case in many other crime surveys. (see Koffman 1996:2)

**Perceptions regarding the policing in the area**

Aspects of public confidence and expectations regarding the police were also investigated, as the police were seen as prime movers in the so-called 'zero tolerance type' policing section of the community safety partnership initiative. Several particular aspects of policing were examined: contact with the police; police approachability; an evaluation of the police; and visibility of police patrolling the area in question.
3.1 Contact with the police.

To assist in assessing individuals' perceptions of the police, respondents were asked to indicate if they had had contact with the local police in the 12 months preceding the initiative and subsequently in the 12 months when the initiative had run its course. The results, shown in Table 3.1 indicate what may be considered fairly high returns for contact both before and during the initiative (45% and 43% respectively).

Table 3.1 Contact with the police in the last 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact with police in preceding 12 months</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45% (41)</td>
<td>43% (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>55% (50)</td>
<td>57% (88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (91)</td>
<td>100% (154)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of gender and contact with the police there was an even spread between male/females at 50% in each category in the first survey. This was again echoed in the second survey with a 49% female/51% male difference.

Reason for contact with the police

When asked why contact with the local police had occurred over half the respondents in each survey stated the reason was because they had been the victim of crime (55% and 51% respectively). Overall the results for each category were fairly consistent with a 6% increase in the number of individuals who had contact with the police because they were witnesses to incidents.
Women were more likely to ask the police for help or advice in both surveys, 70% in this category being female in the first survey and a consistent 71% in the second survey. This is encouraging as it may indicate an increased confidence in the criminal justice system and a willingness to become more involved in the detection of crime.

Table 3.2  Reason for contact with the police in last 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for contact</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim of crime</td>
<td>55% (25)</td>
<td>51% (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report lost/found property</td>
<td>7% (3)</td>
<td>7% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness to incident</td>
<td>7% (3)</td>
<td>12% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioned as suspect</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked for help/advice</td>
<td>22% (10)</td>
<td>20% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported road accident</td>
<td>7% (3)</td>
<td>6% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving documents</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (45)</td>
<td>100% (71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approachability of the police

Public perceptions of police ‘approachability’ in the area was also measured and Table 3.3 shows the results. It is worth noting that 42% in the pre-initiative study and 43% of the post-initiative study did not know how approachable the police were in the area, presumably because they have not had any recent contact with the police. Conversely, a large proportion of those who have had such contact found the police to be very approachable. However, this positive indicator declined in the post-initiative study (47% and 42%) and is paralleled by an increase in people feeling that police are not very approachable post-initiative survey.
Table 3.3 How approachable are the police in your area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of police.</th>
<th>Pre initiative survey</th>
<th>Post initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very approachable</td>
<td>11% (10)</td>
<td>15% (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very approachable</td>
<td>47% (45)</td>
<td>42% (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>42% (40)</td>
<td>43% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (95)</td>
<td>100% (161)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was generally believed that older people would show greater support for the police than those who might be targeted for police attention such as the youth of a community. The first survey revealed that of those who thought the police not very approachable in terms of age there was an even spread throughout the age categories. This was repeated in the second survey. However, in the category of ‘very approachable’, it appears that the age groups of 46 and above 58% in the first survey, increasing to 63% in the second survey believe this to be the case.

Being a victim of crime can also influence an individual’s perception of the service provided by the police. Disappointingly for the police, 80% in the first survey and 71% in the second survey who stated they had victims of crime indicated they thought the police were not approachable.

The quality of policing in the area

One of the prime concerns of the initiative was to improve the public’s perceptions of the police and to work in partnership with them and other agencies to improve the community. It was therefore hoped that the perception of how well the police did their job would have increased. The results are shown in Table 3.4 below.
Table 3.4 How good are the police in your area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of police</th>
<th>Pre initiative survey</th>
<th>Post initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do a very good job</td>
<td>17% (15)</td>
<td>12% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a fairly good job</td>
<td>58% (52)</td>
<td>55% (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a fairly poor job</td>
<td>20% (18)</td>
<td>22% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a very poor job</td>
<td>5% (5)</td>
<td>11% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (90)</td>
<td>100% (153)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an obvious decline in the number of people who felt the police were doing a good or fairly good job from 75% to 67%, whilst conversely those who thought the police did a very poor or fairly poor job increased from 25% to 32%.

One interpretation of this finding may be that the zero tolerance initiative raised the public’s expectations of the quality of service that should be provided to an extent that could not be sustained in the initiative period, or even in the latter stages of that initiative. In terms of gender, there appears to have been a substantial increase in the number of females who thought the police did a poor or very poor job (39% in the first survey to 64% in the second survey), with a corresponding decrease in males in this category. The South Wales Police public opinion survey (1997) revealed that 41% of respondents in this community thought the police did a good or fairly good job, whilst 26% stated they did a poor or very poor job.

To establish if there was a link between local knowledge and perceptions of the police, cross-tabulations were conducted between those who believed there were places to avoid, and perceptions of how good the police were. 33% of respondents
who thought there were places to avoid believed the police did a poor job in the first survey, whilst there was an increase in the second survey to 39% in this category.

Contact with the police for varying reasons can also influence an individual’s perception. Of those people who stated they had been a victim of crime in the first survey, 42% said they believed the police did a poor job, compared with 32% in the second survey. This decrease in the number of individuals who believed the police did a poor job in this category may be due to the increased number of agencies involved in dealing with victims of crime during the initiative, such as increased victim support facilities and crime prevention advice.

*Frequency of foot and vehicle patrols by the police*

In an attempt to establish public satisfaction with policing within the community respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they saw police officers on foot (Table 3.5) and also in police vehicles (Table 3.6). The area of high visibility police patrol is one that police forces throughout the country have been concerned about for a number of years. This, in part at least, is in response to performance indicators imposed by the Home Office and subject to inspection reviews by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary. Consequently, the South Wales Police, along with many other forces, have implemented uniform patrol systems in line with external advice and guidance (HMIC 1998; Audit Commission 1996a:1996b).

Six out ten people in the sample reported that they rarely or never saw a police officer on foot patrol before the zero tolerance initiative, whilst this increased to seven out of ten for the sample provided covering the actual initiative. This is particularly
disappointing for the partnership, which relied heavily on police presence to achieve many of its aims and objectives. A previous survey conducted in the area seems to confirm the high number of respondents who stated they rarely saw a police officer on foot patrol, with a response of 84% (South Wales Police 1997). Indeed, only in one category of response, that of seeing a police officer once a month was there a minor increase, from 7% to 9%.

Table 3.5  How often do you see police patrol on foot?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a day</td>
<td>7% (6)</td>
<td>4% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>13% (12)</td>
<td>8% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a fortnight</td>
<td>7% (6)</td>
<td>7% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>7% (6)</td>
<td>9% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely or never</td>
<td>66% (61)</td>
<td>72% (110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (91)</td>
<td>100% (155)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of fear of crime and respondents' perception that there were places to avoid in the initiative area, the lack of visibility of police patrols on foot appears to be an important factor. 69% of those who said there were places to avoid in the pre-initiative survey stated they rarely or never saw police on foot patrol, whilst this figure rose to 74% in the post-initiative survey. Being a victim of crime likewise appears to be a factor, with 71% stating they never or rarely saw a police officer on foot. This is consistent in the second survey with a response rate of 70%.

