Improving public confidence in the police: a review of the evidence
2nd Edition

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Key implications

- A rapid assessment of the available literature on public confidence in the police as well as an assessment of local practice schemes with the potential for wider implementation was undertaken. Interventions were classified (according to the quality of evidence in support of them) into three main categories: what works; what looks promising; and potential pitfalls.

- Overall the evidence suggests that the strategies most likely to be effective in improving confidence are initiatives aimed at increasing community engagement. Three out of the four interventions classified in the 'what works' evidence all included an element of communicating and engaging with the community (embedding neighbourhood policing; high quality community engagement; and using local-level communications/newsletters).

- There is strong evidence to support the continuation and embedding of neighbourhood policing, though the quality of implementation is critical as all three components of neighbourhood policing (targeted foot patrol; community engagement; and effective problem-solving) need to be fully delivered to achieve intended impacts.

- Restorative justice face-to-face meetings mediated by police officers also improved perceptions of the criminal justice system, including the police.

- Among the interventions that looked promising for increasing confidence, targeting confidence-building activities to localised areas where they are most needed was of particular interest. If further evaluation shows this intervention to be successful, then it could prove an intelligent approach to efficiently achieving increases in confidence with limited resources.

- One considerable potential pitfall to increasing confidence is the organisational culture change required. If some police officers do not believe that the community-policing approach is feasible or desirable then this can hinder the quality of delivery.

- To deliver any confidence-building intervention successfully, a high quality of implementation is required. Without high quality implementation there is a risk that a reduction in confidence could occur.

- It should not be assumed that the same interventions will work in every area and in every situation. The best practice for any community is one that fits their needs and conditions and is compatible with available resources.

- Local monitoring and evaluation of confidence-related interventions should be undertaken to measure whether they are achieving their intended impact and revisions made as necessary.

- Increasing and maintaining public confidence in the police should be seen as a long-term continuous process with time taken to understand and address the expectations of different communities.

Contents

Keywords

Confidence in the police

Policing

Community policing

Restorative justice

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Context

It is important that the public feel confident in the police and other crime-fighting agencies. We know that crime has fallen considerably in the last ten years but the public are not feeling the impact of this and believe crime is rising. In 2008 the Government published the Green Paper *From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together* which proposed a single top-down target to replace the multiple targets previously used to monitor police performance. The single target is to improve levels of public confidence that the police and local councils are dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally, as measured by the British Crime Survey. Individual targets were set for each police force and published in March 2009.

To inform evidence-based guidance to forces on how to improve performance, a literature review was commissioned to summarise the best available evidence on 'what works' in terms of improving public confidence in the police and to identify what other interventions look promising and merit further exploration.

Approach

The review consisted of a rapid assessment of the available literature on public confidence in the police as well as an assessment of local practice schemes with the potential for wider implementation. The interventions were classified into three main categories:

1. **What works:** those that had demonstrated improvements in public confidence as measured by an evaluation (at least one evaluation of the intervention must have been rated at level 3 or above on the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods[1]);

2. **What looks promising:** examples where the available evidence did not rate at level 3 or higher on the Maryland Scale or was insufficient to reliably conclude that it would improve public confidence, but where there was some practical basis for considering that it had the potential to bring about improvements in confidence (e.g. the intervention was based on preparatory work such as survey data on what people thought would increase their confidence or experienced practitioners' views); and

3. **Potential pitfalls:** examples of potential difficulties encountered in implementing confidence-building interventions.

Due to the tight timescale for the review, it is possible that some relevant evidence has not been covered. It is also possible that the categorisation of some interventions into "what works" and "what looks promising" could change following further evidence. It is, however, assumed that all key studies have been included.

Results

Tables 1 to 3 below list 1) the interventions identified that can work to improve public confidence; 2) the interventions that look promising but require further exploration; and 3) the potential pitfalls to achieving high quality implementation.

[1] The Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods was developed by Sherman *et al.* (1997) for reviewing crime prevention interventions. It is a five-point scale for classifying the strength of methodologies used in "what works?" studies. For further detail see http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/rea_toolkit/how_to_do_an_rea/how_appraising_studies.asp

Table 1:   What interventions work?

Intervention	Main evidence
1) Embedding neighbourhood policing ● Implemented in full including: a) increased targeted foot patrol; b) community engagement to identify community priorities for action; and c) effective problem-solving.	Tuffin *et al.* (2006) Skogan and Steiner (2004) Skogan and Hartnett (1997)
2) High quality community engagement ● Making contact with residents/businesses as they go about foot patrol. ● Responding to public-initiated contact in a polite and respectful manner.	Criminal Justice Commission (1995) Bennett (1991) Pate *et al.* (1986) Myhill and Beak (2008)
3) Local-level communications/newsletters ● Tell people clearly what the local agencies in a neighbourhood are doing. ● Ensure communication is: a) area-specific; b) gives detail of what is being delivered, including agency responses to problems; c) provides information on actions that are planned; and d) includes contact details of how to access services.	MPS (2008) Singer and Cooper (2008) Salisbury (2004)
4) Restorative justice ●Victims, offenders and sometimes the families involved collectively decide how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.	Shapland *et al.* (2007)

Table 2:   What interventions are promising?

Intervention	Main evidence
1) Targeting confidence activity ● Allocating resources to where public satisfaction could be improved most (e.g. areas with a disproportionate fear of crime compared to actual crime levels in their area).	West Yorkshire Police (2008)
2) Using a variety of public consultation methods ● Gives the greatest chance of reaching a range of demographic groups across diverse communities. ● Could consist of focus groups, public meetings, online surveys, citizen panels, road shows and committee meetings.	Lancashire Police Authority (2008)
3) Training and educating members of the community ● Tackling any public misconceptions of the risk of being a victim of crime. ● Recruiting key individuals in the community to promote police and other local agency work.	Singer and Cooper (2008) Innes *et al.* (2009) Dubois and Hartnett (2002)
4) Improving community engagement skills of police officers ● Ensuring officers and partner agencies are adequately prepared for building confidence through direct interaction with the public.	Sadd and Grinc (1994) Haarr (2001) Skogan *et al.* (1999)
5) Using multi-agency public consultation and communication ● Maximising resources for hosting consultations and disseminating information. ● Reducing 'consultation fatigue' through holding joint, and therefore fewer, events and facilitating multi-agency problem-solving.	Tyne and Wear Public Service Board (2008) Myhill *et al.* (2003) Long *et al.* (2002) Skogan *et al.* (1999)
6) Alleviating visual signs of crime and disorder (e.g. fly-tipping, graffiti, and abandoned vehicles) ● Clear council reporting and action procedures will facilitate quick responses to problems before they get out of control. ● Publicising successful improvements could help further increase public confidence.	Innes and Roberts (2007) LGA (2006) Dalgleish and Myhill (2004) Wilson and Kelling (1982)

Table 3:   What are the potential pitfalls?

Intervention	Main evidence
1) Consultation meetings not achieving full representation of the local community ● Evidence has suggested that formal mechanisms for consultation are mainly attended by unrepresentative members of the community, being biased towards older, White, middle-class citizens. Consideration should be given on how to encourage and consult with the whole community.	Skogan and Hartnett (1997) Myhill *et al.* (2003)
2) Highlighting crime and ASB too much ● Dialogue centred on crime levels and insecurity may stimulate feelings of threat or fear among those listening to such messages, and in turn lower opinions of the police.	Jackson and Bradford (2007)
3) Employees' negative talk about their organisation ● The police have a lower perception of their service than other public sector workers and are least likely to speak highly about the CJS as a whole. It has been suggested that if the police were to talk negatively about their job in public then this may lower public perceptions of the police.	Duffy *et al.* (2008) Edwards (2006)
4) Community engagement is not perceived throughout the police service as important policing work ● If time is not protected for officers to work on community engagement, there is a risk that officers are abstracted to other duties which can impact on the quality of community engagement.	Vito *et al.* (2005) Irving *et al.* (1989) Haarr (2001)

Overall the evidence suggests that the strategies most likely to be effective in improving confidence are initiatives aimed at increasing community engagement. Three out of the four interventions classified in the 'what works' findings all included an element of communicating and engaging with the community and this was also found in many of the 'what looks promising' interventions.

