

DRUGS, CRIME & COMMUNITY IN DUBLIN
Monitoring Quality of Life in the North Inner City

By Johnny Connolly BA (Mod) Ldip LIM

**A research project submitted to the Supply/Control Committee of the North
Inner City Drugs Task Force.**

JUNE 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research has been made possible by funding from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The views expressed throughout however, represent the views of the author or of those who participated in the survey and other interviewees quoted throughout the report.

The author would like to thank Deirdre McCarthy for her professional research assistance in the conduct of the local Quality Of Life survey.

I would also like to offer my appreciation to the members of the research steering group of the Supply/Control sub-committee of the Drugs Task Force, Lyla Crossan of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Julie Cruikshank, Coordinator of the Drugs Task Force and Tom Coffey of the Dublin City Centre Business Association, whose comments on various drafts of the report were always beneficial.

The assistance of the following people was also greatly appreciated;

From Dublin City Council; Dónal Barron, Jim Beggan, Amanda Byrne, Jimmy Lynch, Geraldine O'Toole Toner, Paul Rainsfort, Tommy Stokes and, in particular, Pat Whelan, Attendant at Matt Talbot Court. **From the Garda Síochána;** Sergeant Angie Bates, Inspector Jim Cannon, Sergeant Liam Hickey, Community Garda Ger O'Sullivan, Superintendent Albert Tracey and Chief superintendent Al McHugh. **From the Probation and Welfare Service;** Vivian Guerin and Maeve O'Hare. **From the Northern Area Health Board;** Pádraig Ó Síochrú. **From the North Dublin Inner City Community Policing Forum;** Cathy Moore and Marie Metcalfe.

David Connolly of the Dublin Inner City Partnership, Tony Gregory T.D., Local Youth Worker Paddy Malone, Dr. Mark Morgan, St.Patrick's College Drumcondra, Dr. Mick O'Connell and Dr.Ian O'Donnell at University College Dublin, and Dr. Eoin O'Sullivan at Trinity College.

Finally, I would like to thank those local residents who participated in the survey. I sincerely hope that I have reflected their views accurately and that their willingness to take part in this research and to share their personal stories about the impact of the drug problem on their quality of life might contribute, in some small way, to an improvement in this area.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION ONE – Executive Summary	Page Number
(a) Purpose of Study	6
(b) Recommendations	6
(c) Research Overview – Monitoring Quality of Life	9
(d) Drug-Related Crime & Quality of Life Findings	10
(e) Research Issues Arising From Study	16
SECTION TWO – Introduction	
(a) Background to Research	18
(b) Defining Quality of Life	20
(c) Structure of Report	22
SECTION THREE – Methodology & Research Issues	
(a) Overview	23
(b) Quality Of Life, Drugs & Crime Survey	24
(c) Semi-Structured Interviews	32
(d) Existing Data Sources	34
(e) Community Policing Forum Data	48
(f) Unobtrusive Research Measures	49
SECTION FOUR – Impact of Ordinary Crime	
(a) Local Crime Priorities	50
(b) Personal Crime Victimization	50
(c) Witnessing Crime	51
(d) Numbers Affected or Disturbed by Crime	52
(e) Local Commentary on Crime/ Anti-Social Behaviour	52
(f) Local Response to Witnessing Crime	54
SECTION FIVE – Local Drug Selling	
(a) Local Exposure to Drug Selling	56
(b) Location of Drug Dealing Sites	56
SECTION SIX – Personal/Family Impact of Drugs	
(a) Personal & Family Drug Use	59
(b) Family Bereavement Through Drug Use	60
SECTION SEVEN – Community Impact of Drugs	
(a) Perception of Community Impact of Drug Use	62
(b) Perception of Most harmful Drugs	63

SECTION EIGHT – Perceptions of Changing Levels of Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour & Fear of Crime Analysis

(a) Perception of Changing Levels of Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour	64
(b) Fear of Crime & Quality of Life	66
(c) Fears about Drug Selling	68

SECTION NINE – Community Anti-Drugs Response

(a) Community Anti-Drug Activity	70
(b) Existing Obstacles to Local Community Activity	73

SECTION TEN – Obstacles to State/ Community Cooperation

(a) Current Interaction between Community & State Agencies	77
(b) Knowledge of the Community Policing Forum	78
(c) Attitudes to Garda Síochána & Dublin City Council Service Provision	79
(d) Willingness to Report Crimes/Anti-Social Behaviour	82
(e) Reasons for not Reporting Crimes/Anti-Social Behaviour	83

