

The effectiveness of partnership working in a crime and disorder context

A rapid evidence assessment

Geoff Berry, Peter Briggs, Rosie Erol and Lauren van Staden

Background and method

- Partnership approaches are largely built on the premise that no single agency can deal with, or be responsible for dealing with, complex community safety and crime problems. There are a range of ways of describing what constitutes a partnership approach; however it can be described in simple terms as a cooperative relationship between two or more organisations to achieve a common goal.
- Partnership approaches to tackling crime are now strongly embedded in the way in which local areas in England and Wales approach community safety. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) defines the core group of agencies involved in these partnerships as well as their functions and role at the local level. However, as yet, there have been no systematic attempts to review the social research evidence base around partnership working, and synthesise the evidence base in a way which makes it easily available for practitioners and policy makers. This rapid evidence assessment (REA) represents an attempt to address this gap.
- An REA provides a robust method of synthesising evidence by adopting systematic review methods to search and critically appraise available research in a subject area. The approach is made more “rapid” than traditional systematic reviews by limiting the breadth or depth of the process whilst maintaining the same level of quality criteria in assessing the available evidence.
- This REA sought to address two questions; i) “Are partnerships more effective and efficient in achieving crime-related outcomes than alternatives?” and ii) “What factors have been identified as making partnerships work effectively and efficiently in delivering crime-related outcomes?”

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Keywords

Rapid Evidence Assessment
Partnership
Multi-agency
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Crime
Evaluation

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- The search strategy involved searching abstracts, titles and key words of twelve electronic databases, plus hand searches of a number of print sources. The REA focused on published UK and international studies in the English language.
 - The initial database searches identified 6,312 citations and from these, an “on-screen” review of the abstracts identified 217 papers which appeared relevant to the research questions. Studies were assessed independently through a “double-blind” scoring process. Of the 217 papers reviewed only nine papers met the required stringent quality criteria of Maryland Scale (MS) of Scientific Method Level 3 or 4; these formed the basis of the detailed review. All had partnership working as an integral element of how they have tackled crime. All of the evaluations were undertaken in the US between 2001 and 2009. Three of the studies evaluated multi-site, multi-outcome initiatives across cities in the US.
- (e.g. reduction in gang crime). The initiatives themselves comprised prevention or deterrence activities, enhanced service provision or, in many instances, a combination of approaches determined by the local problem which had been identified through targeted analysis.
- The catalyst for partnership working was either the identification of a known problem (often by those not directly responsible for delivering the intervention) and the provision of funding to address that problem, or, the identification of a problem by partner agencies in which mutual benefit in tackling this was identified.
 - The table below summarises the findings of the studies included in this review. The nature and type of partnerships evaluated varied; in most cases the nature of the partnership was determined by local circumstances.
 - Of the five methodologically stronger studies (MS level 4), two recorded positive significant impacts as a result of the interventions undertaken: one focused on reducing serious violence across seven sites (McGarrell *et al.*, 2009) and the other on changing perceptions of fear of crime in a shopping centre (Jim *et al.*, 2006). Cahill *et al.* (2008) found mixed results in their study of an initiative implemented in four US cities to target

Main findings

- The main focus of the studies identified through this review was violent crime. In most cases the partnership element of the interventions reviewed focused on joining up the provision of services to a target group in order to achieve specific crime related outcomes

Author	Date	Focus of initiative	Findings: positive significant impact demonstrated by evaluation
MS Level 4 Studies			
Cahill Multi-site	2008	Reduction in youth gang crime and violence	Mixed
Jim	2006	Reduction in crime problems and perceptions of fear in shopping centre	✓
McGarrell Multi-site	2009	Reduction in gun crime	✓
Turner <i>et al.</i>	2002	Reduction in offender recidivism	X (No demonstrable impact)
Winterfield <i>et al.</i>	2006	Provision of services to serious and violent offenders on release from prison	X (Positive, not significant impact)
MS Level 3 Studies			
Scott	2002	Reduction in recidivism of first time violent offenders	✓
Roehl Multi-site	2005	Reduction and prevention of violent crime	Mixed
Kostelac	2004	Reduction in violent crime in targeted areas of Phoenix	✓
Whetstone	2001	Pilot of coordinated domestic violence response team	✓

violent crime: one city demonstrated a positive significant impact; two cities demonstrated no significant impact; and one demonstrated a non-significant negative impact. Turner *et al.*, 2002 found no positive significant impact on the recidivism of offenders. Finally Winterfield *et al.* (2006) focused on service provision to violent offenders and did not record significant improvements for the treatment group.

- Of the four MS Level 3 studies, three recorded positive significant impacts on outcome measures. Whetstone's (2001) evaluation of a coordinated domestic violence team found a positive significant impact on arrests and callouts to victims as did Scott *et al.* (2002) on levels of violent recidivism. Roehl *et al.*'s (2005) multi-site evaluation of an intervention to reduce violent crime found positive significant impacts in seven of the ten sites evaluated. Finally, Kostelac *et al.* (2004) found a positive but not significant impact on levels of serious violence as a result of the adoption of a multi-agency approach.

Interpreting the evidence

- Isolating the contribution that particular components of an initiative make to crime reduction can be complex. This is particularly the case for this review which sought to identify the effectiveness of an *approach* (partnership working) rather than a specific intervention (e.g. installing door locks to reduce burglary). The review identified studies in which interventions which had partnership working as a core component were compared to interventions where no formal partnership approach was in place. None of the studies could be described as solely testing the efficacy of partnership working.
- The findings of the studies included in the review are mixed. However, on balance, the evidence suggests that the principle of applying partnership working as a component of initiatives to tackle complex crime and disorder problems is effective.

Mechanisms associated with better partnership working

Leadership	Shared vision, values and norms of partners involved to establish collaborative advantage
	Strong leadership and strategic direction (focused on proving a central coordination effort, getting buy-in from partners and managing the project)
	Full integration of project aims into partner organisations aims
	Clear project brief, roles and responsibilities
	Core groups to oversee problem solving approach
Data sharing and problem focus	Clarity regarding the problem(s) being tackled through focused analysis to ensure a properly problem focused intervention
	Regular exchange of relevant information
	Having focused interventions in each area
	Including researchers within partnership
	Continual evaluation to review and inform activity of group
Communication and co-location	Regular face to face contact and communication between partners
	Co-location of agencies, partners and staff
	Presence of partners at local level
Structures	Flexibility of structures and processes
	Having a research partner as an active member of the task force
	Clear monitoring, accountability and integrity mechanisms
	Having operational groups to implement strategies
	Involvement of most appropriate agencies
Experience	Prior experience in working together in partnership (i.e. established relationships)
	Secondment of skilled officers into joint team
	Careful selection of appropriate partners
	Joint training of team members

- Much of the evidence comes from US based multi site studies which feature diverse patterns of local partnership working. This needs to be considered when reflecting on the applicability of the findings for England and Wales. Nevertheless, the adoption of a multi-agency approach to tackling complex crime problems, and the challenges associated with working across organisational boundaries, cultures and established ways of working, have clear relevance to practitioners and policy makers in the UK context.
- The studies reviewed identified several mechanisms as being linked to effective partnership working. Whilst it is not possible to establish categorically that these characteristics led to effective partnerships they were found to be a contributing factor in areas in which effective partnership working was identified. The main mechanisms are summarised on the previous page.
- The findings of this review improve our understanding of the value of a multi-agency approach by providing clearer evidence on role partnership working in tackling crime as well as providing some indication of what mechanisms are associated with more effective partnership working.

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I Background

Partnership approaches are largely built on the premise that no single agency can deal with, or be responsible for dealing with, complex community safety and crime problems. There are various ways of describing what constitutes a partnership approach; however, in this area it has been described in simple terms as a co-operative relationship between two or more organisations to achieve a common goal.

At the present time partnership working as an approach to delivering community safety outcomes is strongly embedded in the way that localities in England and Wales approach the delivery of the community safety agenda at the local level. However, as yet, there have been no systematic attempts to review the social research evidence base around partnership working, and synthesise this in a way which makes it easily available for practitioners and policy makers. This rapid evidence assessment represents an attempt to address this gap.

The theory of partnership working

Partnership working between agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, has become an increasingly important feature of the way in which crime problems are tackled at both the local and regional level. There are a range of ways of describing what constitutes a partnership approach; however, it can be described in simple terms as a co-operative relationship between two or more organisations to achieve a common goal. Partnership approaches are largely built on the premise that no single agency can deal with, or be responsible for dealing with, complex community safety and crime problems.

A US theoretical perspective on multi-agency models of crime reduction identifies seven potential benefits of effective partnership working:

- crime and drug problems are complex and require complex, innovative and comprehensive solutions;
- partnerships are better than individual agencies at identifying and defining problems of greatest community concern;
- partnerships are better able to develop creative and targeted interventions (because they bring together a diverse group of agencies with different approaches);
- multiple interventions are generally more effective than single agency interventions with potentially higher levels of the intervention being delivered (e.g. greater number of prevention activities being undertaken);
- partnerships bring more resources and new ideas to the problem solving arena;
- multiple interventions are likely to maximise the impact on any particular target audience;
- exposure to different interventions may yield new benefits (where the combined interaction of two or more interventions may generate greater effects).

[adapted from Rosenbaum, 2002]

Rosenbaum (2002) also identified several additional benefits of partnership activity over and above the impact on crime reduction. In particular, he suggests that when partnerships work effectively they can:

- increase the accountability of organisations;
- reduce duplication and fragmentation of services;
- build public-private linkages;
- increase public awareness of and participation in crime reduction initiatives;
- serve to strengthen local community organisations; and,
- be transformational, permanently altering the way agencies do business (better data-driven decision making, emphasis on problem solving and prevention).

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In a crime context, the last of these may be particularly important in changing the extent to which some law enforcement agencies adapt from their often traditional focus on reactive response and enforcement to a more crime prevention oriented approach. The benefits outlined by Rosenbaum are in the most part based on a scenario in which partnership working is effective. The mere presence of a partnership approach is, of course, not a guarantee of the delivery of the benefits outlined above.

Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales

A multi-agency approach to crime reduction has been present in England and Wales in various guises since the 1960s, with most initial arrangements being undertaken on an informal and relatively small-scale basis.¹ This approach was rooted in a greater emphasis on crime prevention during this period and was encapsulated in the work of the Cornish Committee on the Prevention and Detection of Crime, which reported its findings in 1965. This Committee had a partnership philosophy as its central theme and can be seen as the starting point for partnership working in a community safety context in England and Wales.