In terms of police officers seen in vehicles there was again an increase in the rarely or never seen category from 41% to 43%. This is consistent with the South Wales
Police survey (1997), that showed a return of 44% of respondents who stated they rarely or never saw a police officer in a vehicle. There was also a decrease in the number of people who stated they saw a police officer in a vehicle once a day from 30% before the initiative to 22% during the initiative. Even allowing for the fact that, perhaps understandably, more people stated they saw police officers in vehicles than on foot, the results are disappointing for the partnership. This is particularly so as part of the strategy involved an increase in police visibility in the area.

Table 3.6 How often do you see police patrol in a car?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Pre-initiative survey</th>
<th>Post-initiative survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a day</td>
<td>30% (28)</td>
<td>22% (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>17% (16)</td>
<td>22% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a fortnight</td>
<td>6% (6)</td>
<td>6% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>6% (6)</td>
<td>7% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely or never</td>
<td>41% (38)</td>
<td>43% (68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (94)</td>
<td>100% (159)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a decrease in both females and males in the area who stated they saw a police vehicle once a day from 29% and 30% respectively to post-initiative returns of 19% female and 25% male respondents. Age, too, appears to influence responses to a degree, with those respondents aged over 65 years of age being the primary group stating they rarely or never see a police car (55% and 49% respectively).

The fact that community members indicated they did not see a police officer as often as the steering group would have liked is of concern. This is particularly so as community expectations during the pre initiative stage were raised by meetings and the media campaign. At the first community meeting, however, there was much
scepticism over promises of higher uniform police presence. Several members of the audience were from the few remaining small businesses in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. Their response was not enthusiastic and one of their number summed up their feelings thus:

"We don't see a policeman in Aberfan. It's the same old promises, we get our windows smashed and nothing gets done. Three years ago we would have welcomed you with open arms, but now? We've heard it all before, nothing but empty promises to keep us happy"

(Aberfan Shopkeeper)

The main concerns of the community revolved around the perception that all the problems of crime and disorder were caused by the youth of the area and illegal drug-taking. When assured that the police would tackle the problems, one resident suggested that the police were not interested in local youths who take drugs:

"When it comes to drugs, whenever we try to tell you lot about our drug problems, you tell us 'It's the big boys we're after, the big dealers, not the little ones on the street'. But it's the little boys we want you to get after, they're the ones who cause us trouble, we don't want you to target the big boys"

(Aberfan Resident)

The concerns of the individuals in the community meetings were plain for all to see. They wanted youth annoyance and illegal drug activities at street level addressed and a highly visible police presence on the streets.

Considering the apparent input by the partnership and in particular the local police, the results relating to policing in the area, which it was hoped would influence
individuals' perception of crime and fear of crime, were extremely disappointing. This is particularly so in view of the comments made during the pre-initiative meeting. As an example, the number of people who thought the police were not very approachable actually rose by 4%, victims of crime continued to think the police did a poor job despite the multi-agency approach adopted for victim support, whilst visibility of uniformed police officers on foot and in vehicles was perceived to have actually dramatically decreased.

Conclusion

The questionnaire survey

The second main objective of the initiative set out to reduce fear of crime in the community by 25% over the 12 month period of the scheme. A major influence in achieving this target was to be the extra deployment within the community of regular and special constables engaged in targeted high visibility policing. This meant, in many cases, police patrols to be undertaken at localities that saw a high number of individuals in the public place at a given time. A good example of this type of patrolling involves the placing of special constables outside bingo halls or cinemas when the public leave.

This type of strategy appears to work well within a community that has these types of facilities available, and a population that is in a position to spend money on them.

The research tends to suggest that in the case of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale, there was very limited opportunity to impress the public by presence of the police in this
manner. The information provided by this survey suggests that here is a well-established community, with the majority of respondents having resided in the area for quite some time. A large percentage of respondents stated that they were satisfied with living in the area to a greater or lesser extent. However, there is some evidence to support the belief that this view is reducing. This may in some part be due to the high media output of the initiative that may have influenced individuals' perceptions of the amount of crime and disorder within the community in the area as a whole. In general terms the population consisted of an even spread amongst gender but in terms of age a large proportion of the community appear to be in the older categories. There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that this community is predominantly white and that the majority regard themselves as Welsh. Coupled with this is the fact that there appears to be quite a low number of individuals who own cars and telephones when compared with other communities within the local authority area. It is fair to say that this is a community that may retain close parochial ties within its boundaries. As such residents may not respond well to crime prevention initiatives that have been implemented without proper consultation and, indeed, the approval of the community itself. The evidence shows that this community suffers high unemployment, particularly amongst the youth of the area, and this would introduce certain complications for the delivery of the initiative if consultation and explanation of the scheme with these groups was not forthcoming. All these factors are important considerations if the community is to be considered as part of the solution to the problems of crime and disorder.

In terms of the community's perceptions of crime, a surprisingly high number of respondents considered themselves to be a victim of crime and this was dominated to
a large extent by the more elderly respondents. What is most interesting is the high number of auto-crime offences reported by the respondents. It appears an obvious problem for the community that should have been highlighted during the consultation phase and any cursory examination of crime figures. In contrast domestic burglary offences were never reported as being the prime offence that individuals suffered from either before or after the crime prevention initiative. Not unusually most respondents felt safe at home at night, but the number of individuals who felt unsafe walking alone at night was consistently high in both surveys. It was believed that this category would have fallen considerably in the second survey if the initiative had been successful, as would responses to the question regarding places to avoid, which showed a small decrease.

Both surveys appeared to show a high percentage of contact with the local police. A contextual analysis of this showed that a large number of these individuals did so as victims of crime, and these individuals also stated that in the main they thought the police were not very approachable. As the response of being very approachable actually declined in the second survey, this must surely raise serious questions about the commitment of quality service provided by the police to victims of crime during this initiative. A separate area which was seen as being vital to the reduction of crime and fear of crime was in the area of high visibility policing. The survey shows that, far from respondents indicating an increase number of sightings of the police, these sightings decreased during the post initiative survey. This may well have had a major impact upon the initiative as a whole. Given the decline in the number of individuals who thought the police did a good or fairly good job and a corresponding percentage increase in those who thought the police did a poor or very poor job, this is a
disappointing result, given the promise of so many inputs by the partnership, especially by the police.

That the objective of reducing fear of crime through the zero tolerance initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale by 25% was not achieved is disappointingly obvious. A lack of in-depth community consultation and an inability correctly to analyse the major crime problems through crime pattern analysis, meant that the objective never really had the support of the full community nor targeted the important areas of criminality that was of concern.

There appears to have been a very poor response to the initiative by the police in the area when it came to carrying out the various inputs, including high visibility policing and targeting the concerns of the public. This may in part be linked to the failure for proper consultation and direction. However, it should come as no surprise that the wishes of senior police managers were not carried out as they had been intended. Reuss lanni et al (1983) point out that there is very often a translation process that takes place in police work between ‘street cop’ and ‘management cop’. This process influences the success or otherwise of projects such as crime prevention initiatives, as it is often the commitment of staff at the lower level of organisations that enable initiatives to become a success. Perhaps one of the biggest problems lay in the fact that this project was top-down driven with very little community involvement and almost no intelligence-led research properly to identify the main areas of concern with regards to crime and disorder in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. This, in turn, had a major impact upon trying to achieve the fear of crime objective.
Qualitative analysis