SECTION ELEVEN – Local Perspectives on Responses to Crime

(a) Environmental Solutions – ‘The Steps’	86
(b) Local Views on Evictions	89
(c) Attitudes to the Decriminalisation of Cannabis	91

CONCLUSION	94
-------------------	----

TABLES, GRAPHS, PYE CHARTS

TABLES **PAGE NUMBER**

(i)	Recorded Drug Related Offences 1997-2000	36
(ii)	Type of Drug Seized 1997-2000	36
1	Local Crime Priorities	50
2	Personal Crime Victimization	50
3	Witnessing Crime	51
4	Numbers Affected/ Disturbed by Crime	52
5	Numbers Offered Drugs/ Who Witnessed Drug Selling	56
6	Type of Drug	56
7	Personal Drug use	59
8	Changing Levels Of Crime/ Anti-Social Behaviour	64
9	Fear of Crime Victimization	66
10	Fears For Personal Safety	66
11	Fear of Drug Selling/ Drug Use	68
12	Familiarity With State Agency Officials	77
13	Contact with State Agency Officials	77
14	Attitude to Garda Síochána/ City Council Service	79
15	Willingness to Report Crime	82
16	Willingness to Report Crime – CPF Survey Comparison	83
17	Reasons for Not Reporting Crime	84

PYE CHARTS

1	Numbers Who Witnessed Joy Riding	51
2	Numbers Who Witnessed Mugging	51
3	Numbers Offered Drugs	56
4	Respondents Whose Family Members Used Drugs	59
5	Family Drug Bereavement	60
6	Residents Group	74
7	Willingness to Join Residents group	74
8	Awareness of Community Policing Forum	78

GRAPHS

1	Perception of Changing Levels of Mugging	65
2	Perception of Changing Levels of Heroin Selling	65

SECTION ONE – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 (a) Purpose of Study;

This study has had two primary purposes. On the one hand, it has been concerned with ascertaining the quality of life in a specific location in Dublin's North Inner City, with a particular focus on the impact of drug related crime and anti-social behaviour. On the other hand, it has involved the piloting of a research instrument to aid in ascertaining quality of life. This research instrument used a triangulation of methods and sought to complement existing data sources. The following recommendations will focus firstly on those matters related to the substantive findings regarding quality of life. Secondly, a number of recommendations will be made with regard to the research issues, which have been identified in this study.

Where a recommendation relates to a specific part of the study, a corresponding page reference will be included in brackets after the recommendation.

1 (b) Recommendations;

Responding to Crime

1) Local Crime Priorities *The deployment of Policing and Estate Management resources should reflect the ongoing crime and estate management priorities and needs of the local residents.*

2) Emergency Responses *This study reveals the extent of the crime problems associated with particular locations such as 'The Steps' at Seán O'Casey Avenue. It is estimated that 10 – 20 people are responsible for most of this anti-social activity¹. The problems in Sean O' Casey Avenue and 'The Steps' were first brought to the attention of the author in his role as adviser to the Community Policing Forum (CPF) at a meeting of local residents in September 1999². 'The Steps' were removed*

¹ Estimate based on discussions with Probation and Welfare Service, Garda Síochána, Community Policing Forum Coordinator and local youth worker.

² Community Policing Forum Minutes of tenants' group meeting; Summerhill, Sean O'Casey Avenue, 23rd September 1999. For an account of the Community Policing Forum see Connolly (2002 Forthcoming) *The North Dublin Inner City Community Policing Forum*.

in January 2002 during the course of this research. The development of such drug dealing sites or sites of intense and prolonged anti-social behaviour has a particularly corrosive impact on the local community over time and needs to be responded to immediately with appropriate policing practices, criminal justice interventions, local authority and community based responses.