There is strong evidence to support the continuation and embedding of neighborhood policing to increase confidence, though the quality of implementation is important as previous Home Office research has found that all three components of neighbourhood policing (targeted foot patrol; community engagement; and effective problem-solving) need to be fully delivered to achieve intended impacts.

A high quality of implementation is required to achieve intended impacts and local monitoring and evaluation of interventions should be undertaken to measure whether they are achieving their intended impact. It should also not be assumed that the same intervention will work in every area and in every situation. The best practice for any community is one that fits their needs and conditions and can be delivered with available resources.

Improving public confidence in the police: a review of the evidence

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Introduction

Some previous systematic reviews have looked at the effectiveness of individual types of policing interventions, for instance, the effectiveness of street-level drug law enforcement (Mazerolle *et al.*, 2007), CCTV (Welsh and Farrington, 2008), neighbourhood watch (Bennett *et al.*, 2008) and hotspots policing (Braga, 2007). Dalgleish and Myhill (2004) undertook a review appraising the evidence base on police effectiveness in reassuring the public and Myhill (2006) carried out a comprehensive review of the evidence on community engagement. However, no previous review has specifically looked at the evidence for improving public confidence in the police.

This report presents findings from a literature review of evidence on public confidence in the police. The review aims to summarise the evidence on what can work to improve public confidence in the police; to identify any other interventions that look promising, though have not yet been robustly evaluated; and to identify any potential pitfalls.

Background
Why is public confidence important?
In the past ten years, recorded crime rates have fallen considerably; however, according to British Crime Survey (BCS) statistics, the public have not felt the impact of this and believe crime is rising (Kershaw *et al.*, 2008). It is important that the public feel confident in the police and other crime-fighting agencies, as the public may be more likely to engage with the police service and other local agencies to work alongside them in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (e.g. reporting crimes or anti-social behaviour, and providing local intelligence) if they have confidence that their issues will be dealt with effectively. It is also important to allay needless concerns, which may affect community perceptions of safety.

A single top-down target
To address this confidence gap, the Government introduced a new Public Service Agreement (PSA) in April 2008. PSA23 ('make communities safer') is made up of four Priority Actions. One of these actions (Priority Action 3) is to '*tackle the crime and ASB issues of greatest importance in each locality, increasing public confidence in the local agencies involved in dealing with these issues*' and it includes the following indicator:

- public confidence in local agencies dealing with the anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues that matter to people in their area (indicator 3).

In July 2008 the Home Office published the Green Paper *From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together* which proposed measuring police performance on PSA23 as a single top-down target to replace the multiple targets previously used to monitor police performance. The single target is to improve levels of public confidence that the police and local councils are dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally, as measured by the BCS. Analysis from the first 12 months of data collection (October 2007 to September 2008) showed that 46 per cent of adults surveyed agreed that the police and local councils were dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter (Thorpe, 2008). The most recently available analysis showed that this rose to 49 per cent of adults surveyed between April 2008 and March 2009 (Walker *et al.*, 2009).

Individual targets were set for each police force and published in March 2009. To help raise public confidence, police forces and other agencies would benefit from evidence-based guidance on what is likely to work best.

Approach

The literature review uses a rapid evidence approach. Rapid Evidence Assessments (REAs) are a quasi-systematic review and are often used where time and resource constraints are not sufficient for a full systematic review (which can often take six months to a year to complete). The functions of an REA are to:

- search the electronic and print literature as comprehensively as possible within the constraints of a policy or practice timetable;
- collate descriptive outlines of the available evidence on a topic;
- critically appraise the evidence;
- sift out studies of poor quality; and
- provide an overview of what the reliable evidence is saying (Davies, 2003).

It is a methodology for assessing evidence, particularly published literature, to guide public policy through research and evaluation and aims to find out what is already known in a quick and efficient, but critical way.

Data collection
The following data sources were used to gather potential published data for inclusion in the review:

- contact with leading researchers in the area; and
- searches of electronic databases of publications (Criminal Justice Abstracts, BIDS, Sociological Abstracts, National Criminal Justice Records Service).

In addition to locating published literature, police forces were also approached to identify any examples of practice-based initiatives, with supporting evidence that suggested they could improve confidence. This included:

- focused internet searches of national, force and authority websites (including reviewing Inspection Reports and force/authority policies);
- an e-survey aimed at performance managers in all forces;
- an e-survey aimed at senior police authority officers; and
- interviews with representatives from key national organisations (including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Superintendents' Association of England and Wales (SAEW), National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), Police Federation, and more).

The following search terms were used.

Category	Terms
1	Police OR Policing OR Criminal Justice System
2	Confidence* OR Perception* OR Reassurance OR Satisfaction*
3	Trial* OR Evaluation* OR Research* OR Review* OR Project* OR Intervention* OR Initiative* OR Program* OR Measurement*
4	"Public Engagement*" OR "Consult*" OR "Communication" OR "Fairness" OR "Respect" OR "Dealing with Minor Crimes"

Assessing the quality of data
The data collection identified 848 abstracts (once duplicates were removed), of which 382 studies were discounted from the selection as they were not relevant to the research question. A set of criteria for including and excluding studies was developed. This was based mainly on the type and quality of the studies, probing any limitations and bias of the research methodologies. The studies were classified as either:

- weak: poor quality evidence;
- moderate: some practical basis for considering that the intervention had the potential to bring about improvements in confidence; or
- strong: based on systematic reviews or a Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods level 3   and above evaluation study.

Some studies did not contain sufficient methodological detail for assessing the quality. In these cases, additional information was sought but where it was not available the studies were excluded from the review.

Classification
Findings from the different studies were analysed and written up descriptively because many of the quantitative measures used in each intervention were different, and could not always be compared to other studies. This approach allows the reviewer to take into account the statistical outcomes presented by the evaluator, but to set these against geographical, cultural and implementation factors. The evidence has been classified under 'what works', 'what looks promising' and 'potential pitfalls in implementation':

1. **What works:** those that had demonstrated improvements in public confidence as measured by an evaluation (at least one evaluation of the intervention must have been rated at level 3 or above on the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods[2]) or systematic review;

2. **What looks promising:** examples where the available evidence did not rate at level 3 or higher on the Maryland Scale or was insufficient to reliably conclude that it would improve public confidence, but where there was some practical basis for considering that it had the potential to bring about improvements in confidence (e.g. the intervention was based on preparatory work such as survey data on what people thought would increase their confidence or experienced practitioner views); and

3. **Potential pitfalls:** examples of potential difficulties encountered in implementing confidence-building interventions.

Limitations
The review has the following limitations.

- Due to the tight timescale for the review, it is possible that some relevant evidence has not been identified. It is also possible that the categorisation of some interventions into "what works" and "what looks promising" could change following further evidence.
- The studies reviewed made use of different quantitative measures of confidence which may not all be comparable. The majority of measures from the literature were intended for measuring satisfaction including, for example, general confidence measures, questions about doing a good job and dealing with crime, and questions which ask respondents to anticipate the way things would be in alternative police scenarios.

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2   The Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods was developed by Sherman *et al.* (1997) for reviewing crime prevention interventions. It is a five-point scale for classifying the strength of methodologies used in "what works?" studies. For further detail see http://www.gsr.gov. uk/professional_guidance/rea_toolkit/how_to_do_an_rea/how_ appraising_studies.asp

- There was a low response rate from police forces (19 out of 43) and police authorities (11 out of 43) to the survey and therefore there may be some practice-based examples of work that have not been captured in this review.
- Findings from non-UK studies may not necessarily be applicable to the UK. Different cultural, political and socio-demographic contexts may affect the success of an intervention on public confidence.
- A large number of studies were impossible to classify. This was primarily because insufficient methodological information was available.