This type of research very often provides a deeper understanding of the interactions that take place within any multi agency approach to crime reduction. The covert methods used highlighted many fundamental problems inherent in this initiative and which could have greatly influenced the results in the questionnaire surveys. Many of the individuals involved of the scheme were sceptical and obstructive even before any attempt to apply the inputs began. Many of these problems appear to have revolved around the struggle for control and power within the local police hierarchy, with the local supervisors jealously attempting to maintain control over the officers, to the obvious detriment of the scheme. This lack of support demoralised the two community officers in the initiative area, gradually discouraged the special constables and ultimately led to the police input shrinking to virtually nothing in the last days of the scheme. It may then be assumed that this would have a marked effect upon individuals' perceptions about the police, crime and fear of crime in general. Further, despite the fact that local councillors showed a degree of support for the scheme, particularly the uniform patrols, there was little evidence from the community that they were overly happy to support it. The evidence from the community meetings could be construed as the community having given up that anything could be achieved. This may well have led to the community apathy witnessed throughout the initiative. There appears to have been suspicion and mistrust between the leading agencies at the delivery level of the initiative. No real attempt was made to explain roles or integrate those attempting to deliver the scheme, and this led to interagency conflict, which must surely have had a detrimental effect upon the scheme as a whole. These issues, that affected the implementation of the initiative, are discussed at length in the next chapter.
7 Implementation

Implementation Failure

Implementation failure is as likely to cause unsuccessful crime prevention programmes as any other is so it is important to try and ascertain exactly what happened over the life of the initiative. This means asking a number of related questions such as: who was involved; what decisions were taken; how were they arrived at; did any unforeseen events arrive; did people do what they said they would do? In order to accomplish this, an examination of the major components in the crime prevention partnership is required.

The Local Authority

Although the local authority appears to have been very supportive of the scheme, it could be argued that there was little visible evidence during the initiative of this support. Referrals to the local authority by the local police regarding removal of graffiti, for example, resulted in little being done. This resulted in repeat referrals, and caused friction between some of the main component members of the scheme. It also became apparent as the scheme progressed that as far as the local authority was concerned, Safer Merthyr, now that they were partially funded by the local authority, was their visible representative in the scheme, and as such, supplied their main input.

Community - Raised expectations

Little thought seems to have been given to the conditions necessary for effective community participation and almost no resources were committed to the community role. Friedman (1994) believes the quality of the community’s participation is
decisive. If community style policing is to contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder and the improvement of a neighbourhood’s quality of life, more than dialogue is necessary. For problem-solving partnerships to be effective there must be grassroots organisation through which volunteers can work and be educated, with informed leadership and an appropriate problem-solving target. This problem should be one that residents have a strong stake in clearing up. No evidence of this was forthcoming during the initiative, whose only contact with the community came from two community meetings held to introduce the scheme. The remaining contact was with the elected representatives who, it could be argued, represented only a proportion of those who lived in the area.

**Safer Merthyr**

Funding constraints mean crime prevention programmes are often expected to deliver results within an unrealistic short time span. During the early phases of the initiative, staff appeared to work hard at the tasks they were allotted, but as time wore on demands from other part of the local authority area reduced their inputs. Nevertheless, over 100 houses in the initiative area did receive the free Homesafe Scheme locks on their houses. The majority of these fittings, it must be pointed out, were completed not on burglary victims but on those individuals identified by Safer Merthyr as being at risk of becoming victims of crime, including the elderly. This may, in fact, have contributed to an increase in perceptions of fear of crime amongst this group of individuals. Friction between staff and the local police was evident and although on occasions cooperation did exist, arguments and ‘office politics’ ensured there was always an undercurrent of suspicion at the lower levels of both Safer Merthyr and the police.
Community Safety officers

In order to involve the community at large and provide another level of surveillance, Safer Merthyr attempted to recruit 20 individuals from within the community. These individuals would be trained on accredited courses dealing with crime prevention, community safety issues and personal skills development. Ultimately, it was believed, these individuals would staff the crime prevention shop within Aberfan. However, despite a media campaign to recruit people (*South Wales Echo* 10/3/98) not one individual applied for the position. This was duplicated when attempts were made to introduce neighbourhood watch into the area, with no individual offering to take up this challenge. Again, during the initiative no attempt was made to understand why this should have been the case, and indicates the partnership's blinkered view of community involvement in the scheme. This may also be attributed to the lack of communication and meetings with the community as the initiative progressed.

Crime prevention shop

The crime prevention shop was opened some four months into the initiative with a flurry of media attention (*South Wales Echo* 20/8/98). Initially it was run by staff from Safer Merthyr and attracted some attendance from the local population. However, as time went on, and with no community safety officers appointed, the drain on resources at Safer Merthyr meant that the shop remained open only on selected days. Consequently, its purpose lost impetus and ultimately was ignored by people even when it was open. Further, the owners of the premises, who lived in Aberfan, were subject to abuse from other shopkeepers in the area, with charges of
favouritism amongst others. Consequently, these individuals withdrew their offer of free accommodation, and ultimately the shop closed well before the end of the scheme. This, it could be argued, was evidence of the inertia affecting the initiative, especially in the last six months. It also displayed a basic misunderstanding of the needs of the community who were never consulted regarding the implementation of the crime prevention shop.

Neighbourhood watch

Despite the stated aim to introduce the semi-official surveillance of neighbourhood watch schemes throughout the area, this was never realised. A combination of lack of will on behalf of community members, and the obvious lack of interest of the local police management at ground level was apparent. This lack of support resulted in no neighbourhood watch schemes being formed before, during or after the initiative. Again, no formal consultation took place between the community and the partnership in this area.

The Police

Much of the success of the scheme lay in the hands of the local police at street level. If the scheme were to succeed then the police, as an agency providing overall 24 hour presence, was the one visible agency that could ensure a positive result through their presence.

However, the contribution by the police was particularly disappointing, as were the results in the fear of crime survey that generally reported the local police not to be very visible or approachable. Lack of internal support for the two initial officers quickly appeared and they were left isolated and unsupported by their peer group and
by their supervisors. This led to disillusionment and hostility on occasions between police officers. Public enthusiasm for the scheme by the local sector commander responsible for service delivery in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale appeared to hide the fact that he did not wish the scheme to succeed and therefore the support and direction required at street level was not forthcoming. Perhaps this should not have come as a surprise and could have been anticipated. As far back as 1983, Reuss-Ianni and Ianni when discussing the implementation of new schemes into the police service wrote:

Planners and decision makers pay little attention to actual police practice, designing new programs and procedures based on seemingly rational and logical grounds while ignoring street level practices that have more impact on day to day operation and therefore the actual outcome of any intended programme or plan.

(Reuss-Ianni and Ianni 1983:252)

Highlighting the difference between ‘management cops’ and ‘street cops’ Reuss-Ianni and Ianni (1983) state that while the management cop is sensitive to politics and public opinion, street cops, annoyed at the apparent change in the rules of the system, fight back in the only way they know how. This includes a host of coping mechanisms and self-defending techniques that include misleading management as to the implementation and success of policy decisions. This may well have been the case in vital areas of the policing input to this scheme.

One interpretation of the findings is that the media prior to the implementation of the initiative raised the public’s expectations of the quality of service that should be provided by the police to such an extent that it was difficult to meet to this high
expectation in the first part of the scheme, and became progressively more difficult in the later stages of the initiative. This interpretation tends to be supported by the extra deployment of Special Constables in the area during the earlier stages of the initiative and may reflect the fact that they withdrew through lack of support in the final stages of the initiative.

This is indicated in the return of hour worked by special constables for the area as seen in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Hours Worked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st six months</td>
<td>375 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is particularly disappointing as when a time series analysis is carried out using the number of hours of duty performed by Special Constables against the total recorded crime in the first six months, it appears to show this may have had an impact upon crime in the area.
After the first six months no significant input by Special Constables was made to the initiative. There were several reasons for this, the main one being that Special Constables felt they were not receiving the level of support from the sector commander and other regular police officers from the area as well as competing demands.