3) Local Strategy & The Community Policing Forum *Although the Community Policing Forum is still at a developmental stage, its potential as a forum through which to develop negotiated responses to drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour between the local community, the relevant state agencies and other community-based organisations should be considered. Appropriate resources and training would need to be provided to those involved with the CPF for it to fulfil such a role.*

4) Ethnic Minorities *The experience of ethnic minorities in relation to crime victimisation needs to be researched further.*

5) Policing the Young *Relations between the Garda Síochána and local young people needs to be further researched and assessed.*

6) Long Term Strategy *The Task Force should consider organising a conference to look at alternative approaches to the problems being confronted. This conference should also consider issues related to ethnic minorities and youth groups. It might also consider ways of overcoming the significant fears that inhibit community activity on behalf of residents, which is so vital to community cohesion. Relevant state agencies, local youth groups and the local community should be afforded a role in the formation of a coordinated response to such issues.*

Research Issues - Recommendations

7) Local Crime Survey: *The Task Force should consider commissioning a larger Quality of Life Survey, which could follow on from the Community Policing Forum Survey and the Quality of Life Survey conducted as part of this study. This survey might be based on the area covered by the North Inner City Drugs Task Force as a whole. Such a survey, while looking at drug-related crime issues, might also include*

broader quality of life questions such as family breakdown due to drug use, and health and education issues. (Reference Page 29)

8) National Victimization Survey & Drugs: *The National Crime Council has recommended that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform commission a National Victimization Survey in 2002. It is recommended here that this survey should include a special component on drug-related crime. (Reference Page 29)*

9) Research Needs: *The Task Force should identify the data needs of the Stakeholders, the Research community and the local community. (Reference Page 46)*

10) Comparing Data: *State agencies should seek to ensure that their recording practices and the 'counting rules' used in the compilation of their statistics are consistent with each other. Also, the geographical boundaries covered by their statistics should overlap as much as possible. This would facilitate enhanced networking between agencies, comparisons between data and also render policy interventions more externally accountable. (Reference Page 46)*

11) Monitoring Local Initiatives: *Data recording and dissemination practices should be developed within state agencies so that they facilitate the evaluation and monitoring of inter-agency and community-based approaches and interventions as close to service delivery as possible. The Potential offered by new Information Technology systems such as PULSE should be evaluated in light of this recommendation. (Reference Page 47)*

12) Counting Drug-Related Crime: *The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 identifies the need for the Department of Justice, Equality and Law reform to 'oversee the establishment of a framework to monitor numbers of successful prosecutions, arrests and the nature of the sentences passed'. This research supports that objective. However, it is unclear from the report what type of framework is envisaged. Also, following discussions with the representative of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the Drugs Task Force, it*

appears that this action has not progressed very far. It is recommended therefore that the authors of the National Drugs Strategy provide further clarification as to the framework envisaged and that it be established on a pilot basis in a designated location. Such a pilot study should also seek to ascertain the number of reports of drug-related crime made to the Gardaí in a given period for the specified location. (Reference Page 47)

13) Confidentiality: *Issues of confidentiality will need to be considered in relation to the establishment of all monitoring systems. Confidentiality requirements need to be reconciled with the requirement for reliable and up to date information. (Reference Page 48)*

14) Monitoring the Community Policing Forum: *The data compiled as part of the Community Policing Forum process offers a useful source of information in terms of the background to and progress made in relation to local incidents. It is recommended that these systems of monitoring be standardised and maintained as part of the CPF. This finding supports the commitment made in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 to establish project-monitoring guidelines, something being undertaken by the NICDTF. (Reference Page 49)*

1(c) Research Overview - Monitoring Quality of Life;

In this study, we have attempted to explore the use of a triangulation of research methods as a means of monitoring the Quality of Life of a specified urban area in Dublin's North Inner City. The study incorporates a Local Crime Survey, Semi Structured Interviews with relevant state agency personnel and other relevant individuals, and Unobtrusive research measures. It also utilises data sources established as part of the Community Policing Forum. Existing data sources including those gathered by the Garda Síochána, Dublin City Council and the Probation and Welfare Service are also utilised and reviewed in the study.

For the purposes of this study the concept *Quality Of Life* has been linked to questions of community empowerment, cohesion and general well being. We have employed

the term community as a way of considering the way in which the drug problem can both create and fragment bonds between residents of the area, thereby simultaneously building and undermining community cohesion. Similarly we have sought to assess the way in which interventions, be they state based or community-based have the potential to impact in both positive and negative ways at a local level.

1 (d) Drug Related Crime & Quality of Life Findings;

This research shows that drug related crime and anti-social behaviour significantly compounds the already serious social problems being confronted in areas such as that under study. Local drug dealing and drug consumption has contributed to the erosion of community bonds and also to significant intra community conflict. This research reveals the capacity of a very small number of offenders to commit an amount of crime and anti-social behaviour sufficient to severely undermine the quality of life of the local community.