Results

The results from the literature review are presented in three sections: 'what works', 'what looks promising' and 'potential pitfalls'. Much of the literature (though not all) focuses on police-based interventions; however, many of these interventions are generic and similar approaches could also be used by other local agencies (e.g. the council).

A key source for the review was Myhill's (2006) review of community engagement evidence and also Dalgleish and Myhill's (2004) review of international policing interventions for reassuring the public.

What works?
Table 4 summarises the research evidence supporting four key interventions that have demonstrated improvements in public confidence. The four interventions are:

- community or neighborhood policing;
- high quality community engagement;
- local-level communications; and
- restorative justice.

The table gives detail of the intervention, the country it was implemented in, the impact that the intervention had and the strength of the studies based on the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods.

Table 4:   What works?

Intervention, country of origin and reference	Impact	MS rating
1. Community/neighbourhood policing		
Community policing in Chicago • Visibility. • Problem-solving. • Community involvement. • City partnerships. Chicago, US *Skogan and Steiner (2004)*	• Improved perceptions of police responsiveness (13 percentage points over ten years). • Improved perceptions of police performance (by ten percentage points). • Improved perceptions of officer demeanour (by four percentage points). • For perceptions of police responsiveness, perceptions improved (by over 20 percentage points) between 1993 and 1999 and then fell (by seven percentage points) between 1999 and 2003.	4
National Reassurance Policing Programme • Visible, accessible, familiar and dedicated policing resources. • Targeting signal crimes and disorders. • Co-produced solutions with partners and the public. England *Tuffin et al. (2006)*	• Improved perception of police effectiveness (by 15 percentage points compared to three percentage points in the control sites).	4
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS): 24/7 Safer Neighbourhood Policing • Increased visibility. • Focused provision – where they walk, what they are doing and what they are seen to be doing (talking to people or talking to each other) as well as how they engage with people. London, England *MPS Strategic Research and Analysis Unit (2008)*	• Improved perception of the police in the area doing a good job (by 12 percentage points). • Improved confidence in the police's ability to respond to the needs of different community groups locally (by three percentage points). • Improved satisfaction with the way the local area is policed (by six percentage points).	3
Familiar Officers and beat policing • Intervention included police officers having part of their houses as 'mini' police stations. However, the results related to the service provided by them generally, as opposed to their accessibility or familiarity. Australia *Criminal Justice Commission (1995)*	• Public confidence in the police improved (by seven percentage points across four measures). • Satisfaction was higher in the test area (where the beat service was in operation) compared to control areas (11 percentage points difference).	3
2. High quality community engagement		
Reducing Fear of Crime Policing Autonomy, initiative, and responsibility of officers to develop and implement programmes best designed to respond to the needs citizens had identified. Houston and Newark, US *Pate et al. (1986)*	• Positive, statistically significant effect on improved evaluation of the police (effect size was not reported)[*].	5

* The positive effects in this study were not quantified in the research publication. Efforts were made to retrieve the original unpublished full reports; however they were not received in time for this research. Therefore the degree to which we can be sure whether the Houston and Newark interventions are successful is limited as the effect size and the degree of variation in effect between the different interventions are not known and cannot be scrutinised.

Contact patrols ● Continuous police presence (one officer in area for two daytime shifts per day). ● Resident contact (officers contacted one adult per household at least once a year over a one-year period). ● Interventions based in areas with high victimisation rates and high levels of disorder. Birmingham and Southwark (London), England *Bennett (1991)*	● Improved satisfaction with the area (by 12 percentage points in Birmingham). ● Improved levels of informal social control. ● Improved satisfaction with the police (by 12 percentage points in London and 28 percentage points in Birmingham). ● Improved perception that the police were doing a good job (20 percentage points in Birmingham) ● No impact on fear of crime.	2
Improving police treatment of the public – being respectful and polite England *Myhill and Beak (2008)*	There is considerable debate about the extent to which direct contact can improve confidence. However, most evidence suggests that to at least retain confidence, efforts should be made to ensure the police deal with the public in a polite and respectful manner.	N/A
3. Local-level communications		
Criminal justice system (CJS) information booklet ● Booklet containing information on the performance of the CJS. ● Distributed in three different ways: by post, in person and in person accompanied by an explanation. ● Intervention took place in area where confidence in CJS was relatively low. England & Wales *Singer and Cooper (2008)*	● Improved perceptions of the effectiveness of the CJS in bringing people to justice (by five percentage points). ● Increased knowledge of crime levels (by five percentage points). ● Having the booklet personally delivered by someone in a position of authority was most effective	5
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) newsletter ● Newsletter design based on area-specific research into police-public communication and what residents want from this. ● Information focused on local relevance, including police response and actions. London, England *MPS Strategic Research and Analysis Unit (2008)*	● Increased levels of feeling informed locally (by ten percentage points) and London-wide (by 12 percentage points) ● Decrease in likelihood of identifying a local area of concern (by 18 percentage points). ● Improved levels of confidence in: 1. local policing (by eight percentage points) and London-wide policing (by nine percentage points). 2. police ability to tackle gun crime by eight percentage points); 3. police ability to tackle drug use (by four percentage points); 4. police ability to tackle teenagers hanging around (by six percentage points); 5. police ability to tackle dangerous driving (by six percentage points); 6. police ability to keep people informed (by five percentage points).	4

Provision of information to BCS respondents ● Booklet provided to 845 BCS respondents. It contained: ● statistics on crime; ● information on courts and sentencing; and ● information on re-offending. England and Wales *Salisbury (2004)*	● Improved confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) (between eight percentage points and 16 percentage points for each measure) ● Improved perceptions that the CJS is effective in reducing crime (by 16 percentage points). ● Improved perceptions that the CJS is effective in dealing with young people accused of crime (by seven percentage points). ● Findings suggest that some increases were the result of engaging people on the topic of crime and criminal justice through taking part in the BCS interviews, rather than of improved knowledge resulting from having read the booklet: confidence increased for some aspects for those who did not receive it..	2
4. Restorative justice		
Restorative justice ● Face-to-face meetings between offenders and victims of burglary, street crime and violent offences. ● Trialled in three areas (London, Northumbria and Thames Valley). ● In two areas (London and Northumbria), the restorative justice meetings were facilitated by police officers. England *Shapland et al. (2007)*	● Higher levels of victim satisfaction with what the CJS had done overall about the offence (72% of conference group compared to 60% of control group). ● Improved victim perceptions of the CJS (34% of conference group compared to 28% of control group). ● Improved victim confidence in the police (no effect size reported).	3

1. Community or neighbourhood policing

In the UK, neighbourhood policing was piloted under the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP). The design of the NRPP focused on three key components:

- visible, accessible, familiar and dedicated policing resources;
- targeting signal crimes and disorders[3]; and doing so in a manner that
- co-produced solutions with partners and the public.

The NRPP ran pilots in 16 wards, in eight forces in England, from October 2003. Six of these pilots were each matched to a control site, which acted as a standard against which results could be compared. Outcomes were principally measured using a telephone survey of residents in each pilot site and each control site. After 12 months of implementation, evidence was found of increased public confidence in the local police in the pilot sites, as measured

by an indicator of perceptions of effectiveness (the percentage of people thinking that the 'police do a good job'). In addition, there were indications of reductions in victimisation, and perceptions of reduced levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. There were also improved feelings of safety, public perceptions of community engagement, police visibility, and familiarity with the police. Further analysis of the survey showed that the three delivery mechanisms (targeted foot patrol; identifying community priorities for action; and effective problem-solving) were associated with improvements in public confidence (Tuffin *et al.*, 2006).