"I've tried to get two officers for the Aberfan zero tolerance, but when I try to I'm told (by regular officers) they are going to be up in Dowlais. It's got so bad that the Aberfan zero tolerance will be having us only on a Thursday and Friday night. I just can't give them anymore."

(Special Constables Commander)

The removal of one of the community constables six months into the initiative with no replacement, and the lack of support for the initiative from other police officers,
may have assisted in this perception. Despite these problems the two community officers were committed to the scheme, particularly in the initial phases.

"I know it's naff to say, but I'm enjoying it so much, what's the word, rejuvenated, that's it. I don't feel that I'm just a number turning up answering calls or aimlessly plodding along the place. I really feel I'm doing something worthwhile"

(Aberfan Community Officer)

"You know, I talk to people now. I actually got time to do that and the people seem to appreciate it. They're always saying how nice it is to see me - I'm drinking tea all day with them now"

(Aberfan Community Officer)

The divisional commander echoed this enthusiasm for the initiative:

"In all my 33 years of police service, I've never felt so optimistic about the way the police are going. We should seize this opportunity with both hands, and get it back to what we should be doing, policing with the community, not on our own."

(Divisional Police Commander)

However, this enthusiasm did not appear to be matched by those who immediately supervised and influenced the policing of the initiative. Keeling and Cole (1996) point out the complexity of this type of police work and advocate that supervisors committed to community type police work should become mentors and coaches to officers, with the focus on assisting officers in solving neighbourhood problems not strictly adhering to organisational rules. However, the support necessary to promoting this initiative did not appear to be evident amongst front line supervisors.
"I don't know what they are fucking up to, they work days all the time and I can't use them for anything else. This is nonsense what they are doing, it won't work and is a waste of time."

(Supervisory Sergeant)

The obvious lack of support was not just confined to the community officer’s immediate supervisory sergeant. At Sector Inspector level the response was just as unsupportive of the officers in particular and the scheme in general. The perceived lack of control over the officers in their day-to-day activities was seen as a threat, and the concept of allowing them the freedom to work according to the needs of the community and having close liaison with the local councillors was totally disregarded.

"Well talking to fucking councillors and keeping them happy isn't police work. He (the divisional commander) has just lost touch with reality. What we want is more men not all this nonsense about zero tolerance and being nice to kids and that."

(Sector Inspector)

With the obvious lack of support for the two officers from their supervisors who were trying to carry out the initiative, it was hardly surprising that their colleagues in and around the initiative area were just as dismissive. The concern appears to revolve around the fact that community style policing including the form of zero tolerance policing proposed in this scheme, is not seen as being ‘real policing’ at all and that the community should leave policing to the police. As one police constable from a neighbouring beat said:
“You've only got to shout louder than anyone else and we come running, like little lap dogs. It's not the job I joined for sure. What happens to the real police work?”

(Police Constable, Merthyr)

The general lack of support and derision for the scheme was echoed throughout the police division. In particular, the CID who should have played a major role in targeting suspected offenders and drug abusers in the community, played no real part in the scheme. There was a prevailing view that the scheme did not involve plain-clothes police work, as it was a community-based project. The view and the attitude of CID officers highlight the rift between the two departments in the police division at this time. The attitude of one detective officer is representative of the department as a whole:

“Let them (uniform officers) do their thing with the community. Uniform do f*ck all anyway, so at least they'll be doing something.”

(CID Officer)

It is little wonder that the initial enthusiasm shown by the two selected community officers for the scheme waned fairly soon after commencement. On many occasions they were abused by their colleagues and accused of just trying to get a 'cushy number'. This peer pressure obviously had a great impact upon the two, and when one left the initiative with several months left, his explanation summed up his frustration at not being able to achieve the desired results and lack of support from his colleagues and supervisors.
"Everyone seems to think we are in it for a soft ride. One even said congratulations on your retirement from the police. It's sad, but someone's going to get it from me before long. They automatically assume it's not going to work and then they'll make it fail"

(Aberfan Community Officer)

One must conclude that there was a lack of consistent support for the initiative from the police in the immediate area. This could be crucial to the results obtained in the surveys undertaken, but illustrates problems experienced by lack of commitment from the police to crime prevention problems. As an organisation they are well placed to prevent crime by targeted patrol, issuing security advice or working with youth in attendance centres. For Hough and Tilley (1998) crime prevention should be woven into the fabric of police thinking especially since, as Bradley (1998) points out, the police are more likely to influence the public's views of and demands for policing if the police have a strong working relationship with the public.

It was not only in the area of police officer relationship that the initiative suffered. There was evidence of difficulties in the differing cultures that made up the partnership scheme. Councillors who were under pressure to be seen by their constituents to be as backing a successful scheme, were now open not only to praise when good results were produced, but were also susceptible to criticism when the results were not so good. This in turn brought them into conflict with the police over specific incidents and sought to reinforce negative stereotypes for those who were resistant to the initiative.
"I had three phone calls from people last night about groups of kids with baseball bats attacking each other in Aberfan. The police must have had ten or more calls about it but didn't turn up."

(Local Councillor, Merthyr Vale)

Despite the problems for elected representatives becoming more accessible and more accountable to the community in general the local councillors supported the initiative throughout. In part this may be due to the appeal of nostalgia for far off days when the perception was that each community had a police officer as part of the visible local machinery of social control. This equates to Reiner's 'golden age of policing' (Reiner 2000) when policing in Britain was believed to have been the envy of the world and was the cornerstone of society. For the local councillors, of whatever political persuasion, high visible policing equated to a return to the days when authority was respected and the villages were safe and free from crime.

"It was good to see a policeman walking and talking to the public just like it was in the good old days."

(Local councillor 1)

"People are not afraid now. I'd say the feeling in the village is like it was years ago, when it was safe to walk the streets"

(Local councillor 2)

Nostalgia for 'the good old days' should not be under-estimated in considering what this initiative was trying to achieve. Even the divisional commander who was a most influential individual in the steering group, indulged in this school of thought.
"We had it right for 130 years or so, then the wheel came off. We've got to get it back to where we were before the 70s."

(Local Divisional Commander)

Crawford (1998) has rightly pointed out the problems between differing agencies in the partnership approach to crime reduction. Differing organisational cultures, agendas and occasionally just the mechanics of trying to achieve the same result with differing approaches can cause problems, confusion and conflict. Despite outward appearances the partnership between Safer Merthyr and the local police was not considered by all the staff within those organisations to be as co-operative as others thought. There was reluctance on the part of the police to provide information, such as about burglary victims, to an outside agency who appeared to be making media gains by highlighting the Home Safe scheme as the only means to prevent burglaries. Staff from both organisations very often showed little appreciation of the working ethics of each other and each considered the other as a junior partner in terms of workload.

"The trouble with the police is that they will only do one thing at a time, and don't understand what we are doing."

(Safer Merthyr employee)

"They (Safer Merthyr) are lazy, don't know what to do and I have to go there and do their job."

(Police constable attached to Safer Merthyr)

These types of comments were commonplace during the initiative and the lack of commitment to the scheme by middle management and supervisors meant that they
were not challenged or corrected. These perceptions, coupled with a basic misunderstanding of each other’s role in the initiative and the reluctance of many of the police to appreciate the skills offered by Safer Merthyr and other agencies continually caused conflict, which in turn deflected the thrust of the crime prevention scheme.
8 Conclusions

This work has been based upon a partnership crime prevention initiative that sought to reduce recorded crime and fear of crime by 25% within a year of implementation in the areas of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale. In terms of this research the following areas were specifically of interest;

iii. What effect did this initiative have in the specific targets of reducing recorded crime and the fear of crime within the chosen community by using the techniques chosen?

iv. Further, did the research provide evidence of an effective method of dealing with the problems of crime and disorder

The partnership and the techniques involved in attempting to achieve these targets owe their existence to the fact that the last 15 to 20 years have witnessed the rise of different concepts of crime prevention and community safety, accompanied by a host of new ideas, techniques and practices. This rise, however, is not premised on a completely coherent theoretical framework but on a number of assumptions.