Sustainable inter-agency and community-based interventions need to be carefully considered and sensitively implemented. Effective responses will be those, which can reconcile the need for immediate interventions, which can alleviate the severe disruption caused on an ongoing basis with a more sustainable strategy in the long term. Environmental solutions such as blocking off access routes and walkways such as ‘The Steps’ at Seán O’Casey Avenue or the policy of evicting from local authority housing those identified as being involved in drug dealing, while understandable and sometimes necessary in the short term, are unsustainable in the long term or when viewed on a citywide basis. The following were the principal findings made with regards to the impact of drug related crime and anti-social behaviour on the local area.

Crime Priorities

*Drug offences clearly remain the top crime priorities for most residents.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

*48% of the total number of respondents stated that they had witnessed somebody being mugged locally while 75% stated that they had witnessed joy riding. 80% of those who responded said they were affected or disturbed by joy riding, 78%

by public nuisance and 60% by young people gathering in groups. 58% said they were affected or disturbed by noise late at night time.

*The section of Dublin City Council responsible for abandoned vehicles has recorded approximately 9 abandoned or burnt out cars in the area or on the streets immediately adjacent to the area between 2nd July 2001 and 31st December 2001.

Crime & Ethnic Minorities

*There appears to be a high incidence of attacks on ethnic minorities, presumably locally resident asylum seekers or refugees.

Perceptions of Crime & Local Youth

*There is an acknowledgement among many respondents that, despite the serious problems being caused locally by some young people, the young of the area have little to do.

Crime & Fear of Retribution

*While the seriousness of the problems being confronted with regard to crime and anti-social behaviour are clear, it is also evident that respondents, having witnessed such incidents, experience a sense of powerlessness rooted partially in exasperation and partially in fear.

Drug Related Crime

*16 respondents or 36% of the total sample had been offered drugs in the past year while 53% had witnessed drugs being sold in the past year.

*76% of respondents stated that they were Somewhat Likely, Quite Likely or Very Likely to witness drug selling within the next six months.

*The percentages of respondents who were able to identify the type of drug being sold was very significant, with 83% and 84% identifying heroin and cannabis respectively.

*One respondent, who was herself a recovering drug user could identify the type of drug by the dealer and she insisted that those dealing heroin did not generally deal cannabis.

*Of the 29 respondents who offered a site location for drug dealing; 6 mentioned 'The Steps' where Sean O'Casey Avenue meets Summerhill, 3 mentioned

Summerhill, 5 stated that they witnessed dealing outside their door every day, 2 respondents mentioned Buckingham Street where there had been significant street level dealing a few years ago, including at the 'Home' monument established as a memorial to those who have lost their lives locally due to drug related deaths.

*A recovering drug user, who on her way to obtain her methadone from the local clinic, had been offered drugs three times on the day the interview took place. The difficulties encountered by drug users attempting to come off drugs are obviously exacerbated in such circumstances.

Personal & Family Impact of Drugs

*While 9 respondents or 22% of the sample that answered had used drugs themselves with 4 of those users long term, over half of the sample had a family member or relative who had used drugs. Over 50% of the latter were long-term users.

*For many of the respondents a dominant concern is the negative impression street level drug dealing and use has upon younger children. There is a fear that for children drug use and drug dealing will be seen as a way of life. The presence of bereavement, the difficulties in attempting to manage families where one or more members is a drug user and the difficulties for those who are attempting to come off drugs when they see it around them are all significant impressions.

Community Impact of Drug Problem

*One respondent refers to drugs as having contributed to the marginalisation of the community within wider society thus leading to stigmatisation of the community as a whole. Some respondents refer to the absence of unity within the community, the absence of proper amenities, the fear among many including the elderly and a perceived sense of hopelessness among the young.

*Of the total sample number of 44, 39 respondents regarded heroin as being the most harmful in terms of its impact on the community.

Fear of Crime

*The Central Statistics Office National Crime and Victimization Survey found that almost 30 % of respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe walking in their

neighbourhood after dark³. The current survey recorded a figure of 66% who felt unsafe or very unsafe walking around their area after dark.

Community Responses to Drugs problem

*36 or 86% state that there had been an anti-drugs group in the area. 26 respondents claimed to have been involved in anti-drugs activity while 12 respondents state that they had not been involved. From a total response of 41, 35 respondents or 85% stated that they supported the anti-drugs movement while 6 or 15% stated that they did not.