Although partnership working as a method of delivering crime reduction outcomes was promoted by Home Office Circulars from the 1960s onwards, arguably the next most significant milestone was the publication of the Morgan Report (*Safer Communities: The local Delivery of Crime Prevention through the Partnership Approach*) (1991). The Morgan Report was critical in shaping community safety and the future development of community safety partnerships in England and Wales. It advanced the notion of partnership and recognised the need to bring together key stakeholders in the field of community safety and crime prevention. It recommended linking local authorities with police and others in a multi-agency approach to tackling crime. Following its publication there was wide-scale, voluntary adoption of community safety partnerships across Britain. However, their scale, scope and constitution varied.

The Crime & Disorder Act (1998) transformed partnership working in community safety by placing a statutory requirement for local authorities, the police

and health authorities in England and Wales² to work in partnership. Some areas had already established this method as a way of working and so for these, the new legislation required little change to existing practice. For others the Act necessitated significant institutional change.

In order to assist areas in adopting the requirements of the Crime & Disorder Act, the Home Office published *Delivering Community Safety: A guide to effective partnership working* (2007). This provided statutory guidelines and guidance for partnership working contained within six so-called 'hallmarks for effective practice', namely:

- empowered and effective leadership;
- intelligence-led business processes;
- engaged communities;
- effective and responsive delivery structures;
- visible and constructive accountability; and
- appropriate skills and knowledge.

While most Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) act at the strategic level, much of the activity undertaken by the partnership is done through other local agencies working together. Whilst these partnerships do not have the same statutory footing as CSPs they often work within the same local framework and act to deliver the services identified as being required by the CSP. These include Drug Intervention Programmes (focused on directing adult drug-misusing offenders into drug treatment and reducing offending behaviour), and Prolific and Priority Offender Programmes (initiatives aimed at targeting those responsible for the highest level of offending in local areas).

Partnerships and crime in the US context

Given that much of the current evidence base on partnerships comes from US studies it is important to set out briefly the US tradition of partnership approaches to crime reduction. Partnership approaches to community safety in the US do not have the same historical footing as those in England and Wales. There have, however,

- 2 Unlike England & Wales, crime and disorder partnerships are not a statutory requirement in Scotland. However, *Safer Communities through Partnerships: A strategy for Action*, launched in 1998 encourages local authorities in Scotland to take the lead in forming local community safety partnerships, involving the police and other relevant bodies. The strategy does not mandate the size or scope of established partnerships but encourages this to be determined by local circumstances.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w6/cp-03.htm>

¹ Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships: Round one Progress.
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/prs151.pdf>

been signs of an increasing interest in local partnership approaches to crime since the 1990s particularly around community policing initiatives (Roth *et al.*, 2000). Aside from local bilateral partnerships, often police-led, involving residents (neighbourhood watch) and schools (drug abuse resistance programmes), the growth in partnership working in the US has been seen as going hand in hand with problem oriented policing.

In contrast to the legislative approach to building formal partnerships in England and Wales, the US approach to formal partnerships can be characterised as being dominated by a series of government sponsored national demonstration programmes. One example, Weed and Seed, was a large scale Department of Justice partnership initiative involving more than 200 communities established in 1991. It sought: to develop a multi-agency approach to controlling and preventing violent crime and drug trafficking in high crime areas; to co-ordinate local and national partner agencies and private and voluntary sector initiatives to maximise impact; and to mobilise residents in the areas to assist in identifying and removing offenders. The 'weed' of the initiative relates to weeding out violent offenders; the 'seed' relates to intervening through preventative initiatives and the revitalisation of services (Reno *et al.*, 1999). Other sponsored national programmes started during the same period included the Community Responses to Drug Abuse Program and the Comprehensive Communities Program (an innovative multi-agency response to violent crime).

More recently, US national partnership initiatives with an explicit and formal partnership component have included the 'pulling levers' strategy (Kennedy 1998, McGarrell, 2010) and Project Safe Neighbourhoods (Hipple, 2010). Both involved interventions targeted at crime reduction, which whilst varied in their approach, all used partnership as a key delivery mechanism.³

2 The Rapid Evidence Assessment approach

According to Davies (2003) a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) is designed to:

- 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 evidence is saying and discuss the gaps.

In recent years the REA has emerged as an alternative to the Systematic Review. The REA applies the same quality criteria as a Systematic Review (and so is expected to be equally as rigorous). However, it makes several concessions, to shorten the time taken to complete the review, by narrowly defining the research question and limiting the number of databases and searches undertaken.

The key to any REA therefore is: clarity regarding the subject matter and the aims of the work; a tightly structured approach to the selection of suitable data sources; the searching process (including well defined search criteria); and a clear and simple assessment process. In broad terms, the REA comprises four broad stages, namely:

- identification of the research question and agreement of definitions;
- search and selection process;
- quality assessment; and,
- synthesis of the findings from the selected papers.

Section 2 of this report considers each of the stages in relation to this review in greater detail.

The research questions and definition

This REA was undertaken in order to address the following research questions:

“Are partnerships more effective and efficient in achieving crime-related outcomes than alternatives?”

and

“What factors have been identified as making partnerships work effectively and efficiently in delivering crime-related outcomes?”

³ These evaluations have laid the groundwork for the development of a new model of crime reduction in the US termed the New Criminal Justice (2010). This model has at its core three principles; i) collaboration across agencies previously viewed as relatively autonomous, ii) a focus on local problems and local solutions and iii) a deep commitment to research, which guides problem assessment and policy formation and intervention (Klofas, Hipple & McGarrell, 2010).

The second question is, to some extent, a refinement of the first. The initial question seeks to understand if partnerships are effective in delivering crime-related outcomes, compared to non-partnership based approaches. The second question asks that, if this is the case, what factors contribute to making partnerships work effectively?

The questions raise a number of issues with regard to definition of terms, in particular ‘partnerships’, ‘effective’, ‘crime-related’ and ‘outcomes’. One of the challenges in trying to address the first of the two research questions is the very nature of partnership working. Partnership working is, self-evidently, not a tactic or an intervention in its own right. Rather it is arguably best described as a general approach or enabling mechanism which brings partners or agencies together to tackle shared crime problems. Partnership working was therefore viewed as a mechanism through which to achieve specific outcomes rather than an end in itself. The research question – and the search terms – were designed not to be restrictive in this respect and encompass a wide range of possible partnership approaches.

The following definitions were adopted:

Partnerships: For the purposes of the review, a partnership was defined as more than one agency or group coming together to address a particular problem or problems. The review embraced any multi-agency approach to tackle crime and disorder.

Effective: The review sought to identify studies which provided evidence that interventions have achieved their stated aims or have had some positive impact on the problem on which they were targeted. This included any assessment of efficiency, value for money or cost effectiveness.

Crime-related: In addition to crime problems the review search process was designed to include studies which considered those partnerships targeted at broader issues such as anti-social behaviour.

Outcome: Outcome measures were defined broadly. They included number of crimes recorded, public perceptions of crime/fear of crime, improved service delivery and reconviction measures.

Approaches to partnership working may either be narrow and focused or more wide-ranging. On the one hand they may be built around, or be an integral part of,

the delivery of a specific initiative or intervention; on the other hand they may be about instituting a ‘way of working’ between agencies. The ‘partnership approach’ can include: joint tasking analysis and decision making; the co-location of staff; the sharing of information and data; or it may simply be about two or more agencies building closer and more sympathetic working relationships. It may also be applied in tackling a diverse range of crime types and crime problems.

Overall, the review was designed to be inclusive and not exclude particular types of partnership working. The necessarily broad brush nature of this approach to the evidence was intended to take forward understanding of the value of partnership working. Beyond this there lies a specific and arguably more difficult question, namely, to what extent is it possible to isolate the particular contribution within any identified ‘partnership intervention’ that is specifically the consequence of partnership working. Whether or not this question can be successfully answered is dependent upon the robustness and sophistication of the evidence base reviewed.⁴

Selection of studies

Search process

The search strategy involved searching abstracts, titles and key words of a number of electronic databases, plus hand searches of a number of print sources. The REA focused on published UK and international studies in the English language.

The first task was to agree the search terms. An initial list was identified and tested against a small number of databases. This highlighted a number of key search terms and the list was refined on this basis. The key terms were used to start the searches across different databases, with the remaining terms added in various combinations as the searches progressed. The list of search terms was organic, in that terms were added as the searches progressed and new ones, previously not identified, came to light. For example, the term ‘partnership agencies’ was added relatively late in the process. In terms of the process, initial searches used ‘high level’ key search terms such as ‘partnership’ or ‘crime’. These were then refined by adding additional combinations of search terms depending upon the number of citations identified. The search terms are given in Annex B, with the key terms highlighted in bold.

⁴ For instance, the extent to which any intervention seeks to isolate partnership working within the study design.

Twenty electronic databases were identified as being relevant to the research questions. As the initial searching progressed, the number of duplicate citations identified across the databases rose markedly. This suggested that the 'pool' of possible studies for inclusion in the REA was becoming exhausted. As a result, the searches were focused on twelve databases (these are also listed in Annex B). In addition, a general internet search was undertaken as was a search of the Home Office library catalogue.

To ensure the relevance and currency of results, all searches only considered studies dated 1980 or later. An on-screen review of abstracts identified those studies that might be relevant to the research questions and these were saved for further review. The saved abstracts were then examined in more detail and from this a list of studies for possible inclusion in the review emerged.

Each of the 'possible' studies was then considered against the following inclusion criteria.

Criterion One: The paper includes a comparison between an intervention which includes a formal partnership component with settings which do not include them.

Criterion Two: The paper attempts to measure the impact of this intervention on outcomes, e.g. crime reduction or service provision.

Criterion Three: The paper explores more generally the mechanisms by which partnership working helps to achieve crime-related outcomes.

All papers had to meet Criterion One and Two to be included in the study. If the abstract suggested that the study met the inclusion criteria, the full paper was called.

It became clear in reviewing the abstracts that the body of the research literature around partnerships generally focused on formal partnerships being a mechanism to support the delivery of an intervention (e.g. multiple partners working together to provide services to violent offenders). However, one of the challenges in applying Criterion One was that it was rarely made explicit whether comparison sites did not have some element of, albeit informal, partnership working in place. All that could be said, on the basis of the abstract, was that the problem was not being tackled through formal partnership approaches in comparison sites.

Each team member was allocated a number of databases and carried out the searches independently. A guidance note was issued to ensure consistency across the search process. If any team member was unsure whether to include an abstract, they consulted with another team member (and if necessary, both other team members), in order to reach an agreed decision. If, following discussion, it was still unclear whether the abstract should be included or not, the paper was called. This happened in the case of two papers, both of which were rejected at the quality assessment stage.

Each team member forwarded the copied or saved abstracts from their searches to the team leader together with their views regarding possible final inclusion or exclusion of papers. The team leader then carried out the inclusion/exclusion process, advised by the other two members of the team. A draft list of papers for inclusion was then circulated and following discussion a final list of core study papers was then agreed by all three members of the team, prior to undertaking a quality assessment process. Where there was any doubt regarding the possible inclusion of papers, all three team members considered the issue and a decision was taken.

