

# Private Low-level Crime Reduction Schemes Are Filling The Growing “Policing Gap”, New Research Shows

Submitted by: Littoralis Ltd

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14th May 2019 - Today sees the publication of the UK's first comprehensive research into the role of private-sector business crime reduction schemes in helping drive down low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.

“Business Crime Reduction Schemes: An examination of operation, management and best practice”, written by Doctor Andrew Stafford, senior lecturer in Criminology at the University of Gloucestershire, gathers objective information - for the first time – to show how local schemes 'self-manage' low-level crime and ASB to help fill the growing 'policing gap'.

The ground-breaking report is the first attempt to assess the contribution of the growing number of private-sector crime reduction partnerships in the UK and was based on in-depth questionnaires and supplementary submissions from 243 organisations including Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, Business Improvements Districts (BIDs) and shopping centres.

The report confirms that private-sector crime reduction schemes:

- are ‘an essential part of modern-day crime control’, driving down low-level crime and ASB;
- help police deliver their obligation to prevent and detect low-level crime at a time when they have substantially reduced community policing;
- play a growing role in extra-judicial crime prevention and reduction initiatives such as Early Intervention and Restorative Justice schemes
- are usually 100% self-funding without financial support from public sector.

Police themselves recognise the important role played by the schemes, most of which work with local police forces. However, the report shows that the level of police support is variable, and in many cases, police involvement has declined over the last 5 years and has continued to do so in the last 12 months.

The report, however, identifies some worrying threats to private-sector crime reduction schemes:

- financial pressure on ‘the High Street’ is reducing subscription revenue and therefore financial viability;
- decline in police support reflects continuing pressure on public spending and de-prioritising of ‘victimless’ crime such as shoplifting;
- reducing participation of some retailers due to misplaced concerns regarding new data protection law.

The most successful schemes in the research shared a number of common features:

- Close working with pro-active and supporting local police;
- Use of technology to support close interworking and communication such as private radio and secure online information-sharing systems;
- The management of banning schemes which identify and then, if appropriate, ban trouble-makers from members' premises;
- Involvement of active Boards of Management that meet at least quarterly;
- Interworking with other schemes, especially those in neighbouring areas;
- Measurement of performance and comparison of performance over time;
- Compliance with defined standards of Best Practice.

Report author Dr Andrew Stafford explains, "There really hasn't been sufficient research in the past into the role of crime reduction schemes, of which there are many hundreds around the country. The contributions of such organisations extend far beyond the immediate benefits they provide to their members and in future years I hope we can look into these in more depth.

"I would like to thank all the crime reduction schemes who took time to complete our extensive questionnaire and submitted additional comments and observations which have found their way into the report. And also thanks are due to Littoralis Limited, the company behind Disc, the secure on-line information-sharing system, who supported this work throughout."

#### DOWNLOAD & READ THE FULL REPORT HERE

([https://www.discagainstcrime.com/sites/default/files/Stafford\\_bcrs\\_research.pdf](https://www.discagainstcrime.com/sites/default/files/Stafford_bcrs_research.pdf))

Notes for editors:

#### About Dr Andrew Stafford

Dr Andrew Stafford is Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Academic Course Leader for Undergraduate Criminology at the University of Gloucestershire.

Andrew has worked with police constabularies and with business crime reduction partnerships in cities to help design and implement crime reduction measures, evaluate initiatives, identify evidence-informed approaches and improve levels of public confidence and trust in the police and the criminal justice system. Andrew is part of the National Business Crime Centre's Governing Board for BCRP national standards.

#### About Littoralis Ltd and Disc

Disc has been developed by Littoralis Ltd to enable communities to self- manage low-level crime and anti-social behaviour and enable police to work with them to deliver a new kind of effective, joined-up community policing.

Littoralis has developed Disc over more than a decade, constantly enhancing it to support the evolving needs of its customers. Today the system is in use across more than 450 towns and city- centres, as well as by shopping centres, major retailers, sports venues, security companies and the police.

In addition to delivering on-going advice on how to make the most of their Disc systems, Littoralis

provides consultancy on compliance with Data Protection law and Best Practice.

## Media Contacts

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For more information about Littoralis Limited and its Disc system visit their website (<https://www.discagainstcrime.com/>) or contact Charlie Newman on [cnewman@littoralis.com](mailto:cnewman@littoralis.com)