Follow-up research was carried out in the four most successful NRPP pilot sites and their comparison sites to find out whether the improvements during the first year of the programme could be sustained in the longer term. Respondents were re-interviewed at the end of the programme's second year. The results showed that the positive changes delivered during the NRPP's first year were largely sustained for a second year and, in some cases, lagged improvements were made. However, the findings highlighted that the police must remain focused on consistent delivery in the longer term because of the relative decline in two

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3 Signal crimes and disorders refer to the theory from reassurance policing that certain crimes or incidents of anti-social behaviour may act as a "signal" to a community that they are at risk. A common example is types of vandalism; however, this will vary according to particular neighbourhood problems.

outcome measures. Firstly, there was a decline in crime rate perceptions: the proportion of residents who thought crime had fallen decreased by five percentage points in the pilot sites. However, it still remained higher than at the start of the programme. Secondly, there was also a significant reduction in police visibility across the sites as the proportion of people who reported seeing an officer on foot patrol once a week or more fell across the pilot sites. Despite the fall in police visibility, public perceptions were higher than at the start of the programme which may suggest that the other two delivery mechanisms – community engagement and problem-solving – are potentially more important than police visibility in maintaining results in the longer term (Quinton and Morris, 2008).

Innes and Roberts (2007) suggested that implementation of reassurance policing works in different ways in different sites. In some of the high-crime and high-disorder communities, the most important factor is assertively targeting signal crimes and signal disorders. In lower-crime areas, where there are lower levels of disorder, it appears that the process of engaging community members and taking their concerns seriously was sufficient to improve perceptions of the area and confidence in the police. An important factor in making local solutions work is, therefore, to create and respond to an in-depth understanding of places and their problems. This is dependent upon obtaining detailed accounts about local crime and disorder issues from members of the public.

Following the NRPP pilots, neighbourhood policing was rolled out across the UK over three years through the national Neighbourhood Policing Programme (NPP). A BCU-level evaluation (Quinton and Morris, 2008; Mason, 2009) used a similar research design to the NRPP evaluation. In this evaluation, the survey of residents showed no consistent pattern of change in their perceptions and experiences across the sites during the first 24 months of implementation. It is not possible, however, to reach the conclusion from this study that neighbourhood policing does not 'work' as there was good evidence at ward level that neighbourhood policing can deliver positive change. However, there was also evidence to suggest that neighbourhood policing had not been implemented in full and/or consistently. Further analysis supported this by identifying that some of the experimental sites were not vastly different in terms of implementing neighbourhood policing to their comparison site, thus making overall differences in performance harder to attribute to the NPP.

The research also found that implementing effective problem-solving had been problematic for many sites.

As the NRPP evaluation suggested that all three delivery mechanisms (including problem-solving) would need to be in place to deliver a change in outcomes, it seems likely that all three mechanisms were not delivered in a large enough 'dose' across BCUs in order to improve public confidence (Quinton and Morris, 2008); HMIC (2008) as cited in Mason, 2009). It may also take time to achieve sufficient quality of implementation across a large area to realise desired outcomes. When community policing was adopted in Chicago, it took over eight years for the benefits to be fully realised; and even after ten years it was acknowledged that "all police departments find solving problems difficult because it necessitates high levels of training, supervision, analysis, and organisation-wide commitment" (Northwestern University Institute for Policy Research, 2004).

2. High-quality community engagement
Many of the community policing initiatives discussed above included community engagement as part of the intervention. Similarly, Dalgleish and Myhill (2004) conducted an international review of policing interventions and found that some of the most successful interventions for improving perceived police effectiveness used mechanisms designed to improve community engagement as well as increasing the visibility and familiarity of police officers. Myhill (2006) also conducted a literature review on police community engagement and found strong positive evidence for it leading to improved police-community relations and community perceptions of the police.

Research has shown that the quality of this community engagement is important, and that quantity alone will not achieve substantial results. Quinton and Morris (2008) found that foot patrol was important, but insufficient on its own to prompt a large-scale shift in public perceptions. Quality of community engagement should involve police officers not just undertaking foot patrols, but giving officers responsibility for making contact with residents/ businesses at the same time as they go about on foot patrol.

The Houston and Newark Reducing Fear of Crime initiatives (Pate et al., 1986) identified success across seven different projects implemented in the early 1980s. A variety of mechanisms were used to improve community engagement across the different projects, including:

- re-contacting victims by telephone or letter;
- establishing a group of residents to work closely with the police in identifying priority problems in the local area and what could be done to solve the problems;

- proactive patrol work designed to improve familiarity of the local officers;
- a small local police community station intended to increase accessibility of officers to the public; and
- newsletters emailed to the local residents each month.

In Chicago, the community policing evaluation by Skogan and Hartnett (1997) asked residents about the fairness, politeness and helpfulness of the local officers. Amongst groups that traditionally had more proactive contact with the police (e.g. middle-class White residents), satisfaction levels with the police increased following the introduction of the above engagement methods. However, for groups that had less proactive contact originally with the police, the satisfaction levels fell. Dalgleish and Myhill (2004) suggested that this may be because their previously higher levels of satisfaction were prompted more by perception than by actual experience of interacting with the police.

Bennett (1991) evaluated the implementation of a contact patrol programme on two 'problem' housing estates in two police forces in the UK (West Midlands and Metropolitan Police). The programme comprised two main elements: maintaining a continuous police presence over two daytime shifts; and making contact with local residents in the target estate. At least one officer was expected to patrol the estate for the two daytime shifts on every day of the one-year trial period. Proactive contact with the public was achieved by instructing officers to speak to at least one adult representative of every household on the target estate (approximately 2,000 contacts per housing estate). This required officers to go door-to-door and initiate contact with local residents. Prior to the door-to-door approach officers received training on methods for negotiating contact, and sessions to prepare them for the actual resident encounters. Problems identified by the public were recorded, and the sergeant was tasked with devising methods to tackle the problems using the local resources available. The evaluation found that whilst the strategy did not achieve its main goal of reducing fear of crime, the strategy did appear to produce significant improvements in several indicators of confidence. Improvements were seen for satisfaction with police performance, the percentage of residents that thought the police were polite, and the percentage of residents who thought the police were doing a good job.

The importance of high-quality community engagement is also supported by research findings demonstrating that opinions about the police have often been found to be lower among those who have had recent contact with officers, be it as a suspect, victim or subject of a stop, than among those who have not (Fitzgerald et al., 2002;

Allen et al., 2006; Skogan, 2006). Bradford (2008) analysed data from the Metropolitan Police Survey and found that unsatisfactory contacts with the police were associated with less favourable opinions about police effectiveness, fairness and engagement with the community. Myhill and Beak (2008) analysed British Crime Survey data and found that responding to public-initiated contact with the police in a polite and respectful manner helps to improve the quality of engagement. This confirms that people who have had contact with the police and been satisfied with the way the police dealt with them are more likely to be confident in the police than people who were not satisfied with the service they received.

3. Locally based communication/newsletters
More recently, some research has been undertaken on the effect of providing information to local residents. In 2008, the Metropolitan Police Service disseminated a newsletter designed after considering area-specific research into police-public communication and evaluated the impact on perceptions of the police. The newsletters included:

- an introduction to the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), including their purpose and objectives, followed by current ward priorities;
- information on the SNT responses and actions undertaken in response to the ward priorities and, if possible, what the results had been;
- local pictures of the area and the SNT;
- information on how to get involved, including invites to public meetings; and
- contact details for the team and the local police station; including opening hours, and other information sources, such as the MPS website.

Care was taken to avoid jargon and abbreviations, and to strike a balance between a professional and yet user-friendly writing style.