This approach was designed to incorporate checks and balances at all stages in the process to ensure consistency across the three team members. The controls in the process also ensured that the selection of 'possibles' from an initial list of abstracts, common to REA approaches, was also valid.

Outputs from the search process

The initial database searches identified 6,312 citations and from these the 'on-screen' review of the abstracts identified 217 papers, which appeared relevant to the research questions. Many of the 217 papers identified were conceptual or theoretical pieces, i.e. they discussed what an effective partnership *should* look like. Others were descriptions of interventions rather than evaluations. There were far fewer papers which considered the evaluation of partnerships compared to non-partnerships and the identification of effective partnership practice.

The more detailed consideration of the 217 saved abstracts identified 66 'possibles', which were then tested against the inclusion criteria. Just 17 studies met the criteria and the full papers were subsequently called.

A total of 49 papers were rejected at the detailed assessment phase for a variety of reasons. The most common was the lack of a non-partnership comparison or control intervention or the lack of outcome data. Two were also found to be duplicates. The remaining 47, while not meeting the inclusion criteria for the review, are still a useful source of material in relation to partnership working and are listed in the References at the end of the report.

Quality assessment

Each of the 17 papers called were then assessed for methodological quality, the inference being that the findings drawn from studies of a higher methodological quality will provide more reliable evidence. Once received, the studies were again assessed against the three criteria to ensure that they were relevant for inclusion in the REA. All 17 papers passed this additional test and proceeded to the quality assessment phase.

All of the papers received were quality assessed against two research quality scales: the Maryland Scale of Scientific Method and a Quality Assessment Tool (QAT).

The Maryland Scale of Scientific Method is a five-point scale developed by Sherman *et al.* (1997), which attempts to classify the nature of research design. Sherman *et al.* argue that the more robust the design, the greater likelihood that the research will provide stronger evidence. It does not classify the strength of an intervention's effect but assesses the strength of the scientific evidence (see below).

Level 5 represents the strongest research design, and Level 1 the weakest.

Each study was also assessed using a Quality Assessment Tool derived from the Cabinet Office framework for assessing the quality of evidence (Spencer *et al.*, 2003).

Through the QAT, each study was marked according to its methodology in four areas, namely:

- sample selection
- bias
- data collection
- data analysis

Each heading was further broken down to provide a total of ten strands and each of these was marked between 1 (strong) and 5 (weak) for each study. The average scores for each strand were added together to provide an overall score for the study. Those studies having the lowest scores were the most methodologically sound, the lowest possible score being 10 and the highest (worst possible) score being 50.

The scores were then used to inform decisions regarding which studies were methodologically strong enough for inclusion in the detailed review. A guidance note in relation to the QAT process was prepared for all members of the team to ensure consistency of approach. This note provides more detail about the structure of the QAT and its application and can be found in Annex C.

Each paper was quality assessed on a 'double-blind' basis, that is, at least two team members graded each of the studies independently and the results were compared. Subsequent discussions with the whole team confirmed the final scores.

Where there were large discrepancies between the scores of both readers, the studies were subject to review or, if necessary, referred to the third member of the team. Once all of the 17 papers had been assessed against the Maryland Scale and the QAT criteria, decisions were made regarding inclusion in the data synthesis exercise.

Level 1 (Weakest)	Correlation between a crime prevention programme and a measure of crime or crime risk at a particular point in time
Level 2	Temporal sequence between the programme and the crime or risk outcome clearly observed, or the presence of a comparison group without demonstrated comparability to the treatment group
Level 3	A comparison between two or more comparable units of analysis, one with and one without the programme
Level 4	Comparison between multiple units with and without the programme, controlling for other factors or using comparison units that evidence only minor differences
Level 5 (Strongest)	Random assignment and analysis of comparable units to programme and comparison groups

Table 1 *Distribution of studies across the two grading scales*

QAT Grade	MS Level 5	MS Level 4	MS Level 3	MS Level 2	MS Level 1
29 or less	-	5	4	4	-
30 or more	-	-	2	1	1

The first research question requires that there must be some comparative element in all of the selected studies, i.e. in order to compare partnership and alternative approaches. On this basis, it was felt that the detailed analysis would have to focus on those studies that were graded at least Maryland Scale 3 (this is the minimum level that requires studies to have a comparative element).

The results from the application of the QAT criteria identified those studies that were methodologically strong and those that were less so. It was decided that studies for inclusion in the detailed review had to achieve a QAT score of less than 30.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the 17 studies across the two grading scales. Just nine of the 17 studies met the required quality criteria of Maryland Scale level 3 and a QAT score of less than 30. These have formed the basis of the detailed review. Generally speaking, studies which scored higher on the Maryland Scale also achieved high QAT scores. Those papers rejected at this stage are also a useful source of information and are also listed in the References at the end of the report (along with the nine selected studies).

Three of the selected studies were 'multi-site' evaluations. As a result, the number of study sites is greater than the papers identified and evidence has been drawn not only from the overall findings of these papers, but also some of the individual site evaluations included in them.

Synthesis

Each of the nine studies was subject to detailed review and key points were extracted and summarised in relation to:

- focus of the study;
- description of the intervention;
- comparative area;
- components of the intervention (mechanisms of change);
- nature of the partnership;
- rationale for coming together;
- impact; and,
- critical mechanisms.

Although the searches highlighted papers drawn from a wide range of countries, this is not reflected in the final group of papers which underpin the REA. All of the studies included in the review related to evaluations undertaken in the US and were published between 2001 and 2009.

The impact of interventions in which partnership working was an integral element of the approach adopted was assessed in all nine studies. Five categories were developed.

- Positive impact – significant, i.e. if there is evidence from the study that the observed change is positive and statistically significant (compared to a comparison or control).
- Positive impact – not significant/not tested, i.e. if there is evidence from the study that the change is not statistically significant or that significance tests have not been applied (compared to a comparison or control).
- No demonstrable impact (compared to a comparison or control).
- Negative impact – not significant/not tested, i.e. if there is evidence from the study that any change is not statistically significant or that significance tests have not been applied (compared to a comparison or control).
- Negative impact – significant. If there is evidence from the study that any change is negative and statistically significant (compared to a comparison or control).

The next chapter provides an overview of each of nine studies. Chapter 4 outlines the principal mechanisms in the reviewed studies which were identified as being associated with effective partnership working. A summary of the findings for practitioners is provided in Annex A.

3 The reviewed studies

Summary of reviewed studies

This chapter describes the nine selected studies in more detail. Of the nine studies assessed, six were evaluations of initiatives designed to tackle serious violence and three were not crime type specific. All were published between 2001 and 2009. In three studies the catalyst for the adoption of a partnership approach was the identification of a known crime problem by those not directly responsible for the intervention and the provision of funding in order to address that problem. In a further three studies partnerships were developed in response to the availability of funding to address a problem identified in the local area. The catalyst for partnership working in the final three studies was the identification of a specific problem by partner agencies in which some mutual benefit from tackling the problem was identified. In these initiatives no additional funding was 'unlocked' as a result of adopting the partnership approach although resources from across the agencies involved were utilised. None of the studies included in the review were able to isolate the specific contribution that partnership working made to the outcomes evaluated. Nevertheless, all had, as an integral part of the intervention, the use of a partnership approach to tackling crime.

Two of the Level 4 studies recorded positive significant impacts as a result of the interventions undertaken (one of which focused on reducing serious violence across seven sites, McGarrell *et al.*, 2009) and the other on changing perceptions of crime (Jim *et al.*, 2006). Cahill *et al.* (2008) found mixed results across a range of outcome measures in their study of Gang Reduction Programme in four US cities. Turner *et al.* (2002) found no positive significant impact on the recidivism of offenders targeted through the initiatives compared to the control groups. Winterfield *et al.*'s (2006) study of service delivery to offenders also found recorded positive impacts but these were not statistically significant. A summary of the impact achieved by each intervention against the outcome measures identified by the evaluation are shown in Table 2.⁵

5 While most of the key outcome measures are crime related, some relate to other non-crime factors. Cahill *et al.* presents findings from four separate study sites and McGarrell *et al.* consider the data from seven separate sites. Therefore, in total, the data from the five papers relates to 14 separate study sites.

Of the four MS Level 3 studies, three recorded positive significant effects on outcome measures. Scott *et al.* (2002) recorded a positive significant impact on levels of violent recidivism as did Roehl *et al.*'s (2005) multi-site study of a partnership approach to reduce violent crime in seven of the ten sites covered in the study. Whetstone's evaluation of domestic violence teams recorded overall positive effects, with five of the six outcome measures showing statistically significant differences in comparison to the control site. The remaining study, Kostelac *et al.*'s evaluation of a multi-agency approach to tackling serious violence recorded positive changes in outcome measures which were not statistically significant. A summary of the impact achieved by each intervention against the outcome measures identified by the evaluation is shown in Table 3.⁶

Crime Reduction Initiatives

Cahill *et al.* (2008) – The Gang Reduction Programme – MS Level 4

This was a multi-site evaluation of the Gang Reduction Programme (GRP), an initiative aimed at reducing the level of youth gang crime and violence in four US cities: Los Angeles, Milwaukee, North Miami Beach and Richmond. The programme involved multiple interventions including elements of service provision, deterrence and enforcement (mainly through arrest and conviction).

The partnership element of the intervention involved agencies providing a range of services. Core partner agencies were the police, local criminal justice agencies, local and federal (i.e. state) government agencies and the health sector. In addition, community-based organisations, volunteers and local residents were involved in some sites. Oversight at each site was provided by a programme co-ordinator. The precise nature of each scheme in the four sites varied and the framework of activity for each area was developed by local stakeholders to address family, school and community needs.