*In stating the reason for their involvement in the anti-drugs movement 9 respondents stated that it was for the benefit of the children of the area. 5 stated that they were anti-drugs. 2 respondents declared that they became involved out of anger and frustration with how bad things had got in the community.

*Apathy and concerns about the use of violence are expressed as the primary reasons for respondents' non-involvement in anti-drug activity. Nevertheless there appears to be a general understanding of anti-drug activity even where it is opposed.

*Contrary to most of the media reports a clear majority of respondents believed that the anti-drugs movement was representative of the community. Some however stated that it caused problems within the community between neighbours where some had children using drugs. 5 respondents stated that some of the activists were dealers themselves or were in it for the money or others were dealers who were using it as a way of monitoring anti-drugs activity. 2 respondents felt that it led to rows between neighbours. 2 respondents felt that the anti-drugs movement sometimes marched on the wrong people and that it did not focus on the big dealers due to a perceived fear of them. 4 respondents were concerned that such activity should be non violent. 3 respondents felt that it led to violence against young people and that it did not help drug users.

*2 respondents believed that such activity removed a lot of drugs from the community at one time. 11 respondents stated that they believed the anti-drug activity made it difficult for the dealers to operate. 8 respondents felt that it helped unify the community. 2 respondents felt that it helped set up the current system whereby prospective tenants are vetted now before being allocated local accommodation.

³ Central Statistics Office (1998) Quarterly National Household Survey Central Statistics Office.

Another felt that it helped to get clinics started and that the anti drugs movement helped make people aware of the dangers associated with drugs. Other respondents expressed the view that little had changed.

Attitudes Towards Community Involvement in Resident's Groups

*Of the 40 respondents who answered this question, 29 stated that they were aware of the existence of a resident's group in their area while 11 stated that they did not know of one.

*Of the 42 respondents who answered this question as to whether they would participate in such a group, 18 (43%) expressed a willingness to join such a residents group while 23 (55%) stated that they would not be so willing. Fear of being singled out for retribution, a belief that their contribution would not be valued due to them being an ex drug user, apathy, a concern that the community would not actively support them and a feeling of hopelessness are all prominent in respondent's reasons for not joining a residents group. Also, a reluctance to become involved in local politics is a discouraging factor.

Relations With the Garda Síochána & Dublin City Council

*There was significant concern expressed regarding an alleged assault on two Garda members in the area during the course of the research. Also, interviews with Garda members indicate that certain uniformed Gardaí, particularly those who are new to the area, have been harassed on occasion. Although further research needs to be conducted in this area, anecdotal evidence suggests that an aggressive or 'macho attitude' on the part of some Gardaí in their relations with local youth might contribute to conflict between the two.

*28% of respondents stated that they knew the name of their local Community Garda while 16% knew the name of their local City Council official. 42% had spoken to the Gardaí while 36% had spoken to a City Council official. Of a total of 44 respondents, 10 (22%) stated that they knew of the existence of the Community Policing Forum while 34 (77%) stated that they did not.

*In the Central Statistics Office survey, 75% regarded the work done by the Garda Síochána in controlling crime in their neighbourhood as Good or Very Good.

25% rated it as average, and 10% regarded it as poor or very poor. In the current survey 35% regarded the work done by the Gardaí in controlling crime as good or very good, 30% rated it as average and 35% regarded it as poor or very poor.

Relations With State Agencies & Fear of Reprisal

*The issue of fear of reprisal is obviously highly significant and remains as the most significant reason why respondents are reluctant to engage with state agencies on controversial matters that affect local residents.

Attitudes Towards Interventions – Evictions & Environmental Crime Solutions

*24 respondents out of the total sample of 44 answered questions in relation to their attitudes towards the policy of evicting City Council residents who are involved in Drug dealing as defined within the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997. Among those who agreed unequivocally with the policy, concerns were expressed regarding the perceived delay in the process. Others were concerned with the influence the presence of drug dealers had on the area if permitted to remain. Nobody disagreed with the policy although most of the respondents' agreement was conditional on the need to meet certain concerns. A strong feeling was expressed that the needs of drug users, other family members and the positions of mothers needed to be considered. A second concern related to issues of due process, whereby some respondents expressed concern that people might be moved out for the wrong reasons. Others questioned the long term results of the policy, questioning whether or not it was simply moving the problem to another area.

