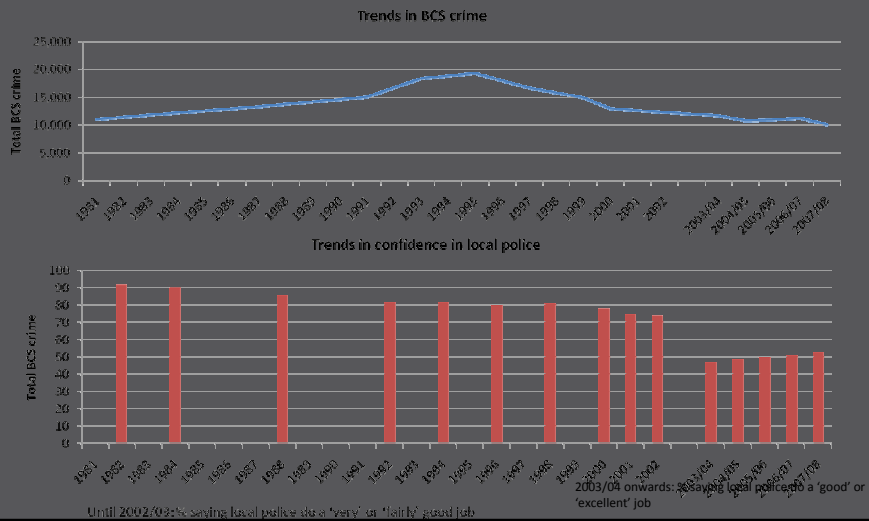## The Scottish Institute for **Policing Research**

**Mapping a dynamic and differentiated landscape:
Reassurance policing in England & Wales and
Scotland**

**John Graham (Police Foundation)
Nick Fyfe (Scottish Institute for Policing Research)**

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Falling crime, falling confidence…

Trends in BCS crime

Trends in confidence in local police

Until 2002/03: % saying local police do a 'very' or 'fairly' good job

2003/04 onwards: % saying local police do a 'good' or 'excellent' job

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Why public confidence is declining….

- A 'law and order' politics which increases fear and raises expectations…
- Government targets encourage police to focus on national rather than local demands;
- Failure to address the 'authority' gap…
- Mission creep and a thinning 'blue line'

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Reassurance policing: addressing the 'reassurance gap'

- Targeting signal crimes
- Focus on improving public confidence, managing perceptions
- Visibility, accessibility and familiarity
- Involve local communities, partnership working
- Reduce collective insecurity and increase informal social control

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Neighbourhood policing I: the model

- The neighbourhood policing programme based around local policing teams:
  - Uniformed police officers who act as team leaders and tackle crimes that require the full use of police powers;
  - Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who provide a high visibility presence but have limited powers
  - Special Constables and other volunteers;
  - Local authority wardens
  - Partners from other organizations, such as housing mangers, youth workers, the health services, the fire service and local ward councillors.
- Over 3,600 teams in 43 forces
- 16,000 PCSOs and 13,000 Police officers

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Neighbourhood policing II: aims and operation

- Teams should aim to increase:
  - police visibility
  - establish greater community involvement
  - secure a commitment to collaborative problem-solving with partners

- The operation of the NPP involves:
  - Baseline assessment…
  - A 'control plan' to tackle priority issues.
  - A review to assess changes in public perceptions and the sense of security.

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Neighbourhood policing III: impacts

- When piloted at a **local** level, neighbourhood policing was found to have a significant positive impact on a range of outcome measures, including criminal victimisation, perceptions of anti-social behaviour and public confidence in the police.
- Foot patrol, community engagement and problem solving were all found to be critical in improving public confidence in the police.
- The **national** evaluation identified implementation problems, with effective community engagement and problem-solving not yet in place in many areas.

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The Flanagan review and 'citizen-focused policing'

The next phase of Neighbourhood Policing requires…

- Integration of Neighbourhood Policing with Neighbourhood Management approaches;
- Ensuring performance measurement gives proper weight to partnership working, problem solving, community confidence, and dealing with community concerns;
- Ensuring that those holding posts within Neighbourhood Policing teams are in post for at least two years;
- Greater recognition to officers and staff who remain on Neighbourhood Policing teams for lengthy periods of time;
- Ring-fencing PCSO funding for 2008/9 to enable the embedding of the PCSO role within Neighbourhood Policing teams

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A Scottish perspective…

'The policing of Scotland, like the policing of any territory with its own political and cultural identity, consists of distinctive but broadly familiar sets of social practices informed by a distinctive but broadly familiar pattern of historical development'

(Neil Walker, 1999, 'Situating Scottish Policing').

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Community policing in Scotland: the position in 2008…

- No national strategy, no PCSOs and no significant force strategy;
- Concerns over the confusion and ambiguity of the terms 'community policing' and 'community officers'…
- But a political commitment to a 1000 new 'community officers'….

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Community policing in Scotland

- 2008 Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee Inquiry into Community Policing;
- Took evidence from England & Wales, the US, academic researchers, key police and community stakeholders and went on fact-finding visits;
- No national template but offered a 'community policing vision'

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Scotland's national 'Community Policing Vision'

- **Community policing principles**: visible, accessible, identifiable officers; problem-solving approach; clearly defined geographical boundaries; civic engagement and partnership working;
- More **active public scrutiny** through police governance arrangements;
- Clear policies on **tenure and abstraction** of community officers
- Commitment needed to **training and leadership**;
- Rigorous **evaluation** of the outcomes (quantitative and qualitative) of community policing

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Local variations on a theme….

Strathclyde Police

- Communities Unit to include Community Policing Teams, Campus Officers, Community Safety, CID and Special Constables.
- Geographical organisation of policing teams will be based on wards with numbers informed by a Needs Assessment.
- Teams will focus on 'effective problem-solving through enforcement, public reassurance and focused response policing'.
- Limited involvement in diversionary activities and supporting community groups.
- Special Constables to be an integral part of Community Policing Teams and be used exclusively in that capacity.
- Non-abstraction policy in respect of Community Policing Teams to be introduced to 'Red-Circle' officers in their areas.
- Priority payments for constables to be linked to their membership of Community Policing Teams.

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Local variations on a theme….

Central Scotland Police

- Six step model for delivering community policing:
  - Know your community/neighbourhood
  - Engage with the public to identify signal crimes and signal disorders
  - Engage with partners
  - Local neighbourhood/community action
  - Divisional action
  - Review Progress and communicate results
- Community profiles to be shared with partners and community members.
- Formal structure created for community problem solving action plans.
- Community policing teams to work closely with community traffic wardens, Community Wardens and Special Constables.
- Community officers to be retained in post for a minimum of 18-24 months.

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Conclusions

- Reassurance policing in the UK is dynamic and differentiated….
- The importance of policy transfer in an era globalisation… of acting locally but thinking globally…
- The dangers of implementation failure and weak evaluation…
- The 'unbearable lightness of community' and the need for capacity building…