6 Roehl *et al.* was a multi-site evaluation with ten separate study sites.

Table 2 *Impact of interventions from studies categorised as MS level 4 (All incidents are measured by police recorded crime unless otherwise stated)*

Author	Outcome measure	Positive impact		No demonstrable impact	Negative impact
		Significant	Not significant (or not tested)		
Cahill^a <i>Los Angeles</i>	Serious violence incidents		▼ 12.65 incidents per month		
	Gang related incidents	▼ 6.78 incidents per month ^c			
	Gang related serious violence		▼ 8.71 incidents per month		
	Vandalism incidents			Unchanged	
<i>Richmond</i>	Drug related incidents				▲ 5.41 incidents per month
	Serious violence incidents				▲ 3.66 incidents per month ^c
	Gang related incidents				▲ 15.70 incidents per month ^c
	Gang related serious violence				▲ 3.55 incidents per month ^b
<i>Milwaukee (Phase II results)</i>	Serious violence incidents			▲ 2.30 incidents per month	
	Drug related incidents			▼ 3.52 incidents per month	
	Vandalism incidents			▼ 4.33 incidents per month	
<i>Miami Beach</i>	Serious violence incidents			▲ 2.07 incidents per month	
	Gang related incidents			▲ 1.49 incidents per month	
McGarrell	Serious violence incidents <i>All sites (n=7)</i>	▼ 4.1% violent crime trends ^d			
Turner	Juvenile Crime % of re-arrests post release leading to petition			65% of target group re-arrested (compared to 69% of control)	
Jim	Public perceptions of safety/fear of crime (based on survey)	▼ 11.8% in fear of crime during day ^c			
Winterfield	Better service delivery (Number of services provided both pre and post release based on survey)		Average of 48.9 services provided to offenders (out of possible 58 available)		

a Only analysis relating to recorded incidents presented. Data relating to number of incidents per month.

b Statistically significant ($p < .10$).

c Statistically significant ($p < .05$).

d Statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Table 3 *Impact of interventions from studies categorised as MS level 4 (All incidents are measured by police recorded crime unless otherwise stated)*

Study Reviewed Author	Outcome measure	Positive impact		No demonstrable impact	Negative impact
		Significant	Not significant (or not tested)		
Scott	Recidivism of target group	Recidivism rate of 0.05 1yr after completion of program (compared to 0.33 in control group) ^b			
Kostelac	Overall reduction in violent crime		▼ 27% in all violent crime		
Roehl All Phase I sites (5 cities)	Homicide rate	▼ 37% in homicide rate ^e			
	Violent crime rate	▼ 29% in violent crime rate ^e			
All Phase II sites (5 cities)	Homicide rate	▼ 11% in homicide rate ^b			
	Violent crime rate	▼ 16% in violent crime rate ^d			
Whetstone	Arrests ^a	Pre: 8 Post: 14 ^e			
	Arrests as % of intimate partner incidents	Pre: 15% Post: 27% ^e			

- a Values presented are mean monthly values.
- b statistically significant (p < .05).
- c statistically significant (p < .01).
- d statistically significant (p < .005).
- e Statistically significant (p < .001).

The findings on the effects of the Gang Reduction Programme across the four sites evaluated were mixed. Only one site, Los Angeles, showed a statistically significant reduction in crime levels compared with comparison sites (with serious violence, gang-related incidents, gang-related serious violence and citizen reports of shots fired all decreasing after the implementation of GRP). No evidence of displacement was found. In both Milwaukee and North Miami Beach site, however, the analysis did not find evidence that the programme had reduced serious violence and other selected outcome measures. In the fourth site, Richmond, the period after implementation saw a modest increase in serious violence and gang-related offending measures. While the comparison area in Richmond also saw increases in two of the outcome measures, those increases were smaller than in the target area.

The authors suggest that the reason that three of the four sites failed to achieve significant reductions was, in part, due to the fact that the programme had not been fully embedded in sites at the time of the evaluation. This delay in embedding was attributed to the lack of strategic emphasis on gangs prior to the GRP being implemented. In particular, areas where the GRP partners did not have pre-existing relationships, implementation was found to be slower in developing strong partnerships.

By contrast, Los Angeles had previously had a range of gang initiatives in the city. This allowed the GRP to build on existing relationships and interventions when the initiative began. This was considered to be a key element of the success achieved by the city. In Richmond, Cahill *et al.* suggest the difficulties experienced by the initiative were mainly due to a failure to properly define the area's problem at the start of GRP and so adequately target resources.

The authors also reviewed issues of sustainability in relation to partnerships after the initial programme of work had been completed. While much of the evidence on this had yet to be analysed at the time of writing, some early conclusions were drawn. While their analysis indicated that all areas included in the evaluation lacked any strategic planning for how the programmes would continue, all areas except Milwaukee had managed to sustain some form of the GRP once the central funding had ended. The authors suggest that the failure of Milwaukee to sustain the programme was related to a lack of strong leadership at the strategic level and at the operational level, particularly the absence of a local co-ordinator (who left early in the life of the project). In the remaining three areas the programme was sustained through the integration of the programme into existing gang reduction initiatives (Los Angeles), its transfer into a not-for-profit organisation (North Miami Beach) and strong partnerships and community outreach work which resulted in community support for its continuation (Richmond).

McGarrell et al. (2009) – Project Safe Neighbourhoods (PSN) – MS Level 4

PSN was a national programme to reduce gun crime at a local level through enforcement, deterrence and prevention. McGarrell et al., who evaluated the initiative, describe this as a multi-site intervention across seven sites (these were Montgomery and Mobile in Alabama, Durham, Greensboro and Winston-Salem in North Carolina, Lowell in Massachusetts and St. Louis in Missouri).

A PSN task force was assembled by the US Attorney District Office in each area and drew upon law enforcement and criminal justice agencies at the local, state and national level. Additional partners were invited to join the task force where it was thought they would help to maximise the impact of the interventions (e.g. probation and parole officers undertook home visits where appropriate). The exact nature and make-up of the partnership depended on the local area.

Across all seven sites PSN centred on five key components: 1) partnership working; 2) strategic planning and research integration; 3) provision of training to task forces to assist in effective implementation; 4) outreach to potential offenders; and 5) accountability via bi-annual reporting. Within the programme there was recognition of the large variability across communities in the US in terms of the level and nature of gun crime. The intent therefore was to focus the implementation of these five components in response to the individual contexts

driving gun crime in each site. As a result, the scope of the intervention varied across the seven sites according to the nature of the local problem.

Running through the core of the projects was a strategic problem-solving approach. The strategic problem-solving model was based on systematic analysis of the local gun crime problem. Specifically, crime analysis would be used to identify the geographic patterns of gun crime across a PSN district. On the basis of this analysis, specific strategies would be developed and implemented to address these patterns. As strategies were implemented, the research partner would monitor the level of intervention (dosage) as well as assess evidence of impact. This information was then shared with the task force to allow for revision or modification of strategy.

The most common strategies employed by PSN task forces included; increased federal prosecution; directed police patrol; chronic violent offender programmes; street level firearms enforcement teams; offender notification meetings; re-entry programmes; and firearms supply interventions. The most common prevention strategies included neighbourhood development; education; and school-based prevention programmes.

The evaluation recorded a significant decrease in serious violence across all seven sites compared to controls, with each city on average reducing serious violence by eight per cent (during the same period non-target cities experienced no change in violent crime). The authors also investigated the impact of increased dosage (proportion of the intervention implemented) on target cities. Their analysis demonstrated that when a greater dose of PSN was implemented (i.e. when a greater number of components of the programme were delivered), cities experienced even lower levels of violent crime, with the high dosage cities recording a 13 per cent reduction.

The authors were not able to investigate sustainability of programmes across all PSN sites. After the programme had been implemented a handful of areas did see increases in violent crime. Several interpretations of these increases were offered including the difficulty of sustaining complex multi-agency coalitions over time (during which personalities and priorities may change) as well as the general increase in crime seen across the US during this period. However, the authors were not able to provide evidence to support these inferences.

Kostelac et al. (2004) – Central City Violence Project – MS Level 3

This study involved the evaluation of the Central City Violence Impact Project which integrated features of two separate violence-reduction programmes: the Phoenix Police Department's Violence Impact Project (VIP), a local strategy to reduce violence in targeted areas of the city; and Project Safe Neighbourhoods, based on a national model designed to reduce gun-related crime (described above).

Crime trend and hot spot analysis were carried out to determine areas with a high density of violent crimes that would be likely to benefit from the programme. Crime Analysis and Research Unit and Phoenix Police Department personnel gathered data and intelligence that was used to identify problem areas and focus enforcement on particular areas and targets. Regular action plans were formulated and discussed at weekly meetings to help officers address the most common and/or violent crimes. A range of tactics were used by partners, including probation contact with offenders, the issuing of arrest and felony warrants and surveillance of known suspects to collect evidence to secure an arrest.

Key task force partners were the United States Attorney's Office, the Police and Adult and Juvenile Probation Services. As the VIP strategy was joined with the PSN programme (see McGarrell, 2009) to allow more resources to be directed towards the area, other agencies were added (notably the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Drug Enforcement).

The study measured changes in levels of recorded violent crime before and after the intervention and compared changes against a comparison group. There was a marked decrease in recorded offences when the intervention period was compared to the same period one year before (including 70 per cent decrease in homicide, 32 per cent decrease in rape, 18 per cent decrease in robbery and a 27 per cent decrease in aggravated assault). A comparative analysis of the Central City VIP area and six police precincts across the rest of Phoenix revealed a 26 per cent reduction in violent crime in the VIP area following the implementation of the programme. By contrast, no other individual precinct recorded a double digit decrease during the same period.

Roehl et al. (2005) – Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative SACS I – MS Level 3

The Department of Justice launched SACS I, the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative, in 1998, to see if Boston's successful approach to reducing youth homicide in the early 1990s (Operation Ceasefire) could

be replicated by ten other cities also fighting high rates of violent crime. The broad aim of all the SACS I sites was to reduce and prevent violent crime in the target areas. Nine sites targeted homicide, youth violence, or gun-related violence, and one partnership focused on reducing rape and sexual assault. Key outcome measures related to changes in recorded incidents of target crimes before and after the intervention. The intervention was implemented in two stages, with five phase one sites launched in 1998 and five phase two sites launched in 2000.

The scope of the interventions varied across the sites to reflect the nature of the local problem. All sites, however, included some or all of the following components: targeting hotspots and repeat offenders; crackdowns; sweeps; saturation patrols; serving warrants; and making unannounced visits to probationers. In addition, all of the sites adopted a version of Boston's Ceasefire approach whereby offenders were informed that any violence they were judged to be responsible for would be quickly sanctioned by enforcement and prosecution. At the same time offenders were offered assistance in obtaining jobs, education and other services.

In order to target activity key agency representatives and outreach workers met to review and share information on recent homicides and violent incidents. 'Worst of the worst' offender lists were compiled from arrest or probation records or probation and parole officers and used to focus activity.

In half of the sites, the core partner group was composed of law enforcement and criminal justice representatives (police, prosecutors, probation/parole, courts, and corrections, at the local, state, and federal levels) and a research team. The composition of partnerships in the remaining sites was more broad-based and also included social service representatives, community organisations, medical units and faith-based organisations. All sites included local researchers which were primarily professors from local universities with long-established ties with the criminal justice representatives in the core group. The researchers became full partners, participating in strategic planning, development, and assessment (i.e. action research). They collected and analysed data to aid in designing and implementing intervention strategies. They also served as in-house evaluators, providing feedback on strategy implementation and conducting impact analyses to assess effectiveness.

