



Safer Neighbourhood Team – Abstractions Policy

Abstract

For neighbourhood policing to succeed and reduce crime and harm in the long run it is important to understand that problem solving, and preventative policing, can only take place where there is protected time for these activities to take place.

Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is required to ensure Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) spend as much time as possible visibly delivering neighbourhood policing, engagement, dealing with chronic issues and problem solving within their assigned Borough/District, and that abstractions from their core role are kept to a minimum.

2. Policy Statement

For neighbourhood policing to succeed and reduce crime and harm in the long run it is important to understand that problem solving, and preventative policing, can only take place where there is protected time for these activities to take place.

This policy is designed to enhance and support specialist neighbourhood policing by:

- Providing public access to their dedicated local SNT officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO)
- Allowing SNT officers and PCSOs to find effective, long-term and sustainable solutions to chronic and repeat issues within neighbourhoods, working collaboratively with partner agencies and the local community wherever practicable to problem solve.
- Ensuring SNT officers and PCSOs remain visible on their respective Borough/District.

However, in certain circumstances, detailed within this policy, SNT officers and staff will be available to support wider policing when no alternative resources are available.

All personnel involved in the resourcing and directing of SNT staff are responsible for adherence to this policy.

Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition of abstraction

For the purposes of this policy, abstraction is defined as the temporary abstraction of personnel assigned to the Safer Neighbourhood Team within a specified Borough/District, or from their core functions around neighbourhood policing, engagement, dealing with chronic issues and problem solving within neighbourhoods.

2. Circumstances when abstraction is justified

SNT officers and staff will be available to support wider policing as it is accepted that abstractions may be necessary for certain operational situations including:

- Significant spontaneous events
- Critical or major incidents
- Serious or major crime
- Civil disasters or national security issues
- Circumstances authorised at the Force Management Meeting (FMM)
- Emergency calls for assistance from the public when other police resources are unavailable or where an SNT officer is the closest resource.
- Major pre-planned operations e.g. Epsom Derby

It is important to remember that policing has a positive duty under ECHR Article 2, and first and foremost our Neighbourhood Officers are Police Officers. Providing the initial response to emergency incidents, where other resources are not readily available, or the resulting delay in assigning others, would result in a poor service for victims or missed criminal justice outcomes, is important as well. However, before assigning SNT officers as the most appropriate resource, consideration should also be given to all other appropriate units (ARV, RPU, OD, CID etc).

2.1 However, the abstraction of SNT officers and PCSOs must only take place where there are no other resources available, and before assigning SNT officers' consideration should also be given to all other appropriate units (ARV, RPU, OD, CID etc).

2.2 The authority to abstract SNT officers and staff is as follows:

Planned: Any decision, in advance of a planned duty, to abstract SNT officers or staff from their role should only be taken by the relevant SMT in line with this policy and in consultation with the relevant Borough Commander.

In circumstances where there is a force wide need to meet the operational requirements of a pre-planned large scale public safety, or public order, event then, where sufficient time allows, SNT resources will be drawn proportionately in comparison to other areas of the business, so that SNT is not disproportionately affected. However, it is accepted that some of those requirements will be met by SNT officers in order to spread the impact

and to utilise skills of those who are trained public order officers. This will normally be authorised by the relevant Gold Commander.

Spontaneous: In dynamic situations this decision may be taken by the Force Silver who will need to ensure that the grounds for the abstraction are appropriate.

2.3 There is no abstraction rate, or percentage, that has been set because of the establishment of SNTs varies, and their deployable officers and staff can change frequently. The overarching principle is to keep abstractions to a minimum, and new data and oversight will help on going scrutiny and actions to ensure this is the case.

2.4 The following will not be considered an abstraction:

- Mandatory training – Officer Safety Training, Public Order, First Aid etc.
- Training associated with Neighbourhood Policing.
- Attending court.
- Sickness.
- Annual Leave.
- Rest Days.
- Crime investigation that has been allocated to an officer's workload.
- Allocated time for executive members of staff networks and attending developmental programs such as PALS.

It is essential that SNT supervisors must maintain effective oversight of their team's abstraction levels.

The dynamic nature of policing means that to try and create a mechanism to record effectively all the above variations would create an unnecessary and unproductive bureaucracy however we must ensure that some measure of 'abstraction' is recorded.

To give some level of indication on the level of abstractions for SNT officers those officers will record abstractions through the abstraction app. This will be subject to oversight and scrutiny at the Force Neighbourhood Meeting and Local Policing Accountability Board.