The impact of the newsletters was measured via the MPS Safer Neighbourhoods Survey (SNS) both a week before and a week after a newsletter was delivered to all households in the area. Just one newsletter dissemination significantly improved residents' levels of feeling informed, confidence in policing and perceptions of the police (measured by 'did a good job') compared to residents who did not receive a newsletter. The long-term impact was not reported and therefore the sustainability of this approach is unknown.

Another study measured the impact of disseminating a booklet with information on the criminal justice system on confidence (Singer and Cooper, 2008). A

telephone survey including BCS questions to measure public confidence was conducted before the booklet was distributed and then repeated with the same respondents one month after the booklets had been delivered. The findings showed that residents who had been given booklets were generally more positive about the CJS compared with those who had not received the booklet.

Feedback gathered through focus groups suggested that the information would be most effective if:

- it was delivered in person, especially from persons in positions of identifiable authority;
- numbers were provided alongside any percentages to avoid accusations of spin;
- it included reference to failures as well as successes to lend credibility; and
- used real-life examples to provide a human-interest angle.

Salisbury (2004) also evaluated the impact of providing crime information to a sample of BCS respondents. A booklet, titled *Catching up with crime and sentencing*, was given to respondents at the end of their BCS interview. The booklet contained statistics on crime, information on the courts and sentencing, and information on re-offending. Follow-up interviews with respondents who received the booklet and a control group that did not receive it showed for those who looked at the booklet, confidence increased in all the aspects of the CJS covered. However, the findings did suggest that some of the increase was the result of engaging people in the topic of crime and criminal justice through taking part in the BCS interviews, rather than of improved knowledge resulting from having read the booklet as confidence in some aspects increased for those who did not receive the booklet.

4. Restorative justice

Restorative justice is a process whereby, following an offence, the victims, offender and sometimes the families involved collectively decide how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future (Marshall, 1999). The Home Office funded three restorative justice schemes operating in London, Northumbria and Thames Valley under its Crime Reduction Programme from mid-2001 onwards which were evaluated (Shapland *et al.* (2007).

One of the three schemes, Justice Research Consortium (JRC), operated restorative justice set within a close criminal justice framework and achieved the greatest increase in confidence in the CJS of the three schemes. The JRC scheme involved face-to-face meetings between victims, offenders and supporters (generally family

members), and were mediated by police officers. Most of the meetings were held in institutional settings, such as prisons or police stations. Participants were randomised to either a restorative justice conference or a control group (which received no intervention). Views were obtained from offenders and victims prior to random allocation to the conference or control group and then for the conference group, just after the conference and for the control group, just after random assignment. Both conference group participants (152 offenders and 216 victims) and control group participants (118 offenders and 166 victims) were also interviewed eight to nine months after the conference.

Both victims and offenders who participated in the conferences were generally very positive about the experience. Participants were also asked whether their view of criminal justice had changed as a result of participating in restorative justice. Overall victims had become more positive about the CJS (34% had become more positive; 11% had become less positive). Offenders had also become more positive about the CJS (34% more positive; 9% less positive). Around half of the participants (both victims and offenders) said that their views had not changed. Participants were also questioned about their perceptions of individual criminal justice agencies, and views of the police saw the most improvement following restorative justice. This may be due to increased victim contact with the police as the majority of the time the police mediated the restorative justice meetings (95% of victims involved in the JRC model had contact with the police whilst only 15% had contact with the court).

Even though the majority of participants said that their views had not changed, the differences between the views of conference and control group victims on satisfaction with the CJS were statistically significant.

What looks promising?

This section reports on seven groups of interventions which look promising in regard to improving confidence in the police. Interventions were included in this category when the available evidence was insufficient to reliably conclude that they would improve public confidence, but where there was some practical basis for considering that they had the potential to bring about improvements in confidence (e.g. the intervention was based on preparatory work such as survey data on what people thought would increase their confidence or experienced practitioner views). Table 5 summarises the interventions and effect sizes are given where relevant.

Table 5:   *What looks promising?*

Intervention	Summary details	Key references
1. Targeting confidence activity		
Reassurance mapping .	Reassurance mapping in Wakefield The reassurance mapping methodology has five main stages as detailed below: • identify hotspots; • engage and consult; • agree action; • deliver action; and • assess impact. *Outcomes (subject to methodological caveats)* • An increase of nine percentage points in respondents who felt they were well informed of the issues affecting their neighbourhood. • An increase of 22 percentage points in respondents who felt that the police and agencies were performing well at reducing ASB. • An increase of 21 percentage points in respondents who felt police and agencies were performing well at reducing crime	West Yorkshire Police *et al.* (2008)
2. Using a variety of public consultation methods		
Investors in policing .	Lancashire police authority 'Investors in Policing' (IIP) • Proactively communicate corporate messages. Engage the public to actively contribute to scrutinising the police force in collaboration with the police authority. This was facilitated by promoting a wider understanding of the value of public scrutiny. *Outcomes (subject to methodological caveats)* • An increase of seven percentage points in respondents who felt confident in the Lancashire constabulary following the IIP launch	Lancashire Police Authority (2008)
3. Training and educating members of the community		
Tackle misconceptions by educating the public	Research has repeatedly linked increased knowledge levels with higher confidence in the effectiveness and competence of all criminal justice agencies, including the police. For instance, Singer and Cooper (2008) found that residents who had received a booklet on local crime had greater knowledge of crime levels compared with those who did not (five percentage points differentiated).	Singer and Cooper (2008) Smith (2007) Allen *et al.* (2006) Opinion Leader Research (2005) Salisbury (2004) NOP World (2003)

Providing skills for community participation	Evidence suggests that training is necessary for communities as well as the police if active community participation in policing is to be effective. In the same way that community engagement requires certain officers to take on unfamiliar roles, effective participation requires the public to move beyond their traditional role as 'eyes and ears' of the police. Citizen Police Academies (CPAs) are a tool used by many police departments in the US to offer members of the public training and education about the structure and operation of the police. Critics suggest they do not appeal to the wider public (Myhill, 2006, pp 36-37).	Summarised in Myhill (2006) Key primary sources: Sagar (2005) Abutalebi-Aryani (2002) Dubois and Hartnett (2002) Grinc (1994) Skogan *et al.* (1999)
Identifying key individuals in the community	Identifying and recruiting key individuals in the community to promote policing informally and support community engagement work. Theory suggests that where police have demonstrated interest in the concerns of key members of the community (e.g. those with wide social networks such as faith leaders or new parents), these highly connected individuals will start to relay a positive message to others in their social network.	Innes *et al.* (2009) Innes and Roberts (2007)
4. Improving community engagement skills of police officers		
Community-engagement training	Evidence from the US suggests community engagement involving direct interaction between officers and the public is only likely to be successful if officers are adequately prepared for the role. No specific studies of officer training in relation to community engagement were found in the UK (Myhill, 2006, pp 34-35).	Summarised in Myhill (2006) Key primary sources: Haarr (2001) Skogan *et al.* (1999) Sadd and Grinc (1994)
Cultural-awareness training	Examples of interventions to improve cultural sensitivity include officers being trained in the use/understanding of Asian languages and given cultural-awareness training (e.g. the Bhasha project in Reading).	Opinion Leader Research (2005)
5. Multi-agency public consultation and communication		
Multi-agency working	Joint working has been shown to be advantageous when consulting the public about policing issues in terms of maximising resources, preventing 'consultation fatigue' and problem-solving. Tyne and Wear ran a campaign supported by ten public services. Respondents who became aware of the campaign were more likely to perceive that public organisations were 'listening and responding to the general public' and that public organisations were 'identifying and acting upon crime issues'.	Tyne and Wear Public Service Board (2008) Myhill *et al.* (2003) Long *et al.* (2002) Skogan *et al.* (1999)
6. Alleviating visual signs of crime and disorder		
Physical improvements to an area	Evidence suggests that physical improvements to an area can increase public reassurance and reduce crime. For instance removing graffiti, litter, or abandoned cars may prevent groups of youths or others 'hanging around the street' in areas where they are seen by other residents as intimidating Physical improvements such as improved street lighting and improved residential security have also been suggested as successful interventions for increasing public reassurance and perceptions of safety.	Innes and Roberts (2007) Dalgleish and Myhill (2004) Innes (2004) Wilson and Kelling (1982)

1. Targeting confidence activity

A promising intervention that may increase confidence, particularly when resources are limited is the reassurance mapping methodology being used by West Yorkshire Police. This approach is designed to target confidence-building activity and resources to where public satisfaction could most be improved.