The study found that the SACS I multi-agency approach to tackling violent crime, when implemented effectively

(i.e. true partnership working with the full engagement and commitment of appropriate agencies in the process) was associated with reductions in targeted violent crimes. Crime rates of each SACSI site were compared to matched comparison cities chosen geographically and by size. Comparison cities experienced decreases in violent crime, but the decreases in the SACSI cities were found to be significantly greater than those in other cities. Of the nine cities targeting violent crime, six had substantially larger decreases in homicide than their comparison cities. In two sites, comparison cities showed a larger decrease in homicides and in one SACSI site, homicides increased while remaining steady in the comparison cities. Overall, seven of the ten areas had larger decreases in their target area for identified crime outcomes than their comparison cities.

The study found that the phase one sites enjoyed greater success than the phase two sites. On key difference was that phase two sites did not have the benefit of full-time co-ordinators; three of the phase two sites had partnerships that only included law enforcement and criminal justice agencies (broader based partnerships were found in three of the five phase one sites). The authors concluded that the findings support the view that comprehensive partnership approaches to tackling public safety can be effective. They suggest that smaller reductions were seen in areas where programme implementation was not as strong, and in areas where delivery structures and processes were not as robust.

Offender based Initiatives

Turner et al. (2002) – South Oxnard Challenge Project – MS Level 4

The South Oxnard Challenge Project involved providing a multi-agency approach to the provision of services to young offenders leaving prison. The cohort receiving the intervention had a more intensive interaction with partner agencies, with services being provided by partners based within the project offices rather than being referred out to external agencies (e.g. mental health services, drug treatment services and anger management classes). In addition, case management took place via an inter-agency team rather than a sole probation officer. The focus of the intervention was on the offender and his/her family rather than the individual youth.

The multi-agency approach included a range of partners from criminal justice services including the District Attorney and Director of Probation, local service

providers (e.g. Superintendent of Schools) and third sector and community outreach programmes (e.g. Interface Children and Family Services)

Youths meeting the intervention criteria were identified and were then randomly assigned to either the study or control group, with approximately equal numbers in each. Young people who had been involved in the programme recorded similar outcomes to the comparison group. Overall, there was no significant change in behaviour as a result of taking part in the project. The authors suggest that the failure to affect change in the target group could have been due to the similarities in some of the services which were being provided by a probation agency. As the project was thought to have contributed to a reduction in the workload of those members of staff who would have provided services to the target group, this may have increased the time available for these staff to provide services to the control group (with a consequent effect on outcomes). In addition, the authors stated that the partnership approach adopted by the group was not fully embedded. As probation services were in control of the funding, consensual decision making a model was hard to achieve (as the probation service had ultimate responsibility for distributing the money). This led to some tensions across the group and was thought to have had an effect on implementation.

Winterfield et al. (2006) – Serious and Violent Offenders Re-entry Initiative (SVORI) – MS Level 4

The SVORI initiative provided services to serious and violent offenders on release from prison. The intervention focused on developing a local system to help offenders re-enter the community (i.e. assessment, re-entry plan and transition team) and created linkages to services as well as providing services where gaps were found to exist. The programme engaged with offenders both prior to, and on release from, prison.⁷

The main partners in the intervention were correctional agencies, juvenile justice agencies, US Federal government, faith-based organisations and community organisations.

The evaluation focused on changes to the nature and extent of service provision; it did not explore whether the behaviour of the target group changed as a consequence. The results for the intervention

⁷ The evaluation is ongoing, as the programme was still in progress at the time of writing the paper.

group were compared with those of individuals who met the intervention eligibility criteria but were either incarcerated in facilities that did not offer the intervention, or who were returning to post-release communities not served by the intervention.

The evaluation found that the provision of services through a multi-agency approach did result in those leaving prison being offered a greater range of services than previously available. Although there was considerable variation across sites, overall a greater proportion of SVORI participants received most of the services offered compared with non-SVORI participants. This was especially the case in relation to the co-ordination services (pre-release), transition services (pre-release to post-release) and employment, education and skills development services. It was less so in relation to health and family related services.⁸

Scott et al. (2002) – Turning Point: Re-thinking Violence programme – MS Level 3

Turning Point: Re-thinking Violence (TPRV) was a programme designed to expose, educate and rehabilitate first time violent offenders and their parents regarding the consequences of violence. The key outcome measure was a reduction in the level of participants' violent recidivism.

The programme had four key components: trauma 'experience' (where young people see the consequences of violence through a tour of a trauma centre, morgue and autopsy room); a Victim Impact panel presented by parent survivors; a six-week session of group and Community Networking (which focused on individually tailored mental health referral); and, the provision of follow-up services. Overall the program included 14 hours of face-to-face contact (excluding any follow-up contact) in comparison to the control group where standard sentencing options were approximately 100 hours of community service.

The TPRV was developed and delivered in partnership by various agencies including the University of Florida, Jacksonville Medical Center, State Attorney's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice and two local community groups; the Jeff Mitchell Foundation and Compassionate Families Inc.

The study found a significant positive impact from the intervention undertaken to reduce violent recidivism (VR) by offenders. The study group had a VR rate of 0.05 within one year of completing the programme compared to 0.33 for the control group, with the control group recording a statistically higher number of violent offences one year after completion of the programme than the study cohort. The lower VR rate for the study group also occurred with a shorter overall time investment (14 hours) compared to the control group (100 hours), though it is recognised that other time components were not reflected in this figure, e.g. trauma unit staff time in talking to programme participants. In particular the partnership success was attributed to the involvement of community groups which ensured that offenders had access to key services.

Other studies

Whetstone (2001) – Domestic violence co-ordinated response team – MS Level 3

This study involved the evaluation of a co-ordinated domestic violence response team which ran as a pilot project for 18 months. The team comprised two police patrol officers, three victim advocates (drawn from a social service provider), a probation/parole officer and a correctional officer. Police officers and victim advocates worked together as first responders to 911 calls for assistance in all domestic violence cases. The team was responsible for violence cases and follow-up investigation for all cases of intimate partner domestic violence. Both police officers and victim advocates were specially trained for the role. Victim advocates engaged in a wide range of activity in support of victims throughout the charging and prosecution process including counselling and support in accessing service providers.

The study assessed six measures compared with a control group of victims who were not receiving the services provided by the unit. Five out of six measures showed a statistically significant positive impact for the experimental group, pre and post the intervention, compared to just two for the control group. In three cases the experimental group was significantly better than the control group: arrests per intimate partner incident; intimate partner incidents attended as a proportion of calls for service; and the number of domestic violence calls for service attended. However, whilst arrests for domestic violence overall were not affected, arrests for domestic violence by intimate partners increased significantly. The authors note, however, that this measure is to some extent controlled by police

⁸ Turner et al. were not able in their evaluation to evaluate the effect of the intervention on different strands of service provision.

officer actions (i.e. who and in what circumstances they arrest) and the designation of incidents as intimate partner domestic violence events. Any change in either of these would be likely to influence outcomes.

Jim et al. (2006) – Police/Business Empowerment Partnership – MS Level 4

This study evaluated an intervention driven by Westminster Police Department, California, which was developed and implemented by the Police/Business Empowerment Partnership. The intervention aimed to tackle crime problems and perceptions of fear in a shopping centre by providing increased police presence, improved communication and forums for discussion.

The partnership consisted of the local police department and businesses located in the shopping centre.

Jim et al.'s evaluation demonstrated a positive significant impact on its key outcome measures (users' perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour at the shopping centre). The intervention was evaluated using pre-test and post-test data gathered through two public opinion surveys. Surveys conducted before and after the initiative at both the shopping centre and a comparison site found that the community's perception of gang activity and fear of crime decreased significantly following the implementation of the initiative. The authors attribute the success of this initiative to several key mechanisms, including strong collaborative efforts between the police and businesses, increased police presence and the willingness of businesses to contribute financially to the enhanced policing provided.

4 Mechanisms associated with effective partnership working

Several of the studies reviewed sought to identify the mechanisms or factors associated with stronger, more effective partnership working. The way in which these mechanisms were identified varied from study to study. Some studies incorporated bespoke process evaluations, discrete surveys of key participants to identify perceptions of what was important in achieving effective partnership working. Other studies incorporated more general assessments of what worked in particular study sites (and where partnerships were less effective). Although it is useful to draw upon all of this material in trying to establish a

picture of what makes for effective partnership working, it is helpful to distinguish between the evidence-based material and that which was based more on author judgement. Even the more evidenced based studies were, however, only able to report on perceptions of what made partnerships work rather than identify that the presence or absence of a factor caused a partnership to work effectively.

In all, five evaluations included in the review undertook empirical assessments of the mechanisms associated with effective partnership working. Four of these were crime focused initiatives: Gang Reduction Programme (Cahill et al.); Project Safe Neighbourhoods (McGarrell et al.); Central City Violence Project (Kostelac et al.), and Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (Roehl et al.). One was an offender focused initiative - Serious and Violent Offenders Re-entry Initiative (Winterfield et al.). The four remaining studies provided authors' assessments of mechanisms associated with effective partnership working. The five more empirically based studies are discussed in turn below.

Gang Reduction Programme (GRP)

In evaluating the Gang Reduction Programme Cahill et al. undertook a process evaluation which sought to collect information on the functioning of partnerships (which was fed back to GRP members), collect evidence on the partnerships' overall effectiveness and impact, and, identify and compare what did/did not work across all sites. The evaluation utilised three methods of data collection: i) observation of 'partnerships in action' (including attending meetings and reviewing project documentation; ii) one to one and small group face-to-face interviews and; iii) a multi-wave internet survey with all programme directors and committee members. On the basis of the range of source material, the authors identified several mechanisms that they claimed contributed to the functioning of effective partnerships. These included:

- a shared vision of the strategic direction of the partnership;
- clarity regarding the problem(s) to be addressed and the adoption of a problem oriented approach;
- researcher integrated into planning, implementation and evaluation process;
- strong leadership;

- dedicated programme co-ordinator (with independent decision making authority);
- prior experience of working together in partnership;
- flexibility of structures and processes; and,
- getting partners to 'buy-in' to the project and become involved in its planning and development at the earliest opportunity.

Overall Cahill *et al.* noted that stronger collaboration was present across law enforcement (and other so-called 'suppression focused' agencies) that had a history of partnership development and inter-agency communication and co-operation. By comparison, organisations which could be categorised as focusing on 'prevention' and 'intervention' aspects of tackling crime, were less successful in developing effective partnership working. These groups did not have a history of working towards common goals and had previously been competing for the same pool of limited resources.

The GRP study also indicated that Phase One sites had failed to collect any systematic data across activities during implementation which had forced local practitioners to rely on anecdotal evidence to guide future planning. In Milwaukee this failing, coupled with a lack of understanding around the value of adopting a strategic problem solving approach, considerably hindered implementation. This resulted in a myriad of approaches being adopted at the site, none of which adequately targeted the local youth gang problem.