*An analysis was conducted on a recent decision to close off a local walk way due to its association with anti-social behaviour and drug dealing. This discussion suggested that environmental solutions to crisis situations are sometimes useful and necessary. However, they can have serious consequences for people in terms of their freedom of movement and possibly their physical safety as implied in a local petition gathered in response to this initiative. If not handled carefully, such policies can create fissures within a community. Furthermore, they should be seen as a short term response.

Attitudes to Decriminalisation of Cannabis

43 respondents were asked their views in relation to this issue. Those who disagree do so very emphatically believing that cannabis leads to harder drugs. Those who agree do so on the basis that it might help others in terms of reported medical value of cannabis or because they feel it might assist in the prosecution of more serious drug use. Many respondents are extremely unsure. It is also worth noting the high number of respondents who stated when asked why they might not be prepared to report certain criminal offences to the Gardaí, that they would not report drug use or cannabis use to the Gardaí as they did not see it as serious enough.

1 (e) Research Issues Arising From Study;

Existing surveys such as those carried out on a national basis by the Central Statistics Office are unable to provide an adequate impression of the way in which crime can impact disproportionately on different areas or sectors of society. The *Quality of Life Survey* conducted as part of this study, when combined with the *Community Policing Forum Survey* conducted by the author as part of the evaluation of the Community Policing Forum provide a useful tool with which to monitor the quality of life at a more local level. However, given the low numbers surveyed, it is not possible to generalise too greatly from these surveys. It would be useful to follow them up with a more comprehensive localised survey.

With regards to existing data sources compiled by state agencies, it appears that state agencies, in developing their data recording systems, focus primarily on internal operational needs. In doing so, they reduce the potential for networking with and between other agencies.

Also, this approach renders external evaluation of inter-agency and community-based approaches to problems more difficult. It is important that, as new inter-agency approaches to crime develop, as reflected in locally based policing and estate management initiatives, the means by which these interventions can be evaluated also changes accordingly.

Improvements in this area should identify the existing needs for information; standardise recording practices between state agencies including ‘counting rules’ and

areas or boundaries covered so that statistics across agencies are consistent and comparable with each other; improve dissemination practices to the research community and the general public; explore the potential and capabilities of existing information technology systems such as PULSE; reconcile the need for information with the issues of confidentiality and disclosure which arise and ensure that increased inter-agency approaches and interventions develop hand in hand with complementary data recording and dissemination practices.

SECTION TWO – INTRODUCTION

2 (a) Background to Research;

The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 acknowledges the importance of gathering “comprehensive and comparable” data on drug-related issues⁴. The North Inner City Drugs Task Force (NICDTF), as part of its Strategic Development Plan for 2001, prioritised the need for “local research which will support the development of Task Force initiatives and functions”⁵. The Development Plan emphasised the “difficulties in assessing the extent and nature of the local drugs situation”⁶. A number of recent studies have sought to estimate the prevalence of drug use in Dublin in general⁷ and in the North Inner City in particular⁸. As the Supply/Control Sub-committee of the NICDTF suggests in its research proposal, “It has long been recognised in several areas (e.g. economics, health, crime), that any single measure of the state and extent of problems is likely to give limited views of trends and of the effects of interventions. . . .single measures of drug-related problems are also likely to have limited application e.g. amount of drugs seized, number of prosecutions for dealing or number of drug-related deaths”⁹.

Since the 1980s we have witnessed, according to Paul O’Mahony, “an epidemic of intravenous use of opiates, especially heroin, which has been concentrated for the most part in districts of central Dublin”¹⁰. The drugs trade has spawned a sophisticated criminal network and has led to a rapid increase in drug-related crime. A study conducted by the Garda Síochána found that drug users were responsible for

⁴ Department of Tourism, Sport & Recreation (2001) Building on Experience – National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008.

⁵ North Inner City Drugs Task Force (2001) – Strategic Development Plan Page 52.

⁶ IBID Page 3.

⁷ Dr C.M Comiskey (1996) Estimating the Prevalence of Opiate use in Dublin

⁸ The National Drug Treatment Reporting System (1998) Extent and Nature of drug use in the north inner city area.; Deirdre McCarthy (1999) ICON Community Drug Support Services: Evaluation Report; Murphy – Lawless et al (1999) Prevalence, Profiles and Policy. A Case Study of drug use in north inner city Dublin.