There are five stages to the reassurance mapping approach.

- Stage 1 identify hotspots: Using available local information (e.g. local neighbourhood surveys, police authority resident surveys, incident data and ACORN data), areas of low confidence, high worry, and high/low disorder are identified and displayed on maps. These maps are used in conjunction with local knowledge to select areas for further surveying.
- Stage 2 engage and consult: Achieved through hand-delivering surveys and completing them face-to-face with residents. The surveys are used to confirm that the area is a 'hotspot', and what the residents' priorities for action are.
- Stage 3 agree action: The feedback from the surveys is analysed and action plans are agreed to address the neighbourhood issues. Action plans often include work with partner agencies.
- Stage 4 deliver action: The actions planned are undertaken and publicised as appropriate. Action plans are monitored through performance bulletins and results published on the reassurance mapping website. Good practice is captured and shared on the website.
- Stage 5 assess impact: A second survey is used to follow up with the community any progress that has been made on reassurance and satisfaction. Any necessary future actions may be agreed and fed-back to stage 3.

An early evaluation of the approach in the neighbourhood of Monkhill found an increase in respondents who felt the police and other agencies are performing "well" at a) reducing ASB and b) reducing crime. These improvements were measured after six months. However, the sample size was small (less than 300 respondents) and as there was no control group (i.e. an area not part of the reassurance mapping process) it was not possible to reliably attribute the observed improvements to reassurance mapping.

West Yorkshire Police have also found that reassurance mapping provides the force with a useful tool for measuring the success of neighbourhood policing and related reassurance activity. Undertaking a survey prior to planned interventions, enabling a baseline to be set, allows for a follow-up survey to be conducted to measure the impact of activity on local problems and levels of reassurance.

2. Using a variety of public consultation methods

High-quality community engagement was identified in the 'what works' section as an effective method for improving public confidence. However, there is not currently any conclusive evidence on which methods of engagement work best for different types of individuals (e.g. residents in full-time employment compared to retired residents). Lancashire Police Authority (Lancashire Police Authority, 2008) designed an intervention that used multiple methods to maximise the effectiveness of public consultation. It was anticipated that by using a wide range of consultation methods, it would be more likely that a wider range of the community would be involved. This 'Investors in Policing' (IIP) scheme aimed to encourage communities to influence local policing by:

- proactively communicating corporate messages aboutthe police;
- encouraging the public to be actively involved in scrutinising policing services;
- attempting to transform the culture of public indifference about scrutiny processes; and
- involving local people in holding the Chief Constable to account for police performance.

A variety of methods were used to consult with the public, including:

- measuring opinions on police service delivery via face-to-face and online surveys, focus groups, public meetings, citizen panels, and committee meetings;
- contact with over 2,500 residents achieved at a launch event for IIP with 700 of them recording views and video messages;
- contact with over 1,400 residents at local road shows with 900 residents registering views; and
- via a website, increasing hits from 21,500 on average per month before the start of IIP, compared to 175,000 per month post-launch.

Public confidence (measured by 'how confident are you in the Lancashire constabulary') increased from 88 per cent pre-IPP launch in April 2007 to 93 per cent post-IIP launch in August 2007. Whilst the sample size was large (sent to 4,000 respondents with 60% responding), the lack of a control group means that it is not possible to reliably attribute the increase in confidence to this scheme.

3. Training and educating members of the public

In the past ten years, recorded crime rates have fallen considerably; however, according to British Crime Survey statistics, the public have not felt the impact of this and believe crime is rising. Some research suggests that providing information to the public about the reality of local crime rates can improve knowledge which in turn could improve confidence. Singer and Cooper (2008) measured the impact of disseminating a booklet with information on the criminal justice system. The results found that a significantly higher proportion of residents who received the booklet had greater knowledge of crime levels compared with those who did not (by five percentage points). Additionally, compared with controls, those receiving the booklet increased their level of confidence by a margin of nearly five percentage points in response to the question whether they thought the criminal justice system was effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice.

High-quality community engagement was identified in the 'what works' section as an effective intervention to improve confidence. However, there can be problems with residents' willingness and ability to engage with the police which have led some commentators to suggest that the police should provide training and support to the community to help build capacity for engagement. For instance, Dubois and Hartnett (2002) suggested that community support needs to be 'won' as opposed to 'assumed'. One of the barriers to engagement may result from previous efforts at engagement that may have not worked or where communities have not previously seen any changes following their efforts and therefore may be reluctant to contribute again. Therefore the police may need to invest resources to educate local residents about the benefits of engaging with local police and also train residents to understand how they can most effectively contribute. Sadd and Grinc (1994) also suggested that if local areas don't have community organisations already established for the police to engage with, then the police need to foster them.

The CAPS programme in Chicago evaluated by Skogan et al. (1999) included training for the community as part of the policing programme. However, it was reported that the majority of the attendees at the training were middle-class and already actively involved in the community. Therefore the training did not achieve the objective of improving the skills and motivation of a wide representation of the community to engage with the police. Similar findings have been found for Citizen Police Academies (CPAs), a tool used by many police departments in the US to offer members of the public training and education about the structure and operation of the police (Myhill, 2006, p37).

Another suggestion for how the police could train the community is to make use of key individuals within communities. For example, Innes and Roberts (2007) point out that the advertising industry often identifies and targets key individuals, referred to as 'mavens', who have highly developed social connections and are recognised as influential opinion-formers within a particular community. He suggests that the police might harness such individuals both as a resource for community intelligence and to help promote confidence in the police in communities. This idea has also been supported by some UK police forces who reported trying to identify 'community champions', arguing that, because the police had demonstrated interest in their concerns, these well-connected individuals would start to relay a message to those in their social network about how the police were serious in trying to address local problems.

A similar concept is apparent in the label of 'neighbourhood sentinel', used to describe individuals who are especially sensitive and well attuned to the biography of their neighbourhood and its problems. Mothers with children, postal delivery workers, people who are engaged in local groups, have often been found to typify 'neighbourhood sentinel' traits. Lancashire constabulary has recently tasked local policing teams in the town of Morecambe to locate 'neighbourhood sentinels' (Innes et al., 2009).

4. Improving community engagement skills of police officers

Community engagement involving direct interaction between officers and the public is only likely to be successful if officers are adequately prepared for the role. Whilst no specific studies of officer training in relation to community engagement have been identified from the UK, there is some evidence from the US that not all officers have been adequately trained for community policing roles. (Myhill, 2006, p34)

Sadd and Grinc (1994) and Long et al. (2002) both concluded from studies of police-community partnerships that police officers and staff often do not have a clear understanding of the principles of community policing. Even tasks that may not appear challenging, such as running a public meeting, actually require a specific skills set (Myhill, 2006, p30 & p35). Cordner (2004) reported that for good quality community engagement, improvements needed to be made to academy and field training, as well as supervision.

In Chicago, Skogan et al. (1999, cited in Myhill, 2006, p35) concluded that the role of sergeant was crucial to

the *Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)* operating successfully. Sergeants were expected show strong leadership and whilst some were naturally good at this, others would have benefited from better preparation.