Project Safe Neighbourhoods

Project Safe Neighbourhoods was crafted to allow areas to develop local responses to complex problems in each of the target sites covered by the initiative. The evaluation therefore sought to identify a group of core principles underpinning PSN across all sites which were linked to successful outcomes. The approach adopted by McGarrell *et al.* focused on understanding the level and impact of the 'dosage' of a policy implemented in local areas (i.e. the number of components of PSN put in place in each local area). The premise was that those areas which only partially adopted a policy, or received a 'lower dose' of the policy, would achieve poorer results than those who were 'full adopters'.

The key elements of 'dosage' for PSN sites were the extent to which areas could be classified as:

- having effective partnerships (based on a seven score assessment of which groups of agencies had been responsible for delivering an intervention during the programme in each local area);
- the degree of 'data driven decision-making' in sites (including the extent of research around gun crime undertaken, extent to which data were used to drive decisions and assessments of data quality); and,
- the extent of federal prosecution of gun crime (based on two prosecution measures compared over time).

Three methods of data collection were used in establishing the 'dosage' of policies in each area. These were: i) surveys undertaken with research partners (including questions around which partners had been engaged, what interventions had been undertaken and what outcomes had been achieved); ii) 'semi-annual' reports produced by areas and submitted to the research team providing details of individual projects, levels of research undertaken and outcomes achieved); and (iii) case study development of sites including observation and interviews with those involved in PSN. On this basis, the composite score of 'dosage' was derived for each site and were grouped into high, medium and low implementation areas.

The authors found that high levels of data-driven decision making were statistically significantly associated with the development of collaborative partnerships (engaging a broader range of partners) as well as with enhanced federal prosecution. It was rare to find healthy collaborations which did not also have strong data-driven processes. Where data-driven decision making was found to be a feature of partnership working, the process of analysis assisted groups in working together toward a common goal and was perceived to have provided critical information to help groups of partners achieve their aims.

McGarrell *et al.*'s analysis also investigated the infrastructure required within areas to support the effective implementation of PSN. There were two components to this: human capacity (i.e. experience of working collaboratively); and information systems capacity (i.e. compatible systems through which to share information). Those areas that were found not to have established data-sharing processes (what was termed 'research integration') between partners had to put substantial effort into creating these links before initiatives could be implemented. In many instances setting up these

structures could create a large upfront 'cost' (which influenced the potential cost benefit ratio for implementing the PSN schemes). In areas where data-driven decision making had not been successful the authors suggest that this stemmed from a combination of a lack of interest or understanding in the value of research and the active research role and data availability problems (which made the delivery of timely and valuable analyses difficult). In relation to human capacity, prior experience with similar strategic partnerships was found to be significantly correlated with successful implementation of PSN.

The PSN study also examined the general mechanisms that played a role in effective partnership working in the study sites. These included:

- having a researcher as an active member of the task force;
- strong leadership, combined with a commitment to data-driven decision making;
- having a committed project co-ordinator;
- communication including regular face-to-face meetings the exchange of information within and between the criminal justice system;
- having focused interventions in each area, tailored to the needs of the area; and,
- having a collaborative rather than co-ordinated approach to gun crime strategies.⁹

Central City Violence Project

Part of Kostelac *et al.*'s evaluation of the Central City Violence Project involved interviews with those involved in the central city violence project. Mechanisms which participants perceived to be important for effective partnership working were; resources focused on areas with highest density of violent incidents i.e. problem focus; central co-ordination of efforts; and regular meetings to formulate and discuss action plans.

⁹ A collaborative approach (in comparison to a co-ordinated approach) includes not only shared resources, improved communications and co-ordinated operations, but also shared decision making across traditional agency boundaries. (e.g. joint decision making on individuals through a case conferencing approach).

Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI)

In their evaluation of the ten SACSI sites Roehl *et al.* used four methods of data collection: multiple site visits which included interviews with partners at all sites evaluation; two surveys with partnership members; a review of records and documents; and researcher attendance at cluster meetings. Overall, the mechanisms which were perceived to be important for effective partnership working included:

- full-time project co-ordinators to oversee day-to-day activities;
- multi-agency, multi-disciplinary core groups to plan and oversee problem-solving strategies;
- local researchers included in core groups and involved in problem identification and analysis;
- a strategic plan to guide enforcement, suppression, intervention, and prevention strategies, working groups to implement strategies; and,
- evaluation of data and assessment activities to provide ongoing feedback to the core group for programme improvement.

One area highlighted in Roehl *et al.*'s analysis was the importance of prior partnership relationships when implementing a scheme of this nature. Specifically, areas which had adopted a multi-agency approach to working previously found it easier to implement the SACSI intervention than those who had to form these links before the intervention could begin. This was found to be particularly true in relation to criminal justice agencies where partner relationships were already developed.

Roehl *et al.* also paid particular attention to the role of integrated researchers. The embedded research element of the programme (a role frequently played by senior academics) was perceived by participants in some areas to have made significant contributions to the effectiveness of the partnership approach. Core components of the embedded researcher role were: analysing the data and formulating the response to it; and ensuring the adoption of a problem solving approach across areas. For example, one element of the role focused on combining crime data with street level information provided by practitioners. The combined data were then used to develop a homicide and incident review which was viewed as vital to strategic planning.

Serious and Violent Offenders Re-entry Initiative (SVORI)

Winterfield *et al.* assessed which mechanisms were perceived to have influenced the implementation of the SVORI programme by undertaking a survey of all programme directors responsible for the study at the local level. Mechanisms perceived to be linked to effective partnership working were easy communication between partners and the ability to share a wider range of offender-related information more effectively and efficiently between partner agencies.

Summary of mechanisms associated with effective partnership working

As well as the empirical evidence outlined above, all papers included in the review provided authors' assessments of factors associated with partnership working. While greater emphasis should be placed on studies outlined above, author assessments still provided useful information when trying to establish a picture of what contributes to effective partnership working. Table 4 summarises the key factors or mechanisms highlighted across all studies included in the review which were identified as being important in relation to securing effective partnership working. Broadly speaking, the factors which studies identified as being associated with more effective partnership can be grouped under five main headings.

Leadership

- The sharing of values, norms or a common vision across different partners
- Strong senior leadership of the project
- The existence of dedicated project/initiative coordinators
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities amongst senior project leaders

Data sharing and problem solving focus

- Focus around tackling a particular problem
- Adopting a problem-oriented, analytically led approach
- Sharing information and data across partners
- Having an active research partner

Communication and collocation

- Strong cross partner communication
- Co-location of partner staff

Structures

- Flexible structures involving the most appropriate agencies

Experience

- Prior experience of partnership working
-

Table 4 Summary of mechanisms associated with effective partnership working

Author	Leadership	Data sharing and problem solving focus	Communication and co- location	Structures	Experience
MS Level 4					
Cahill	Shared vision	Clarity regarding the problem(s) being addressed (adopt problem oriented approach)		Flexibility of structures and processes	Prior experience of working together in partnership
	Strong leadership				
	Dedicated programme co-ordinator				
	Getting partners to 'buy-in'				
Jim			Monthly meetings		
			Collaborative rather than co-ordinated approach		
McGarrell	Strong leadership	The exchange of information	Regular communication	Having a research partner as an active member of the task force	Experience of working collaboratively
	Dedicated project co-ordinator	Having focused interventions in each area	Having a collaborative rather than co-ordinated approach		
		Established data sharing processes			
Turner			Co-location of agencies		
Winterfield		Shared information	Regular communication		
MS Level 3					
Kostelac	Central co-ordination efforts	Problem focus	Regular meetings		
		Local researchers in core group			
Roehl	Full-time project co-ordinators	Problem solving strategies		Working groups to implement strategies	Prior experience of working in partnership
	Core groups to oversee problem solving approach	Use of local researchers			
		Strategic plan to guide activity			
Scott			Presence of partners at local level	Involvement of most appropriate agencies	
Whetstone		Shared information	Regular communication	Sense of ownership of the team	Joint training of team members
			Co-location of staff		

5 Discussion

Effectiveness of partnership working

The evidence review sought to address two linked questions:

“Are formal partnerships’ mechanisms more effective and efficient in achieving crime-related outcomes than alternatives?”

and

“What factors have been identified as making partnerships work effectively and efficiently in delivering crime-related outcomes?”

The next section deals with the first of these two questions.

The impact of formal partnership interventions on outcomes

The evidence review process identified nine studies of initiatives which met the initial inclusion criteria. These studies can be broadly described as encompassing initiatives in which some form of partnership working, or the formation of new partnerships, was as an integral component. None of the studies could be described as solely testing the efficacy of partnership working. The majority of studies included focused on tackling specific local crime problems, and most of these were related to aspects of violent crime.

A useful rule of thumb in assessing the effectiveness of interventions comes from Sherman & Eck’s (2002) review of ‘what works’ in crime and policing. In this review the authors adopted the view that for an approach to be classified as something that “works” it had to have two or more studies with positive results, with a scientific methods (Maryland Scale) score of 3 or more, and had to report the statistical significance of the findings. Although this might be considered a slightly generous interpretation of a ‘what works’ threshold, it is useful starting point in assessing the evidence when undertaking an REA. Out of the nine studies included in this review, three recorded ‘positive’ outcomes at MS level 3 and two studies (including one multi site study) recorded positive findings at level 4 as a result of the partnership interventions undertaken. Using the above classification we can conclude that on balance the evidence suggests

that the principle of applying partnership working as a component of initiatives to tackle complex crime and disorder problems is effective.

The selected studies have been grouped under two headings: those which were assessed as being MS Level 4 (five studies in total) and those which were assessed as being MS Level 3 (four studies in total). Other things being equal, a higher degree of confidence can be placed on reviewing the findings from the MS Level 4 studies.

Arguably the best evidence comes from McGarrell *et al.*’s (2009) evaluation of Project Safe Neighbourhoods, which identified significant improvements in measures of serious violence in all seven sites. Cahill *et al.*’s (2008) study shares similarities with McGarrell’s work in terms of its focus on serious violence but showed a more diverse set of outcome measures across the four sites. Consistently positive and significant findings for the Los Angeles site (across all measures) sit alongside equivocal results in Milwaukee and Miami Beach, and negative (but not significant) results for Richmond. Jim’s (2006) evaluation of a police-business empowerment partnership also revealed significant positive improvements in perceptions of safety and fear of crime. The findings for the two offender-based studies (Turner *et al.*, 2002 and Winterfield *et al.*, 2006) were mixed (although Winterfield focused on service delivery outcomes rather than offending outcomes). Of the four studies classified as MS Level 3, three could be described as reporting positive significant impacts (this judgment interprets Roehl’s multi-site study as showing, overall, a positive impact in relation to reductions in homicide).¹⁰

Several of the US studies included in this review with an explicit crime reduction focus fall under the banner of the ‘pulling levers’ approach to tackling violent crime which focuses predominantly on targeting resources on a small number of high risk offenders. This approach was adopted in part by the SACSI sites evaluated by Roehl which went on to evolve into Project Safe Neighbourhood sites (the initiative reviewed by McGarrell *et al.*). Partnership and multi-agency working is a critical part of a ‘pulling levers’ approach, although the specific contribution of the partnership component has not been teased out.¹¹

¹⁰ Six sites recorded significant reductions in homicide, three recorded no significant positive change, and one site recorded negative change, not significant).

