

We are becoming increasingly familiar, if not comfortable, with the notion of the 'wider police family' - in fact there was a feature on this subject in the last issue of SSAIB News. The notion draws on the understanding that crime reduction is not just the responsibility of the police but that it is a partnership between the police and the community in its widest sense. In this article, Ken Meanwell, ACPO Security Systems Policy Holder and Company Approval Officer, explores the role of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme and its contribution to the 'wider police family'

Background

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 set out the Government's initiative for a more partnership based approach to the problem of crime and disorder. This approach recognised that crime reduction is not the sole responsibility of the police and in fact the Act places a statutory duty upon the police and local authority to develop and implement a strategy to tackle problems at a local level. The concept of a partnership between the police and other bodies (such as, community and voluntary groups and private security firms) was intended to develop a collaborative 'citizen centred' approach to policing the community. With this collaborative view, each element of the 'family' must recognise and value the role played by the others (see fig1). However, this position can not be achieved overnight and an alternative, more police-centred approach is another mechanism by which the objective might be achieved.

The police centred view, with its focus on contracted services, allows the police buy-in private security to fulfil their customer service role. To some extent this is already happening under the auspices the Police Reform Act 2002 with Community Safety Accreditation Schemes

The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme

This initiative enables the Chief Officers to accredit employees (persons) of organisations who contribute towards community safety. It aims to raise awareness, improve standards and promote co-operation between the police and their partners in the community.

Accredited Persons (APs) will be granted limited, but targeted powers appropriate to their role and the needs of the community.

How does it work?

The setting up of an accreditation scheme is at the discretion of the local force chief. It is then a matter for local employers to decide whether they want to their employees to participate and to circumscribe the extent of the powers they wish them to have. A Joint Operating and Information Sharing Protocol is drawn-up between the applicant organisation and the accrediting force. This is the mechanism by which procedures, line of communication, confidentiality rules and other safeguards are put in place.

The Police Reform Act sets out a number of requirements which must be satisfied before force chief offers can make an accreditation:

- The employing organisation must have a satisfactory complaints procedure.
- The employing organisation must be a fit and proper person to supervise the work of the Approved Person (AP)
- The employee is suitable to exercise the powers that are to be conferred upon him/her.

- The employee is capable of effectively carrying out the function for the purpose of which these powers are conferred upon him/her.
- The employee has received adequate training for the exercise of these powers.

It is a matter for the force chief to decide what training an individual requires and to judge the individual's general suitability for the range of powers they might exercise. When approved the AP remains under the full control of his/her employer. The joint protocols strengthen the bonds between the police and the employer, but accreditation does not require the police to direct the deployment of the AP. Civil action as a result of the unlawful conduct of the AP means that the employer is held to be a joint tortfeasor - that is they are considered to have acted together in committing the wrong and have joint and several liability.

Larger private sector organisations whose activities may cover more than one police region can apply to the ACPO Crime Prevention Initiative (CPI) who will receive and process application for approval. ACPO CPI will advise local Chief Constables who has been recommended for approval in their area.

Uniforms and Identification

Police forces have determined that it is generally better for Approved Persons to wear their own (employer provided) uniform carrying the CSAS badge identifying them as an Approved Person. The AP may only exercise the powers conferred upon him/her while in uniform.



What Powers will the AP have?

While the powers may be varied from time to time, an AP may have some or all of the following powers:

- Issue of Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling, littering and riding a bicycle on a footpath.
- To request the name and address for Fixed Penalty offences and offences that cause injury, alarm and distress to another person or damage or loss of another's property.
- To request the name and address of a person acting in an anti-social manner.
- To confiscate alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco products from young people.
- To require the removal of abandoned vehicles.
- To regulate traffic for the purpose of escorting abnormal loads.
- To stop a vehicle for emission testing.

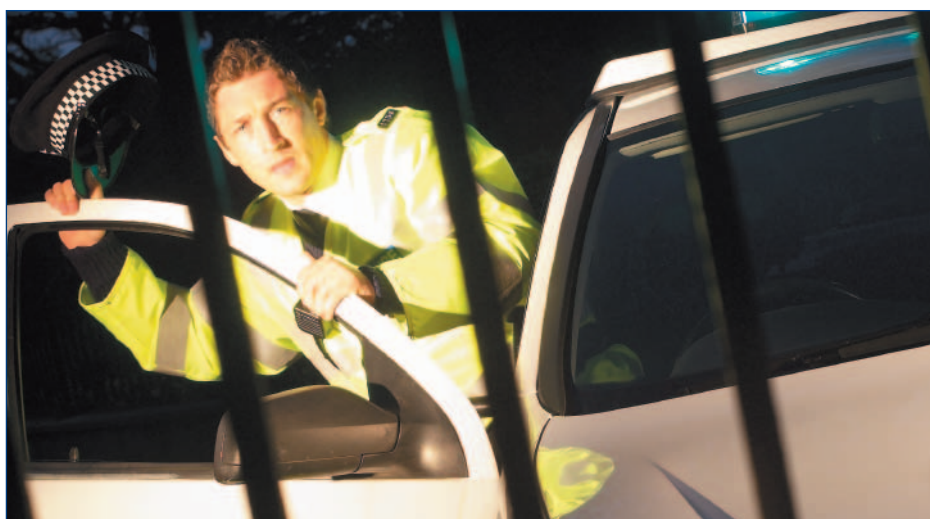
The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 extended the following to APs:

- The power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for graffiti, fly-posting and truancy (eg. If, in a shopping mall, they come across a parent with a child who should be at school).
- The power to stop cyclists if they are suspected of having committed the offence of riding on a foot-way.
- The power to issue (appropriate) Penalty Notices for Disorder under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

Apart from these powers, the AP will not be given additional powers of enforcement other than those available to the ordinary citizen.

How does CSA relate to SIA Licensing?

There is no conflict between the procedures required for Security Industry Authority licencing and the requirement of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme. In my view it is likely that the standards required for AP status are likely to be higher than those required by the SIA as accreditation may confer certain police powers on the individual.



Why join a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme?

At the beginning of this article I looked at the background to this initiative and outlined the changing nature of policing and the role of the 'wider police family'. Organisation, whether voluntary, public or private are being given the opportunity to contribute to the safety of their community - in this respect CSA is empowering the community, through its citizens, to take an active role in the reduction of crime and disorder. Many organisations, already voluntarily or commercially perform this function. The CSA Scheme supports those organisations who have already committed to crime reduction by accrediting their staff and making them more effective.

Employers also benefit because they are safe in the knowledge that their employees have reached an acceptable standard of training, appearance and suitability for the post (verified through vetting and competence assessment).

If you would like more details on the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme or an application pack, contact:

CSAS Company Approval Officer
Kenneth Meanwell
ACPO Staff Office
Lincoln Police Headquarters
PO Box 999
Lincoln
Tel. 01522 558377

Email:
Kenneth.meanwell@lincs.pnn.police.uk

An application pack can be downloaded from: www.acpo.police.uk Follow the link to the policies page for the CSAS Guidelines to download a CSAS application pack.