5. Multi-agency public consultation and communication

Joint working between local agencies can be advantageous when consulting and communicating with the public about policing issues because it can maximise resources and prevent 'consultation fatigue' (Myhill *et al.*, 2003). Another advantage is facilitating a problem-solving approach to policing as many of the problems identified by local residents actually fall to partner agencies to rectify (Skogan *et al.*, 1999; Sadd and Grinc, 1994).

A recent Tyne and Wear public services campaign was supported by ten public services and involved Metro, bus and billboard advertising; posters and adverts in residents' magazines; and public relations and web activity. The campaign was called "We asked, you said, we did" and aimed to raise awareness of how local agencies had worked together, listened and responded to residents' concerns. The campaign also encouraged residents to contact services about priorities in their area, with each advertisement containing telephone numbers and web addresses to allow residents to suggest how services could be improved. A face-to-face survey was conducted with 750 people both before and after the campaign to evaluate its success. Respondents who were aware of the campaign were more likely to perceive that public organisations were 'listening and responding to the general public' than those who were not. Similarly, respondents who were aware of the campaign were also more likely to perceive that public organisations were 'identifying and acting upon crime issues' (Tyne and Wear Public Service Board, 2008).

Multi-agency approaches are not always successful. Myhill *et al.* (2003) assessed the role of police authorities in engaging communities in England and Wales and found that effective working with partners was variable both between and within authority areas. The main barriers cited were: reluctance of some agencies to participate (especially health); local political differences (especially where there was no unitary local authority); desire of individuals to retain leadership and get credit; unwillingness to share information; desire to protect budgets; and over-reliance on informal contacts which lapsed if key individuals moved on.

6. Alleviating visual signs of crime and disorder

Another promising intervention has long been recognised in the criminological literature. The significance of visual disorder was discussed in Wilson and Kelling's (1982) "broken windows" thesis, which argued that disorder is a predictor of crime, because if it is untreated it leads to higher crime rates. This theory has subsequently been subject to tests to prove it which have resulted in some, albeit weak, evidence in support (Innes, 2004). Skogan and Maxfield (1981) argued that this could also lead to increases in fear of crime as well as accelerating the decline of neighbourhoods, although again this has not been conclusively demonstrated. Both concepts have led to numerous initiatives to deal more effectively with low-level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, ranging from removing the signs of such activities (e.g. graffiti, litter, or abandoned cars) to efforts to prevent groups of youths or others 'hanging around the street' in areas where they are seen by other residents as intimidating.

Dalgleish and Myhill's (2004) international review of policing interventions also found support for this intervention. The review identified that physical improvements to an area were reported as a successful intervention in terms of increasing public reassurance and perceptions of safety in their local area, even when this was not the original aim. The police did not usually initiate this type of intervention, suggesting (as discussed above) that reassurance can benefit from a multi-agency response.

Evidence has suggested some useful practice for effectively alleviating visual signs of crime and disorder. This includes:

- clear reporting and action procedures for local councils to facilitate quick responses to problems before they get out of control;
- joint working between local agencies can help report problems to the council that need solving; and
- publicising successful improvements to the local community to further increase public confidence.

Potential pitfalls

This section reports on some potential pitfalls of the above interventions for improving confidence in the police. Table 6 summarises four potential pitfalls which are discussed in further detail below.

Table 6:   Potential pitfalls

Potential pitfall	Summary details	References
1. Consultation meetings not achieving full representation of the local community	Evidence has suggested that formal mechanisms for consultation are mainly attended by unrepresentative members of the community, being biased towards older, White, middle-class citizens. Consideration should be given on how to encourage and consult with the whole community.	Sherman and Eck (2002) Skogan *et al.* (1999) Myhill and Beak (2008) Kemp and Morgan (1990)
2. Highlighting crime and ASB too much	Dialogue centred on the apparent pervasiveness of crime and insecurity may actually stimulate feelings of threat or fear among those listening to such messages, and in turn lower opinions of the police. There is also evidence that if people feel increasingly insecure they are likely to blame the police.	Jackson and Bradford (2007) Crawford, *et al.* (2003)
3. Employees' negative talk about their organisation	Evidence shows the police have a lower perception of their service than other public sector workers and are least likely to speak highly about the CJS as a whole. It has been suggested that if the police were to talk negatively about their job in public then this may lower general public perceptions of the police.	Duffy *et al.* (2008) Edwards (2006)
4. Community engagement is not perceived throughout the police service as important policing work	Some police officers still regard community policing or community engagement-based roles as not 'real' policing. If a community-engagement philosophy is not adopted throughout the police then community-focused work can still be regarded as an 'add-on' to core business. This can result in the work being afforded a low status, or officers being abstracted to work regarded as core business (Myhill, 2006, p30).	Summarised in Myhill (2006) Key primary sources: Sadd and Grinc (1994) Irving *et al.* (1989)

1. *Consultation meetings not achieving full representation of the local community*

A popular mechanism used by the police for community consultation is public meetings. However, evidence does not always support this as an effective approach if it is the only method used to consult with the community. A key problem tends to be that meeting attendees are generally unrepresentative of the wider community. Evidence from the CAPS suggests that achieving representation was a problem when 'beat meetings' were used as part of a problem-solving approach. Skogan *et al.* (1999) found that meetings were more representative and better attended in 'high capacity' areas with existing community networks. This raises the possibility of community engagement in policing resulting in inequitable outcomes – with those most in need of positive outcomes benefiting least from the process.

In the UK, evaluations (e.g. Morgan, 1985; Kemp and Morgan, 1990) have also indicated that formal mechanisms for police-public consultation at a local level were often ineffective, as meetings were attended by unrepresentative groups, and were used to issue information rather than as a genuine consultative process (Myhill, 2006, pp 24-25).

As mentioned as a 'what looks promising' intervention, using a variety of public consultation methods (e.g. public meetings, surveys, and the internet) might therefore be a more effective way to engage with a wider representation of the community.

2. *Highlighting crime and anti-social behaviour too much*

Previous research had suggested that a key barrier to achieving high public confidence in the police was linked to public fear of crime and anxiety about being a victim. Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) described this as an instrumental concern about crime and explained that because people look to the police for protection from crime, if members of the public were fearful of becoming a victim of crime then they may judge the police as ineffective in meeting its purpose. However, more recently Jackson *et al.* (2009) analysed data from ten sweeps of the British Crime Survey. The findings suggested that rather than instrumental concerns about crime affecting public confidence, expressive concerns about neighbourhood stability and breakdown were more important. They argued that confidence may be driven by concerns about disorder, cohesion and informal social control and that the public look

to the police as representatives of community values who can address everyday problems and strengthen social order. Therefore to increase public confidence and decrease the fear of crime, the police need to re-engage as an active part of the community and represent and defend community values, norms and morals (Jackson *et al.*, 2009).

3. Employees' negative talk about their organisation

Employees' talk about their organisation has been shown to impact on public perceptions (Duffy *et al.*, 2008) and evidence has shown the police have a lower perception of their service than other public sector workers. A survey conducted by MORI showed that 35 per cent of police officers surveyed were critical of their organisation (compared to six per cent of teachers for instance) (Edwards, 2006). The police have also been shown to be critical about the CJS as a whole with almost half (49%) of police respondents in 2007 reporting that they would speak critically of the CJS and only ten per cent saying they would speak highly of it (Duffy *et al.*, 2008). It has been suggested that if the police were to talk negatively about their job in public then this may in turn lower public perceptions of the police.

4. Community engagement perceived throughout the service as important policing work

Many commentators have reported that the organisational culture embedded in the police has not fully supported community engagement and community policing. Improvements are required for better implementation that could help improve public confidence. For instance, in the evaluation of the CAPS, Skogan *et al.* (1999 as cited in Myhill, 2006, p32) found that many officers thought their community engagement role was at odds with real police work, which hindered its implementation.