¹¹ ‘Pulling levers’ is a deterrence strategy that focuses criminal justice and social service attention on a small number of chronic offenders responsible for a significant proportion of offences, in many of the studies, urban gun violence problems.

Arguably one of the more sophisticated attempts to assess the partnership component of a complex multi-faceted intervention was McGarrell *et al.*'s approach of classifying the partnership dosage levels (e.g. proportion of a policy/approach implemented) of different PSN sites (alongside 'research integration' and 'federal prosecution of gun crime'). As the three component dosage measures were increased, PSN target cities experienced lower levels of violent crime. However, even though this study sought to measure the extent to which core elements (including partnership) of the PSN had been implemented in target cities, the researchers did not isolate the partnership impact on outcomes.

It is necessary to acknowledge a question over the sustainability that exists in some of the positive reductions identified in the studies included in the review. Some of the partnerships considered by the papers were time limited which raises issues of how to maintain/sustain the partnership impact when attention and/or funding shifts elsewhere. McGarrell *et al.* noted a 'rebound' feature in the data, whereby violent crime and homicides rose again some time after the introduction of the PSN project. The authors suggested that this might indicate a short-term effect of focused deterrence strategies and/or the challenge of sustaining effective multi-agency collaboration and focused interventions. However, McGarrell also noted that some of the interventions did sustain long-term reductions, extending the deterrence model to address other crime types. Across the studies reviewed, sustainability was linked to strong leadership, integration of projects into existing programs of work and embedded partnership working.

Finally, while there is some evidence that initiatives with formal partnership working as a component have better outcomes than alternatives, this is clearly not the same as saying that partnership approaches work in all circumstances for all partners. The very nature of partnership working means that it is susceptible to the specifics of the local environment in which it is being implemented (and this diversity and adoption of approaches tailored to local need is reflected in the studies reviewed in this REA).

The mechanisms by which partnership working helps to achieve crime-related outcomes

Most of the studies which examined the processes involved in partnership working highlighted the variability of partnerships working within the same context. There are weak and strong partnerships; the latter, which Rosenbaum (2002) describes as working like a 'well-oiled machine', are those most likely to deliver potential benefits. The reviewed studies identified several

mechanisms or factors associated with stronger, more effective partnership working. How these mechanisms have been identified in the reviewed studies ranges from bespoke process evaluations to wider author assessments of what worked in particular study sites. Nevertheless, a number of common themes emerge. The studies provide some evidence of what may be associated with effective partnership working (although the absence of these features might not infer ineffective partnerships). Each one is described briefly below.

Partnership focus

Across a majority of studies there was a strong emphasis on effective partnerships having focus, in particular the degree of clarity regarding the problem to be targeted, and activities targeted at the problems identified. In most of the stronger studies (Cahill, McGarrell and Turner) the authors stress the need for a problem focus. Turner also identifies that one of the key reasons why the partnership intervention in his study had little impact compared to the control was that there was insufficient focus for partners and that the remit of the intervention was too broad.

In all of the studies reviewed, formal partnerships were created or otherwise enhanced in order to support the delivery of specific interventions (although the catalyst for partnership formation varied across the studies). However, in six of the nine studies, the broad catalyst was the identification or recognition of a known problem and the consequent provision of funding in order to address that problem.¹² A condition of the funding therefore was that partners should work together towards addressing the problem identified. It is not clear whether the partnerships would have been as robust, would have formed as quickly or would have formed at all, without the catalyst of such funding being available. However, at least two studies (Turner and McGarrell) indicated that the initiatives would not have taken place without funding (as the funding was the main driver for the partnership forming).

Shared values

At a strategic level, several studies suggest that shared values/norms amongst each of the partner organisations are critical to the success of partnerships.

¹² In the three remaining studies, the catalyst for partnership formation was the identification of a specific problem, where mutual benefit in addressing that problem had been recognised. These did not subsequently 'unlock' additional funding. It is important to note that none of the studies examined more generic partnership creation, i.e. where the focus of the intervention was creating a partnership itself.

Leadership and roles

Several of the studies stress the importance of strong leadership together with a clear structure, and defined roles and responsibilities within the partnership (including a core management group). One factor assessed as critical in many of the partnerships evaluated was the presence of a dedicated full-time manager or co-ordinator for the partnership and/or the intervention being delivered by the partnership.

Partnership experience

The prior experience of those involved in partnership working was identified as an important factor in several studies. There were two aspects to this. First, involving those individuals with previous experience of working in partnerships was seen as a helpful. Second, it was also found that partnerships in which partners had some previous experience of working together also appeared to be important; these established relationships could then be built upon in order to engage the most relevant partners in tackling the identified problem.¹³

Partner communication and co-location

The co-location of partnership teams (e.g. of operational partners from different organisations), particularly at a delivery level was also identified in the reviewed studies. Co-location can help to facilitate regular/daily/ongoing communication between partners.

Use of data and research to guide decision making

Several studies highlighted the importance of adopting evidence led/data driven activity to support a problem solving approach. This was particularly the case in sites in which a research/data analyst function was integrated into partnerships and played an active role in decision making. Some studies suggested that these processes were best supported by full, open and unfettered data sharing across and between partners in relation to all relevant data sets. McGarrell *et al.* demonstrated that across the sites evaluated 'healthy' collaborations were rare in the absence of data driven decision making.

The central role of research in the decision making process resonates with and reinforces a systematic review undertaken by Weisburd (2010) into the effectiveness of

¹³ This is similar to the notion of 'network capacity' which has been identified in research by Braga & Winship, 2009. Their review of the Boston Gun Project suggested that a precondition of successful partnership initiatives (or a missing ingredient for some unsuccessful ones) was existing 'network capacity'. In other words, where relationships between partners are not sufficiently developed before an intervention begins (in order to support the intensive relationships required in implementation) the success of an intervention can be compromised.

problem oriented policing (POP). The review identified that problem-focused approaches, built on sound data analysis and research, are effective in tackling crime and disorder.

Flexible structures

Cahill *et al.* found that flexibility of approach, and avoiding over-burdening of partnerships with strict bureaucratic structures and processes was an important factor in securing effective delivery of outcomes. This was especially true when considering funding for centrally driven programmes and adhering to strict implementation dates (which in some cases meant that the programme was launched before all structures were in place).

Numbers of partners

There appears to be no clear relationship between the number of partners included in an intervention/ programme and the impact that was achieved. Where partners involved in an initiative did not have a 'role to play' in the intervention being undertaken, this was felt to lead to problems of partner commitment or 'buy-in'. In simple terms, the maxim of "one size does not fit all" appeared to hold true when adopting a formal partnership approach to tackling crime and disorder. The studies in this review generally demonstrated that the critical thing was including partners which can make a genuine contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of an initiative.

Limitations

By its very definition, a Rapid Evidence Assessment is a 'rapid' assessment. It may miss papers, though the authors have attempted to be as rigorous as possible, within the time and resource constraints. All REA exercises carry the caveat that their conclusions may be subject to revision, once more systematic and comprehensive reviews of the evidence base have been completed. This is consistent with the important principle that REAs and systematic reviews are only as good as their most recent updating and revision allows (Davies, 2003).

Similarly, this REA only considers published papers that have met the required quality criteria. The search process identified a large number of studies that described partnerships or evaluated initiatives involving partnership working but did not compare them to alternative approaches. It is possible that some of these may have demonstrated impact and highlighted critical success factors. Just because an intervention has not been the subject of an evaluation of sufficient quality does not mean

that it is failing to achieve significantly positive impacts; but without such methodologically robust evaluations, we are unable to trust that this is the case.

Finally, it is important to re-state the fact that this exercise has identified studies of initiatives in which partnership working was an integral element. None of the studies sought to isolate the specific contribution that partnership working per se made to the overall outcomes achieved. The initiatives evaluated generally had a strong partnership component but this was invariably alongside other elements within (often complex) multi-faceted interventions.

Concluding observations

Isolating the contribution that particular components of an intervention make to crime reduction can be difficult. This is particularly true for this review which sought to identify the effectiveness of an approach (partnership working) rather than a specific intervention. The evidence reviewed here assessed a range of studies of interventions which have partnership working as an integral element of how they have tackled crime, offending or perceptions of crime. Further research should potentially focus on a specific and arguably more difficult question, namely, to what extent is it possible to isolate the particular contribution within any identified 'partnership intervention' that is specifically the consequence of partnership working.

Since completing this review, several additional papers have been published on the US interventions included in this review. The findings from these papers provide further supporting evidence for the key findings from this REA. A more recent review of the Project Safe Neighbourhoods initiative concluded that leadership was consistently identified as being critical to serious and meaningful implementation within partnerships (McGarrell, 2010). The Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (Rosenbaum and Roehl, 2010) also identified leadership as a critical factor in the success of the evaluation of this multi-site initiative.

The issue of 'research involvement' within successful PSN partnerships was reviewed extensively by McGarrell (2010). McGarrell's assessment, based on a mix of analysis and action research undertaken by researchers embedded into the partnership, indicated that high levels of research involvement were associated with positive PSN outcomes. A high degree of 'research

involvement' was believed to have either committed areas to embedding research and analysis into their approach or acted as an active agent to solidify partnerships and hence focus resources. Again, a mature review of the SASCI evaluation highlighted how integration of research into 'problem selection, analysis, strategic planning and assessment' was linked to the successful execution of SASCI strategies (Rosenbaum and Roehl, 2010).

All of the evaluations included in this review were undertaken in the US. This needs to be considered when reflecting on the applicability of the findings for England and Wales. Much of the US evidence comes from complex multi-site studies which feature diverse patterns of local partnership working. In Chapter 1 it was established that the US and England and Wales contexts for partnership working are very different. The existence of different governmental, organisation and legal contexts may provide some constraint on the wider applicability of the research. However, the adoption of a multi-agency approach to tackling complex crime problems, and the challenges associated with working across organisational boundaries, cultures and established ways of working have clear relevance to practitioners and policy makers in the UK context.

The findings of this review improve our understanding of the value of a multi-agency approach by providing clearer evidence on role partnership working in tackling crime as well as providing some indication of what mechanisms are associated with more effective partnership working. While the evidence is mixed, on balance the review suggests that partnership working is effective in addressing crime.

Annex A Practitioner annex

Summary of mechanisms identified as contributing to effective partnership working

Leadership: Give careful consideration to developing strong leadership for the partnership. This may include leadership from regional or national agencies.