⁹ NICDTF (2001) A proposal to develop and pilot a research Instrument that would Monitor Quality of Life with particular Reference to drug-Related Effects

¹⁰ O’Mahony OpCit. p67. A recent study suggested that there were approximately 10,500 to 12,500 opiate users in Dublin in 1996. See Comiskey C (1996) Estimating the prevalence Of Opiate Drug Use In Dublin, Ireland During 1996.

66% of all crimes detected in the Dublin Metropolitan area between September 1995 and August 1996¹¹. The human cost in terms of its impact on the local community is inestimable. Hundreds of young people have lost their lives in drug-related deaths, many thousands more have been processed through the courts and ended up in prison as a result of drug-related criminal behaviour. A study conducted by O'Mahony in 1996 suggested that two out of every three prisoners in Dublin's main jail, Mountjoy, had used heroin¹². This study also showed that most prisoners are from areas characterised by high proportions of Council housing, such as the North Dublin Inner City.

The above indicators begin to give some sense of the impact of the drugs crisis on the crime problem in the greater Dublin area. We can also begin to see however that such crude statistical measurements do not tell the full story. For example, they do not give us a sense of the impact of the problem on the local community. We are left with a limited knowledge of the local impact of drug-related crime and of local perceptions of the associated problems. A recent innovative study commissioned by the Combat Poverty Agency and the Katharine Howard Foundation; *Social housing in Ireland – A Study of Success, Failure and Lessons learned* has significantly advanced our general knowledge in this area¹³. This study used a variety of research techniques to assess the living conditions in seven local authority estates in Ireland¹⁴. Problems of social disorder were found to be central factors affecting the quality of life of the residents. The authors conclude “Social disorder has the greatest impact on residents’ quality of life, through direct experience of anti-social behaviour, a general loss of communal space and a sense of personal safety, and negative labelling of estates in the wider community”¹⁵.

¹¹ Keogh E (1997) Illicit Drug Use & Related Criminal Activity In The Dublin Metropolitan Area Garda Research Unit.

¹² O'Mahony P (1997) Mountjoy Prisoners: A Sociological and Criminological profile Department of Justice.

¹³ Tony Fahey eds., (1999) Social Housing in Ireland: A Study of Success, Failure and lessons Learned Oak tree Press

¹⁴ Ibid Chapter Seven.

¹⁵ Ibid. Page xx.

The authors of the above study devoted considerable attention to the question of social disorder, its causes and consequences and they have advanced thoughtful proposals as to how best it should be responded to¹⁶.

The Supply/Control Sub-committee of the North Inner City Drugs Task Force, in its proposal for the current study, has sought to continue in this line of inquiry and, in particular, to advance our understanding of the impact of drug-related problems and related interventions on the *quality of life* of a given area in the North Dublin Inner City.

2 (b) Defining Quality of Life;

The first requirement of such a study however is to define for our purposes what we understand by *quality of life* and how this study will seek to assess it. In seeking to clarify the term in 1948 the World Health Organisation highlighted its illusiveness. The WHO stated that “In the absence of any universally accepted definition, some investigators argue that most people, in the western world at least, are familiar with the expression and have an intuitive understanding of what it comprises”¹⁷. Cattell (1995) makes a link between community, community cohesion and quality of life¹⁸.

Similarly, the Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP) refers to the importance of community; “Community regeneration should improve the quality of life of the community and bring meaningful benefits to local people through an holistic approach that integrates issues such as health and welfare, education and training, employment and training, employment and enterprise, environmental improvement, arts and culture”¹⁹. The DICP identifies its strategy in response to what it perceives as “the exclusion of local communities from decision making processes, and social problems such as drug misuse and scarcity of resources”²⁰.

A number of issues have been raised within criminological literature regarding the dangers inherent in the concept of community, particularly in relation to the way in

¹⁶ Ibid, Page 233.

¹⁷ Fayers P and Machin D Quality of Life: Assessment, Analysis and Interpretation Page 3.