One difficulty with community engagement being perceived as important policing work may be because its importance has not been emphasised strongly enough in local strategies. Vito *et al.* (2005) analysed responses to exam questions about the advantages and implementation problems of community policing for 68 police middle-managers in the US. Findings showed that 47 per cent felt that their department did not have a coherent strategy that supported community policing. When asked for some ways to overcome implementation problems, 42 per cent regarded 'strategic planning' as a crucial first step. They felt once clear goals were established, it would be easier to effect organisational change (Myhill, 2006, p32).

Another difficulty could be if large groups of police officers do not buy-in to community engagement and the neighbourhood

policing approach. For instance, in a study of police training, Haarr (2001 as cited in Myhill, 2006, p31) found that new recruits had more positive attitudes to community policing before joining the service than they did after one year on the job. The informal culture and more experienced co-workers' attitudes were thought to explain the reduction in initially positive attitudes to community policing.

Irving *et al.* (1989) interviewed officers involved in a pilot neighbourhood policing model that was being tested in areas of the Metropolitan Police. The findings showed that some officers had doubts about the suitability of the community-policing approach. Whilst some officers accepted the philosophy, most believed that the theory would not translate into practice and had concerns about the practicalities of implementation (Myhill, 2006, p31)..

Wycoff (2004, cited in Myhill, 2006, p30) argued that for community policing to achieve intended impacts it needs to be considered the 'status quo' for all police officers and not be confined to specialists and special units. Without this, there is a risk that community-focused work is considered as only an 'add-on' to core business. Results from this are a lack of understanding of the role of community engagement from non-community officers, the work being afforded a low status, or officers being abstracted to work regarded as core business.

Conclusion

It is important to remember that the conclusions that can be drawn from this literature review are limited to evidence that was readily accessible. It is therefore possible that the categorisation of some interventions into "what works", "what looks promising" and "potential pitfalls" could change following further evidence. In particular, the "what looks promising" interventions have not yet been thoroughly evaluated and require further research before a reliable conclusion that they can definitely improve confidence is reached.

Overall the evidence presented has suggested that the strategies that are likely to be most effective in improving confidence are associated with initiatives aimed at increasing community engagement. Three out of the four interventions classified in the "what works" section all included an element of communicating and engaging with the community (embedding neighbourhood policing; high-quality community engagement; and using local-level communications/newsletters). Community engagement was also captured in many of the "what looks promising" interventions (using a variety of consultation methods; training and educating members of the community; improving community engagement skills of officers; and multi-agency community engagement).

Among the interventions that looked promising as an option for increasing confidence, targeting confidence activity to where it is most needed was of particular interest. If further evaluation shows this intervention to be successful, then it could prove an intelligent approach to efficiently increasing confidence when resources are limited.

Potential pitfalls that could hinder any confidence-building strategy were also discussed. One considerable barrier to increasing confidence in the police is the organisational culture change required. As discussed in the potential pitfalls section, if some police officers do not believe that the community-policing approach is feasible or desirable then this can hinder the quality of delivery, which may in turn affect perceptions of the police. Interventions requiring a cultural shift in working practices have been shown to be most successful where they are supported and driven by senior leaders and stakeholders. For example, the Chicago CAPS achieved organisational change more so than some projects because it had the backing of a senior politician. As this occurred in the US context, it may not be directly applicable to the UK; however, it is possible that commitment from senior police and partners is required for the most successful delivery.

A second pitfall is related to community engagement again, as evidence has shown that only using formal mechanisms of community consultation can be ineffective because they often don't capture a representative local population. It will be important for the police and local partners to design and test innovative ways to encourage fuller representation.

To deliver any of the interventions in this report successfully, a high quality of implementation is required. Without high-quality implementation there is a risk that the opposite effect to that intended could occur, i.e. a reduction in confidence. For instance, whilst there is evidence to suggest that the restorative justice intervention can improve perceptions of the police if they are involved in the mediation, if victims did not feel that the meeting was well mediated or fully supported by the CJS, there is a possibility that this intervention would be detrimental to confidence levels. It will be important therefore for any interventions to be sufficiently resourced (e.g. practitioners trained as required). Similarly, the evidence has shown all three components (targeted foot patrol; community engagement; and effective problem-solving) need to be fully delivered to achieve intended impacts.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of locally implemented interventions will also ensure that the desired effects are being achieved and enable lessons to be learned.

Much of the evidence that informed the review (though not all) focused on police-based interventions; howeve, many of these interventions are generic and similar approaches could also be used by other local agencies (e.g. the Council). When considering how to locally improve public confidence, practitioners should consider which interventions will be most appropriate for their particular local context. There is evidence from various areas of public policy that engagement needs to be tailored to communities' needs and preferences and that there is no 'one size fits all' model or strategy (e.g. Stanko et al., 2007; Opinion Leader, 2005). Therefore, it should not be assumed that the interventions discussed in this report will work in every area and in every situation. The best practice for any community is one that fits their needs and conditions and is compatible with available resources.

Increasing and maintaining public confidence in the police should be seen as a long-term continuous process with time taken to understand and address the expectations of different communities. The majority of evaluations have measured the impact of interventions over relatively short periods of time. Therefore, it is difficult to assess whether these programmes would have sustained their successes, improved further or declined over time.

Efforts that the police and their partners make to increase confidence should also be considered against the changing wider context. This is especially important to consider in the case of interventions that took place a decade or more prior to this review, when political, cultural and other contextual factors were different to what they would be if the intervention were implemented today.

This review has reported on interventions that have been shown to be effective in building public confidence in the police and also identified a variety of interventions which look promising, though as yet their impact is unproven. Factors that need to be borne in mind for successful implementation have also been discussed. We hope that this proves to be useful guidance to inform confidence-building strategies which can deliver.

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Acknowledgements

Errata

Key implications

Title amended to 'Improving public confidence in the police: a review of the evidence' (no new line after 'police:')

Summary

Title amended to 'Improving public confidence in the police: a review of the evidence' (no new line after 'police:')

The report

Title amended to 'Improving public confidence in the police: a review of the evidence' (no new line after 'police:')

Page 14; column 2, row 1, last sentence amended to 'Critics suggest they do not appeal to the wider public (Myhill, 2006, pp 36-37).'

Page 14; column 2, row 3, last sentence amended to ' .... community engagement were found in the UK (Myhill, 2006, pp 34-35).'

Page 14; column 3, row 1, inserted at top (above Sagar (2005)):

Summarised in Myhill (2006)
Key primary sources:

Page 14; column 3, row 3, inserted at top (above Haarr (2001)):

Summarised in Myhill (2006)
Key primary sources:

Page 16, 3rd para, last line amended to '…. operation of the police (Myhill, 2006, p37)

Page 16, 6th para, last line amended to '.... trained for community policing roles (Myhill, 2006, p34)

Page 16, 7th para, line 6 amended to '…. specific skills set (Myhill, 2006, p30 & p35)

Page 16, 8th para, line 1 amended to 'In Chicago, Skogan et al. (1999, cited in Myhill, 2006, p35)

 Page 18 ,Table 6, column 2, row 4, last sentence amended to '….. core business (Myhill, 2006, p30)

 Page 18, Table 6, column 3, row 4, inserted at top (above Sadd and Grinc (1994)):

Summarised in Myhill (2006)
Key primary sources:

Page 18, text at bottom of page, left hand column, 2nd para amended to ' …. consultative process (Myhill, 2006, pp 24-25).'

Page 19, 3rd para, line 6, amended to '…. Skogan et al. (1999 as cited in Myhill, 2006, p32) ….'

Page 19, 4th para, amended to '….organisational change (Myhill, 2006, p32).'

Page 19, 5th para, line 2, amended to '…. Haarr (2001 as cited in Myhill, 2006, p31) ….'

Page 19, 6th para, amended to '…. practicalities of implementation (Myhill, 2006, p31).'

Page 19, 7th para, amended to 'Wycoff (2004, cited in Myhill, 2006, p30) ….'