Project co-ordinator: Consider having a dedicated project coordinator who can oversee the partnership and co-ordinate the activity decided upon by partner agencies.

Evidence-led approach: Develop a clear understanding of the problem being targeted through problem-focused analysis. Use this information to ensure that there is clarity around what specific problem/s are being targeted by the partnership.

Support for the project: Work towards ensuring buy-in from all partner agencies to the project and generate an understanding of shared values and norms. This can assist in shared ownership across partner agencies for the project. Once a problem has been identified establish what each agency can offer and crucially 'what is in it for them' if they participate in the partnership.

Partnership experience: Think about including those with prior experience, both of working in partnerships and, working with partners included in the project (i.e. those who have worked together before). This can result in reduced up-front costs when setting up a multi-agency approach.

Structures: Adopt flexible delivery structures and processes and avoid making this over-burdening or bureaucratic. Work towards having partners and field workers at the local level engaged in the partnership, including in working groups to implement specific strategies. Carefully select partners for the group to ensure that the partnership has a full compliment of the appropriate skills and knowledge. Consider how the roles and responsibilities of partners within the group reflect their knowledge and skills and the services provided by their host agency.

Research: Include researchers (i.e. those with skills to analyse available data and facilitate a problem-solving approach) as active participants in the partnership and involve them in the decision-making process.

Communication: Set up and maintain regular communication between partnership agencies including the regular exchange of relevant data and information. Have regular meetings to decide jointly on what action to take and, where possible, consider the co-location of partnership staff.

Accountability: Have clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Build evaluation methods into the project and undertake this on a regular basis. Develop methods to encourage shared ownership of the project throughout the partnership.

Sustainability: Consider how the partnership will be sustained in the absence of funding and/or focused attention (i.e. how it will be mainstreamed). Work towards integrating the aims of the partnership with those of the partner agencies involved. Develop methods to continually re-assess the focus of the partnership to ensure that efforts are accurately targeted. Use these assessments to ensure that all necessary components of the intervention are still being delivered to the required intensity.

Mechanisms associated with effective partnership working by study

Crime focused initiatives

Study	Mechanisms
Cahill <i>et al.</i> 2008 Gang Reduction Programme	Shared vision, including a clear and shared view of the strategic direction of the partnership.
	Clarity regarding the problem(s) to be addressed and the adoption of a problem oriented approach. Programme goals and activities should relate directly to the identified problem(s).
	Strong leadership.
	Dedicated programme co-ordinator.
	Prior experience in working together in partnership. Those areas where this had been the case, operated more effectively than those which had little previous experience of partnership working.
	Flexibility of structures and processes. Conforming to strict procurement rules had negative effects on implementation of the programme.
	Getting partners to 'buy-in' to the project and become involved in its planning and development at the earliest opportunity.
McGarrell <i>et al.</i> , 2009 Project Safe Neighbourhoods	Having a research partner as an active member of the task force.
	Strong leadership, combined with a commitment to data- driven decision making.
	Having a committed project co-ordinator.
	Communication – regular face-to-face meetings.
	The exchange of information within and between the criminal justice system
	Having focused interventions in each area, tailored to the needs of the area.
	Having a collaborative approach to the gun crime strategies rather than just a co-ordinated approach.
Kostelac <i>et al.</i> 2004 Central City Violence Impact Project	Resources focused on areas with highest density of violent incidents, i.e. problem focus.
	Central co-ordination of efforts.
	Regular meetings to formulate and discuss action plans.
Roehl <i>et al.</i> 2005 Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI)	Full-time project coordinators co-ordinate day-to-day activities.
	Multi-agency, multi-disciplinary core groups plan and oversee problem-solving strategies.
	Local researchers are included in core groups and are integrally involved in problem identification and analysis.
	A strategic plan guides enforcement, suppression, intervention, and prevention strategies.
	Working groups implement strategies.
	Evaluation data and assessment activities provide ongoing feedback to the core group for programme improvement.

Offender focused initiatives

Study	Critical mechanism
Turner <i>et al.</i> , 2002 South Oxnard Challenge Project	Taking the time to work out practical strategies for implementing the restorative justice approach.
	Co-location of the different agencies allowed team members from different agencies to discuss cases on a daily basis, and provide a 'one stop shop' for youths and their families.
Winterfield <i>et al.</i> , 2006 Serious and Violent Offenders Re-entry initiative.	Easy communication between partners.
	Shared information.
Scott <i>et al.</i> , 2002., Turning Point: Re-thinking Violence Programme (TPRV)	Involvement of the most appropriate agencies i.e. those that can contribute most to the problem.
	The presence of partners at a local level.

Other studies

Study	Critical mechanism
Jim <i>et al.</i> , 2006 Police/Business Empowerment	Monthly meetings between police and businesses.
	Collaborative efforts between businesses and the police.
Whetstone 2001 Domestic violence co-ordinated response team	Easy communication within the team between partners
	Shared information.
	Co-location of the partners in one unit office.
	A sense of ownership of the team, by victims.
	Joint training of team members.

Annex B Search terms and databases searched

Search terms

- **Partner***, **collaborat***, **joint-agenc***, joint involv*, **multi-agenc***, **inter-agenc***, joint work*, joined up approach, partner*, agenc*
- **Crime**, **alcohol**, **drug***, **anti-social behavio***, **disorder**, **violen***, burglary, vehicle, robbery, **perception***, **fear**, **safety**, theft, assault,
- Leadership, intelligence, engage* communit*, engage*, public, **respons***, **deliver***, **accountab***, skills, knowledge, **governance**,
- **evaluat***, **impact***, **effective***, **outcome***, scheme*, initiative*, program*, intervention*, trial*, **reduction**, **increase**, **cost effective***, **cost efficien***, cost benefit, **assess***, **result***

Electronic databases searched

- Criminal Justice Abstracts
- CSA Illumina
- National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
- Campbell collaboration C2 SPECTR
- Emerald

- Ingenta Connect
- POPNET
- Sage online
- Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG) - Intute
- OpenSIGLE
- British library catalogue
- PolicyHub

Annex C The quality assessment tool

The QAT was derived from a cabinet office framework for assessing the quality of evidence (Spencer *et al.*, 2003). Through the QAT, each study will be marked according to its methodology in four areas, namely:

- sample selection
- bias
- data collection
- data analysis

Each study is marked 1, 2, 3 or 5 against a set of criteria in relation to each area. The average scores for each area will be added together to provide an overall score for the study. On this basis, those studies having the lowest scores are the most methodologically sound. The criteria are shown below.

Sample selection

Indicator	Level	Score
Size	Whole population or 100+ participants in both treatment and control groups (where they exist)	1
	70% of population or 50-100 participants in both treatment and control groups (where they exist)	2
	Less than 50 participants in both treatment and control groups (Where they exist)	3
	Not reported	5
Method	Whole population or random samples	1
	Purposive samples with potential impact adequately controlled for statistically	2
	Purposive samples with potential impact not adequately controlled for statistically, or not controlled for at all.	3
	Not reported	5
Selection	Control and experimental groups comparable (where they exist)	1
	Control and experimental groups (where they exist) not comparable, but differences adequately controlled for statistically.	2
	Control and experimental groups (where they exist) not comparable, and differences not adequately controlled for statistically, or not controlled for at all.	2
	Not reported	5

The size and method criteria are fairly straightforward but in terms of selection, the authors are looking to see if the experimental and control groups were selected differently or whether and/or not they were truly comparable, e.g. did the experimental and control groups show different patterns of offending; were they of comparable age/gender/ethnicity; were they drawn from similar geographical areas/socio-economic groups etc.

Where there is no control group, but the intervention is applied to a sample, then one should still score the study, but consider the above criteria in relation to the experimental group only.

Bias

Indicator	Level	Score
Response/refusal bias	No bias	1
	Some bias but adequately controlled for statistically	2
	Some bias and not adequately controlled for statistically, or not controlled for at all	3
	Not reported	5
Attrition bias	No/very little bias (<10% bias)	1
	Some attrition but adequately controlled for statistically	2
	Some attrition and not adequately controlled for statistically, or not controlled for at all	3
	Not reported	5
Performance bias	Control and experimental groups treated equally	1
	Control and experimental groups not treated equally – minor effect	2
	Control and experimental groups not treated equally – major effect	2
	Not reported	5

Response/refusal bias

This relates to any bias that may have been introduced once the samples had been selected. For example:

- If a study relied on voluntary take-up of treatment/intervention once the experimental sample had been selected, were those that volunteered to take part (and form part of the control group), comparable to those in the experimental group?
- If a study relied on self-reported data from the experimental and control groups, were those forwarding the data comparable across both groups?

Attrition bias

Some of the factors to consider in scoring this.

- Were all of the participants in the experimental and control groups accounted for?
- Were there differences between the study participants in both experimental groups at the pre and post stages?
- Were there more 'lost to follow-ups' in the experimental group compared to the control group?
- How was any attrition managed or controlled for?

Performance bias

Some of the factors to consider in scoring this are as follows.

- Were experimental and control groups subject to interventions other than that to which the study relates, at the same time?
- Could any other differences in the way in which the groups were treated have any major impact on the outcomes?

Again, where there is no control group, but the intervention is applied to a sample, then one should still score the study, but consider the above criteria in relation to the experimental group only.

Data collection

Indicator	Level	Score
Method	Very appropriate	1
	Appropriate	2
	Not very appropriate	3
	Not reported	5
Timing	Very appropriate	1
	Appropriate	2
	Not very appropriate	3
	Not reported	5
Validation	Very appropriate	1
	Appropriate	2
	Not very appropriate	2
	Not reported	5

Where multiple data collection methods are used, you should make a judgement regarding the overall standard, concentrating on the data most appropriate to answering the research question(s).

Method

Some of the factors to consider in scoring this are as follows.

- What data collection methods were employed?
- Were they appropriate, i.e. did they supply the required data in order to answer the research question (s)?

Timing

Some of the factors to consider in scoring this are as follows.

- Was the timing of data collection before and after the intervention appropriate?
- Was a sufficient length of time left after the intervention in order that the potential impact of the intervention could emerge?
- For longitudinal studies, were the data collected at appropriate intervals?
- Was a rational amount of time given for the timing of data collection and if so, was it credible?

Validation

Some of the factors to consider in scoring this are as follows

- If appropriate, were different sources of data used?
- Was any triangulation carried out? For instance, was self-reported criminality matched to official records?

Studies relying on a single data source should be given a maximum score of 2.

Data analysis

Indicator	Level	Score
Techniques/reporting	Very appropriate	1
	Appropriate	2
	Not very appropriate	3
	Not reported	5

Some of the factors to consider in scoring this are as follows.

- Were appropriate statistical techniques used and reported on?
- Were significance levels reported?
- Were repeated measures reported, i.e. were baseline and post-intervention data reported?

If only post-intervention data are reported, the maximum score should be 2.

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