These assumptions are closely related to the theory known as Home Office or Administrative criminology and include the following:

vii. Acceptance of dominant definitions of what constitutes the problem of crime;

viii. A lack of interest in the social causes of crime

ix. Acceptance of the need for research to be applied to aid policy development and decision making
x. Support for rational choice or 'opportunity' approaches to specific offences
xi. Advocacy of 'what we know' and 'what works' criminal justice policies
xii. Being either employed within the criminal justice system or acting as a paid advisor to criminal justice officials.

(Mclaughlin and Muncie 2001:6)

Situational crime prevention sees crime as a routine aspect of everyday life to be avoided, discouraged and managed, and pre-supposes criminals as being no different from other rational human beings. As such it clearly has some of its beginnings in the ideas of classical theories of criminology. The use of the idea of target hardening and crime scene management has led to the introduction of schemes such as the Safer Cities initiatives and ultimately to agencies like Safer Merthyr. These have flourished under the rationale that the police alone cannot tackle crime and disorder and that leading organisations such as local authorities should assume a major role in tackling the rising number of recorded crimes in this country. Zero tolerance type policing, problem oriented policing and community policing assume that the police can have a major impact upon crime and disorder (Goldstein 1990; Friedman 1992; Fielding 1995; Pease 1997; Mallon 1997a;1997b) This assumption does not take into account any concerns regarding individual civil liberties should a style of 'tough' policing be implemented without due recourse to police discretion.

The success for these types of initiatives is far from being a foregone conclusion. Despite the promotion of similar crime reduction initiatives such as the Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project (Forrester et al, 1988), upon which much of the work of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative was based, it appears that there is no guarantee of success. As this work has demonstrated, despite the best intentions of
groups and individuals within the Merthyr Tydfil Crime Prevention partnership, neither objective chosen as a measure of success was achieved. This was despite the belief that here was a community that was ripe for this type of initiative and fully supported the partnership. As the Chief Executive stated prior to the start of the initiative:

"Zero tolerance only works when a community and groups get behind you and we have had a very positive response already"

(Director, Safer Merthyr, quoted in the *South Wales Echo*, 10/3/98).

There is no doubt that the desire for the community to be involved in the initiative was a genuine held belief. Safer Merthyr and the police, being considered prime movers in this initiative, believed that the targets chosen for measurement would justify their inputs and provide a blueprint for success that could not only be replicated throughout the local authority, but throughout the whole of the South Wales area. The fact that it had been labelled zero tolerance style policing, it was believed, would provide an easy handle for the media to use to report their success. Indeed, after six months of the initiative, by comparing the crime figures with the comparable six months of the previous year, it was believed that this success was easily attainable. These results were reported widely in the local media (*South Wales Echo* 20th August 1998; *Western Mail* 19th October 1998) and it was anticipated that the results after 12 months of the initiative would validate the belief in partnership crime prevention. However, as this work has demonstrated, this multi-agency crime prevention initiative did not achieve any of its published targets in the longer term.
Indeed, it could be said that it did not even approach the specific percentages quoted in its main objectives.

To understand why this initiative was not as successful as it set out to be, there are several areas that need to be explored. The emphasis on outcomes evaluation has meant that there has been a tendency to ignore the task of process evaluation. Yet, as Crawford (1998) points out,

> ‘it is a criminological truism that both the policy formation and implementation process will, in large part, determine any outcome.’

(Crawford 1998:206)

It is, therefore, important to analyse the outcomes of this particular initiative in the light of the two main areas of policy formation, that is the plan of what was to be done, and the area of implementation or how this plan was carried out. It was here that the covert observational methods employed assisted in helping to understand some of the reasons for the apparent failure of the scheme. By being in the central location of the crime prevention initiative, the researcher, on an almost daily basis, was able to observe the interactions and comments of important players in the scheme. These observations allowed the researcher to record the feelings, beliefs and actions of what Goffman might call the actors off-stage. (Goffman 1990). Here, out of the media and public limelight, individuals talked openly about their true feelings and beliefs in relation to the partnership approach to policing and crime prevention. This area of research proved vital to understanding why there appeared to be such a problem with the implementation of the scheme.

Tensions between employees of the various agencies and, more importantly perhaps, the apparent lack of commitment and co-operation between the police officers
responsible for delivery of the scheme, highlight the difficulties in not only delivering the concept at street level, but even in the formation of the plan itself.

Whilst the area of implementation has been examined in the light of delivery of the project this was by no means the single contribution to the apparent failure of the scheme to succeed in achieving its targets.

The area of policy formation, that is the plan of what was to be done, also needs to be examined.

One of the key problems with evaluating the impact of preventative interventions on crime is the natural or random fluctuation in levels of crime within a given area (Ekblom and Pease 1995). The more localised the intervention, the greater the size of the problem and as crimes are relatively infrequent occurrences there are bound to be considerable fluctuations over time in offending. Where numbers are particularly small, fluctuations will be greater. The implications are that it can be difficult to know whether changes in crime rates - either up or down - are the product of preventative interventions or natural fluctuations, or even a combination of the two. Hence a small number of burglaries, for example, can have a dramatic effect on local crime rates, whilst a targeted area cannot be held in a vacuum and is continuously being shaped by forces outside the control of researchers.

The most effective crime prevention strategies adopt a problem seeking approach, concentrating on four major areas. These are routine scanning and analysis of relevant data, a formulation of strategy, implementation of attempted solutions and monitoring and evaluation, with built in feedback systems throughout. (Hough and Tilley 1997)
The formulation of effective crime prevention strategies turns on an adequate knowledge base of systematically evaluated past practices and established principles. Effective measures cannot simply be lifted off the peg and applied mechanically. They need to be tailored to local conditions and involve close partnership coupled with unusual and lateral thinking to solve problems.

With this in mind, therefore, the initiative in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale contained several fundamental flaws that may have undermined the initiative even before it got underway. Aberfan and Merthyr Vale was an area that did not suffer unduly from a high crime rate. In terms of the police division as a whole, its level of crime was no different from others including that of the control area, Heolgerrig.

Curtin et al (2001) suggest that the best strategies will be those that pay attention to the results of data analysis and attempt to understand how crime can be reduced. This includes employing intervention measures that are ordered and implemented in a sequential fashion. The quality of data in the pre-initiative analysis is vital. Crimes occur when a capable and motivated offender finds a suitable target without anyone or anything there to keep the three apart. (Felson and Clarke 1998) Using this as a starting point, it is useful to consider what is actually allowing crime to occur. Interventions can then be targeted to specific areas of concern.

As can be seen, the effectiveness of the crime prevention initiative would never prove to be as effective as in a high crime area. Rosenbaum (1988) suggests that crime prevention programmes should narrow their focus to a few specific crimes or problems in a small target area, so as to maximise the impact and render measurement more discernible.
The partnership steering group in this instance did not carefully diagnose any existing problems prior to the implementation of the initiative. There was an assumption that by implementing the Homesafe Scheme, domestic burglaries would dramatically reduce, thereby allowing the crime reduction target to be achieved and also assisting in the reduction of the level of fear of crime. There appeared to be no understanding that crime is a complex interaction of social events and that by fitting locks and bolts crime would not automatically reduce. In part this decision was based upon the reported results from the Kirkholt burglary reduction initiative, and serves as a warning to partnerships that try to replicate research from elsewhere.

The commitment to the Homesafe Scheme indicates there was no appreciation that the main crime problem in the area was not necessarily that of domestic burglary. Examination of the crime statistics reveals that the area suffered from a large number of auto-crime offences and had done so for some time. Yet no strategy document or major initiative was implemented to deal with this high volume crime. If suitable interventions have been chosen, they should fit easily into the specific objectives. Interventions should be planned once the analysis has been completed and they should be crime data driven rather than driven by other needs such as funding procedures linked to wider regeneration strategies or so-called ‘guesstimates’.

The surprise is that despite this, auto-crime figures fell in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale during the year of the initiative, against many of the general trends for this category of offence in local and national areas. This may well be an example of what Felson and Clarke (1998) call a ‘diffusion of benefits’ which occurs when offenders discover that the risks and efforts of committing a particular crime have increased due to
situational crime prevention efforts targeted on a different crime. Had a concerted
effort been made to target auto-crime instead of domestic burglary within the
initiative area, then the results for the crime prevention partnership could have been
startlingly successful. It is easy to see in hindsight that in terms of the formation of
the policy this initiative was flawed from the beginning, suffering as it was from pre­
figuring and the presumption that what works in one area will work in another. In
short it was not intelligence led. Consultation with the community appears to have
been carried out at a superficial level prior to the commencement of the scheme, and
that thereafter the contact was maintained at a purely political level with the locally
elected representatives.

Despite the fact that there appears to have been poor planning and consultation,
results for the initiative may have been better than seen if the implementation of the
scheme had lived up to its promises. It appears that here lies the problem for this
particular initiative, rather than in the theoretical basis of Home Office or
Administrative Criminological theory. The inability of the steering group to plan
effectively and the problems with individuals and agencies in the implementation
phase of the scheme clearly suggest that the problems lay there.

**Concluding remarks**

Whatever new developments may be in store in terms of crime reduction
programmes, there is a broad consensus that partnerships are essential ingredients of
effective prevention (Hough and Tilley 1998). As demonstrated by the research into
the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale crime prevention initiative, successful partnerships
need to consider several key areas that may improve their chances of sustainable crime reduction.

Hough and Tilley (1997) use the phrase 'getting the grease to the squeak' with regard to crime prevention efforts directed towards repeat victims of crime. In a more general sense this phrase can be used to imply that crime prevention efforts need to be well-focused on identified problems. That these problems need to be analysed through reliable sources of data is clearly advocated by Tilley (2001) who implores crime prevention partnerships to base themselves upon evaluation and evidence led crime reduction policies rather than an ad hoc approach. Clearly, the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale initiative lacked the decisive initial analysis that would indicate the particular crime problems that may have needed attention. Too much emphasis was placed on the Homesafe Scheme as a panacea for crime prevention in the area, with no scientific data to support this method in that particular community. Indeed, if it were not for the fact that the area was high on the list of deprived political wards, and therefore eligible for European grants and funding, one wonders why the decision to place the initiative in this area was taken when other areas with higher crime rates existed.

Laycock and Tilley (1995), when discussing the maintenance of momentum of crime prevention initiatives, state that if initiatives are to be continued to be sold, they need to continue to be marketed. Good practice in relation to crime prevention involves good marketing. It is not sufficient to launch an initiative and expect it, of its own free momentum, to continue in perpetuity both to be maintained and to be effective. This is particularly so in terms of maintaining contact with the community where the
initiative is being introduced. Several meetings were held with the community prior to the start of the initiative ostensibly to find out what it was felt was needed in terms of tackling crime and disorder and also to inform the community of what the initiative comprised. Despite the belief of the community that the use of illegal drugs was a problem, coupled with general disorder emanating from local public houses and the belief that the youth of the area had little in the way of facilities, none of these appeared to be a priority for the steering group. Consequently, it could be argued, the strategy involved was a misplaced one that did not directly deal with the perceived problems in the area. Further, very little contact appears to have been kept with the community itself via regular meetings, so that any adjustments in strategy that may have been required were not implemented. Certainly, consultation with the youth of the area, whom were highlighted at initial community meetings as being a perceived 'problem', appears to have been ignored other than to move them on from one traditional gathering place to another.

Sustainability of the initiative was a separate area that needed attention, particularly from the police delivery aspect. No process was in place to ensure that what the police said they would do over a 12 months period actually took place. There was very little understanding by the police of the problem of operationalising concepts such as zero tolerance policing and crime prevention techniques. The resistance to change evident in this research must have had a great impact upon the delivery of the initiative objectives. Yet at no time did the steering group fully understand the fact that those low level supervisors responsible for ensuring delivery of the scheme did not share the vision of the initiative. Consequently, the total commitment required for the success of schemes such as this, particularly from many of the main service
deliverers, the police, was absent from the start. Hostility and a lack of cooperation were evident in some areas of the partnership, between agencies and between staff within individual agencies.

A separate and equally important lesson for the future lies in the management of such schemes in relation to public expectations. Crime prevention initiatives should not be oversold as likely to lead to permanent reductions in crime unless they are of a very particular type, such as the total removal of the target of crime. In reality, the zero tolerance policing approach to dealing with crime and disorder as publicised by the partnership never was such a scheme. Therefore the perception of the public in the area as to just what was expected was different from what was actually being delivered. There were no sweeps of streets to remove the disorderly, or to arrest the drug dealers and burglars. It appears that the name ‘zero tolerance’ was used primarily as a media ploy to attract attention and possibly resources to implement this and possible future schemes. Whatever the reason for using the name, the police did not implement a major change in policing techniques within the initiative area and, ultimately, even the two community officers withdrew from the area for differing reasons.

It is vital that constraints on initiatives and the limits to potential effectiveness are spelled out clearly to reduce the threat of public disenchantment with often unrealistic and unattainable promises for reduction of crime and fear of crime.

In terms of the research process involved in this work, it would be more than interesting to revisit the area and conduct a further questionnaire survey to discover if
any long-term benefits in the area of addressing fear of crime had been achieved. The use of covert observational methods provided an understanding of what was going on inside the component parts of the initiative, and proved invaluable in this area. It would have been difficult for example to understand the reasons why the two community officers, so committed to the initiative at the start, should effectively reduce their commitment so soon.

In retrospect, an attempt to reach the youth of the area to seek their views and opinions on the scheme as a whole, would have contributed to the results of this research, and perhaps have provided more contextual information about the interactions that were taking place during the time of the initiative.

However, this research shows that partnership approaches to crime prevention may have a better chance of succeeding if they are focused in what they want to achieve, are narrow in scope in terms of what can actually be input, and with achievable objectives that are easily measurable. Careful consultation and selection of staff in key delivery areas are paramount if promises of what can be achieved at street level are actually delivered.

Perhaps the most vital part played by the formation of the partnership was the fact that different agencies that traditionally had not worked closely together in the field of crime and disorder actually did so. This must surely have led to an identification not only of the tasks in hand, but also some of the problems inherent within the formation of multi agency partnerships.
Clearly, the objectives for any type of crime prevention partnership need to be evidence led, with realistic time-scales in-built for regular consultation with the community. Staff must be fully committed to the ideals and beliefs of the partnership approach otherwise initiatives may become sabotaged by interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict. Steering groups should welcome feedback on performance during the initiative and have an ability to closely monitor inputs, allowing for adjustments. Only then may the benefits of partnership crime prevention schemes, tackling crime and disorder with the community, addressing real areas of quality of life, including environmental issues, be seen. Once that has been achieved then it may truly be said that a paradigmatic shift has occurred in the way policing is delivered in this country.
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Appendix One

The Questionnaire used in the Surveys
From January 1998 until January 1999, the police and other agencies, in partnership with the community, introduced a campaign to tackle crime and fear of crime.

By filling in this questionnaire you will be helping to provide information to evaluate the campaign. The questionnaire is anonymous and the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*Please complete the form by ticking the relevant boxes*

1. Are you: female [ ] male [ ]

2. What will be your age on your next birthday? ............. (years)

3. Do you consider yourself to be
   - Employed [ ]
   - Unemployed [ ]
   - Retired [ ]
   - A student [ ]

4. What is your ethnic origin?
   - Black [ ]
   - Asian [ ]
   - White [ ]
   - Other [ ]

5. What is your marital status?
   - Single [ ]
   - Married or living as married [ ]
   - Widowed, divorced or separated [ ]

6. Which of the following best describes your household?
   - Single person [ ]
   - Single parent [ ]
   - Couple, no children [ ]
   - Couple with dependent children [ ]
   - Couple with non-dependent children [ ]

7. Do you have a telephone? Yes [ ] No [ ]

8. Do you have car and/or motorcycle? Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. Which of the following do you consider that you live in: Merthyr Vale [ ] Aberfan [ ]
Questions about your neighbourhood

10. How long have you lived in Aberfan/Merthyr Vale?
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1 - 5 years
   - 6 - 10 years
   - More than 10 years

11. Overall, how satisfied are you with living in Aberfan/Merthyr Vale?
   - Very satisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Dissatisfied
   - Very dissatisfied

12. Some of the following may be a problem in your neighbourhood, please tick the appropriate boxes to show how much of a problem they are to you personally.

   1. Street lighting
   2. Standard of housing
   3. Rubbish/litter
   4. Graffiti
   5. Young people hanging about
   6. Empty, derelict or boarded up buildings
   7. Traffic/parking problems
   8. Dogs
   9. Neighbours
   10. Drugs (dealers and users)
   11. Loud/fast cars or motorcycles
   12. Loud music or parties

   - Not a problem
   - Small problem
   - Big problem
   - Don't know

13. During the time you have lived in this area, have you ever been the victim of a crime?
   - Yes
   - No

14. If you have answered Yes to Question 13, what was the nature of the crime?
   - Theft
   - Burglary
   - Assault
   - Theft of vehicle
   - Theft from vehicle
   - Other
   - Please specify: _______
15. What do you see as being the worst problem where you live?

16. Do you think that the amount of crime in Aberfan/Merthyr Vale has changed in the past year?
   - It is about the same
   - There is more crime now
   - There is less crime now

17. How safe do you feel in your own home at night?
   - Very safe
   - Fairly safe
   - Unsafe
   - Very unsafe

18. How safe do you feel walking alone at night near your home (within twenty minutes walking distance)?
   - Very safe
   - Fairly safe
   - Unsafe
   - Very unsafe

19. How concerned are you about the possibility of the following incidents occurring near your home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>Very concerned</th>
<th>Quite concerned</th>
<th>Not very concerned</th>
<th>Not concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Burglary</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Street Robbery</td>
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<td>3. Having vehicle stolen</td>
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<td>4. Sexual assault</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Physical assault</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Serious traffic offences</td>
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<td>7. Drink driving</td>
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<td>8. Drug use</td>
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<td>9. Racist attacks</td>
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<td>10. Hooliganism or vandalism</td>
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<td>11. Drunkenness</td>
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<td>12. Street parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Stray dogs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Dogs fouling the street</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Vandalism</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Have you seriously considered reporting any of the incidents listed in Question 18 to the police in the past twelve months?

   No ☐
   Yes ☐ How many times? ☐

20. Have you actually reported any of these incidents to the police in the past twelve months?

   No ☐
   Yes ☐ How many times? ☐

21. If you have considered reporting any of the incidents listed in Question 18 to the police but have not done so, which of the following affected your decision?

   Reported the matter to other authorities ☐
   Fear or dislike of the police ☐
   Fear of offenders ☐
   Police could have done nothing ☐
   Little chance of identifying offenders ☐
   Little chance of recovering property ☐
   Too much effort involved ☐
   No loss or damage to property ☐
   Dealt with the matter personally ☐
   It would affect my insurance premium ☐

22. How safe do you feel when you are in the following situations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Fairly safe</th>
<th>A bit unsafe</th>
<th>Very unsafe</th>
<th>Never in situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking alone in this area after dark</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking alone in this area during daylight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone in your home during daylight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driving your car alone after dark in this area</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driving your car alone during daylight in this area</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking alone in the shopping area after</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking alone in the shopping area during daylight</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

23. Are there any places in your area that you try to avoid? Yes ☐ No ☐

   If you have answered Yes, which places are these? ________________________________

   Why do you try to avoid them? ________________________________

   Time of day or night avoided: ________________________________
24. How often do you take the following measures to avoid becoming a victim of crime?

- **Lock up your home when you go out**
- **Lock yourself in when at home**
- **Lock your car when leaving it**
- **Leave your car in places you consider safe**
- **Lock your car doors when driving**
- **Drive a short distance instead of walking**
- **Carry a personal alarm**
- **Keep a telephone by the bed**
- **Check the identity of any caller to your home**
- **Keep something that could be used to defend yourself by the door**
- **Refuse to answer the door after dark**
- **Avoid certain public places**
- **Carry something that could be used to defend yourself when out in public**
- **Avoid going out alone**
- **Keep your children in sight when outside the home**
- **Keep something that could be used to defend yourself by the bed**
- **Set a burglar alarm when you go out**
- **Avoid going out after dark**
- **Avoid using public transport**
- **Keep a dog with you**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lock up your home when you go out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lock yourself in when at home</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Keep something that could be used to defend yourself by the door</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refuse to answer the door after dark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid certain public places</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry something that could be used to defend yourself when out in public</td>
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<td>Avoid going out alone</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Set a burglar alarm when you go out</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid going out after dark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid using public transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep a dog with you</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

25. Can you suggest any improvements that would make you feel safer living in your area?

26. In your opinion, how approachable are the police in your area?

- I think that they are not very approachable
- I think that they are very approachable
- I don't know how approachable they are

27. How often do you see a police officer on patrol on foot in the area in which you live?

- Once a day
- Once a week
- Once a fortnight
- Once a month
- Rarely or never
28. How often do you see a police officer on patrol in a car in the area in which you live?
   - Once a day [ ]
   - Once a week [ ]
   - Once a fortnight [ ]
   - Once a month [ ]
   - Rarely or never [ ]

29. How well do you think the police in your area do their job?
   - They do a very good job [ ]
   - They do a fairly good job [ ]
   - They do a fairly poor job [ ]
   - They do a very poor job [ ]

30. Have you had contact with the police in the last twelve months?
   - Yes [ ] (please go to Question 31)
   - No [ ] (please go on to Question 32)

31. Why did your most recent contact with the police occur? (Please tick one box)
   - You were the victim of a crime [ ]
   - You reported found or lost property [ ]
   - You reported a found or lost animal [ ]
   - You were questioned as a witness [ ]
   - You were questioned as a suspect [ ]
   - You asked for help or advice [ ]
   - You reported a traffic accident [ ]
   - You were asked to produce documents [ ]

32. If you have any general comments you wish to make about crime in your area, please write them below:

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Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

Please return it in the enclosed pre-paid envelope.
Appendix Two

A selection of media articles from Local Newspapers
New zero tolerance scheme

More police on beat to fight crime

MORE bobbies will be pounding the beat around Merthyr Vale and Aberfan with the introduction of a zero tolerance scheme.

More police, crime prevention schemes and a tougher line against nuisance teenagers are just some of the measures which will come into force.

Altogether around £250,000 has been invested in the scheme which is due to run for nine months.

Free locks for the elderly, Neighbourhood Watch schemes and a drive for volunteer special constables will also be high on the agenda.

"We will be trying to put extra into projects in the area," said PC James.

The two policemen have been talking to colleagues in Lower Dowlais where the scheme was successfully launched last year.

"We're looking forward to it. We hope people will notice a change," added PC Evans.

Funding

Community bobbies Pcs and set up base in Merthyr Vale this week and will be at regular sight patrolling the area.

And their first task will be assessing the needs of the community and sorting out potential troublemakers.

"We will be speaking to people in the community to find out what the problems are and try to solve them," said PC .

"We want to give everyone the ground rules first and tell them what is expected of them."

"We will be going back for more grants to take this project to other areas of the borough," she said.
Borough set to get zero tolerance

The success of Zero Tolerance in Dowlais means it could soon spread across the borough, writes Claire Savage.

After the launch of the tough-on-crime project in Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil said here are plans to introduce Zero Tolerance borough-wide.

The project, which targets all crime from littering upwards, was introduced to Merthyr Vale and Aberfan last week and the police and Safer Merthyr arranged information meetings for residents of the villages.

Clare explained: "Zero Tolerance isn't just about crime, it is also about improving people's fear of crime in their local environment and improving their sense of security."

Free locks are available through Safer Merthyr Tydfil's Homesafe Scheme or everyone in a Zero Tolerance area.

Homesafe also applies to victims of burglary, pensioners, people with physical or mental health problems, women living alone or with young children and victims of domestic violence who live anywhere in the borough.

For more information on the scheme telephone Safer Merthyr Tydfil on 01685 721043.
A QUARTER of a million pounds is being poured into Aberfan and Merthyr Vale to crack down on crime.

A Zero Tolerance scheme is being set up after dramatic results in a similar project in Dowlais. Burglary there has been reduced by 38 per cent; theft of vehicles is down by 50 per cent; theft from vehicles has been cut by 46 per cent and an overall reduction in crime by 32 per cent has been recorded.

A European grant will be used through a partnership of Safer Merthyr Tydfil, Merthyr Council and the police.

The Aberfan and Merthyr Vale project aims to improve quality of life and encourage the community to reject anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

Dowlais police constable said the effect of Zero Tolerance in the village had been tremendous.

"The public is far happier now," he said. "The elderly were too frightened to walk to the church or community centre on their own before Zero Tolerance was introduced."

"The fear of crime has now certainly dropped," Merthyr superintendent said: "Police can only do so much on their own."

"Our approach to policing recognises that the whole community working together in partnership can drive down crime and fear of crime, restoring a pride and a community spirit that is sustainable," Safer Merthyr Tydfil Director said Dowlais piloted Zero Tolerance last April and the effect had been massive.

"Fifty-one street signs highlighting neighbourhood watch activities were put into place; there were 651 hours of special constable foot patrol and 500 homes received free security upgrading," she explained.

"Litter, graffiti and vandalism was reduced and a Youth Drop-In Centre staffed by Oasis Youth Centre was provided by Merthyr Council."

Twenty community safety volunteers are now being recruited in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale and police constables are already on duty.

Crime Prevention Roadshows are being held in the area and a neighbourhood watch recruitment drive and offer of free security upgrades is under way.

Fears

The residents of Cefn Coed are also calling for the scheme to be put into action after what they perceive to be a crime wave in the village.

At a public meeting with police in Cefn Community Centre on Monday, residents raised fears that the spread of Zero Tolerance elsewhere could lead to more crime in their village.

The Cefn Forum community group have now decided to start a petition calling for Zero Tolerance.

"Implementing a crime prevention initiative enables the community to have a voice on crime issues that will lead to action," said . We hope to repeat this Zero Tolerance scheme throughout all areas of Merthyr Tydfil over the next five years."
New faces ‘hold key to crime crackdown’

TWENTY volunteers could hold the key to the success of a new campaign against crime in a Valleys community.

Zero Tolerance has been launched in Merthyr Vale and Aberfan, Merthyr, with an injection of £250,000 Euro cash and a call to residents to reject anti-social and criminal activity.

The pioneering Dowlais project has already resulted in a third reduction in overall crime. Recruitment is about to start for the 20 community safety officers, unique to the Aberfan and

By Jackie Bow

Merthyr Vale campaign, who will offer a support network for groups and organisations.

They will be trained on accredited courses dealing with crime prevention, community safety, and personal skills development.

And it is planned that they will man a crime prevention advice centre to be set up.

“We are looking for people who have a couple of hours to spare which they want to commit to improving the quality of life of their community - preferably local people who are interested in crime prevention and community safety, and we hope to hear from people of all ages,” said Safer Merthyr Tydfil director. “Zero Tolerance only works when a community and groups get behind you and we have had a very positive response already.”

It is hoped the new Zero Tolerance initiative will lead to a wider economic and social regeneration of the area.

Public meetings have already identified issues of concern to residents, including drugs and vandalism, said...
One-stop shop to help in fight against crime

A UNIQUE shop in the valleys has officially opened its doors for business.

The first one-stop crime prevention shop has been set up in Aberfan, near Merthyr Tydfil.

The initiative plays a key part in the borough's latest successful Zero Tolerance crime-busting campaign.

In its first six months, crime has reduced overall by a massive 40 per cent in the area, with burglaries down by 73 per cent.

The Community Safety Advice Centre offers free advice to people living in Aberfan and Merthyr Vale.

Residents are encouraged to have valuables security-coded and homes fitted with extra locks to deter would-be burglars. The shop, in Aberfan Road, Aberfan, sells a whole range of personal, car and house safety devices. It was officially opened by the Mayor Coun Ernie Galsworthy.

KEY TO SUCCESS Merthyr Mayor Councillor Ernie Galsworthy opens the centre with Homesafe managers Jane Bennett and Meirion Thomas.

PICTURE: Steve Phillips
There are as many excuses put forward for the general increase in crime on our streets as there are criminals, but one of the usual suspects returns to the top of the pile each time: the lack of a visible police presence.

Without naively pretending that a bobby on the beat is the answer to all law and order problems, common sense suggests that the greater likelihood of being caught in the act tends to deter burglars, hooligans and car thieves.

The Vale’s villages of Aberfan and Merthyr Vale have found this to be true with their community policing campaigns leading to a big fall in crime levels.

Community policing, of course, means little more than having police officers around. It’s not a new concept but it works. Hopefully, many more areas will realise that, too.

Silence ‘indicates satisfaction’

Merthyr Vale and Aberfan councillor Enos Sims said that the very fact so few villagers turned out to meet the police this week showed they were already pleased.

He said that only a few years ago 500 residents packed Aberfan Community Centre in protest at what they saw as lack of police activity.

“We were living in hell with people afraid to go out in the streets at night,” said Enos.

“These villages are better places to live in now. The area has improved beyond all recognition and people are much more contented.”

He said that success in the villages was even more satisfying for the police than the progress made in Downrah last year.

“That was a high crime area and a compact community – here the villages are more spread out.

“It does suggest that this style of policing can work anywhere.”