¹⁸ Cattell V (1995) Community, Equality and Health: positive communities for positive health and well being? Middlesex University Occasional paper

¹⁹ Dublin Inner City Partnership (2001) Achieving equality, Overcoming Exclusion

which exclusive notions of community have been used to justify repressive policing tactics²¹. Such tactics, although employed in the name of regenerating communities, can actually undermine police community relations. The popularisation of the concept ‘Zero Tolerance’ policing and the so-called ‘broken windows’ thesis, for example, which holds that through the aggressive proactive enforcement of the most trivial of offences, the larger crimes will diminish²². Although in Ireland the ‘Zero Tolerance’ idea has not moved beyond the level of rhetoric as yet, as Irish society continues to ponder whether or not we are closer to Boston than Berlin, it will be argued below that the compelling nature of ‘quick-fix’ solutions to crime and disorder must be addressed as we seek to develop sustainable intervention strategies. It is worth pointing out that in some academic circles in the United States, ‘Zero tolerance’ policing is increasingly being referred to as ‘Quality of Life’ policing²³.

Nevertheless, for our purposes in this study the concept *Quality Of Life* will be linked to questions of community. In particular, to issues of community cohesion and general well being. To employ a metaphor, we will be seeking to understand what constitutes the ‘social glue’ of a community. This should not be understood simply as implying that the geographical area in which this study is focused is being defined as a community, with all the positive connotations of togetherness and unity that the term can evoke. Such a definition would be to overlook the complex and often conflictual relations between local residents. Rather, we will employ the term community as a way of considering the way in which the drug problem can both create and fragment bonds between residents of the area, thereby simultaneously building and undermining community cohesion. Similarly we will seek to assess the way in which interventions, be they state based or community-based similarly have the potential to impact in both positive and negative ways.

Our focus in the study will relate to how issues of crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly drug-related, impact on quality of life. We will not be focusing on broader

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Crawford A (1999) The Local Governance of Crime: appeals to community and partnerships Oxford.

²² For a discussion on ‘Zero Tolerance’ in an Irish context see O’Donnell I and O’Sullivan E (2001) Crime Control in Ireland: The politics of Intolerance Undercurrents; On the hugely influential ‘broken windows’ thesis see Kelling G.L and Coles C.M (1996) Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring order & reducing Crime in Our Communities Free Press

²³ Parenti C (1999) Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis NewYork Verso.

issues of health or education or family breakdown and how such matters impact on quality of life²⁴.

2 (c) Structure of Report;

In Section Three we give an account of the methodology used in the study and the issues, which arose in relation to the various data sources. Sections Four to Ten correspond to the various subject headings covered in the *Quality of Life Survey*. Findings are presented in the form of **Tables, Graphs and Pie Charts** or in the form of **Residents' Commentary**, which are direct quotations from the residents. Findings are followed by a '**Note**' in which the author summarises the data or highlights the significant issues arising, analysing it in the context of the study and other similar studies or the other complementary data used in the research. On a number of occasions in tables, the results from the Community Policing Forum survey is presented alongside the current survey for purposes of comparison.

²⁴ The author would like to thank Pádraig Ó Síochrú for comments in this respect.

SECTION THREE – METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH ISSUES

3 (a) Overview;

The primary purpose of this research is to develop and implement a research instrument. Acknowledging the nature of drug use and the large number of social, financial and health problems that surround drug misuse the Supply/Control Subcommittee proposed that the current study incorporate the following factors;

- Using a number of measurable indicators, the research instrument would be developed in an area of the North East Inner City where illicit drug use/ dealing is prevalent²⁵.
- That the research instrument would complement other approaches to measuring the extent of drug problems. That it would not attempt to supplant or duplicate existing Garda Síochána figures or similar information.
- That it would gauge matters related to such information e.g. fear of drug-related crime, perceptions of problems associated with drugs as well as consequences of drug-related activity.
- That the research instrument could be a valuable tool in gauging effects of interventions.
- That it would seek to measure perceptions of drug prevalence and drug related activity in the given area.
- That the instrument should include both perceptions of the problems as well as objective indicators of events or outcomes which, when combined with the perceptions, might provide an overview of the quality of life in a given area.

²⁵ The geographical area for the research was Sean O’Casey Avenue, Summerhill, Summer Place, North Summer Street, Matt Talbot Court Flats and Great Charles Street in the North Inner City.

The research is premised on the idea that there are both positive and negative impacts on Quality of Life. A primary motivating factor underlying the research therefore has been to identify and develop a means of recording those activities or forms of behaviour which have both negative and positive impacts on the quality of life of those people living in the area under study. In order to fulfil the above criteria a triangulation of methods of research was adopted in the current study. Triangulation involves the use of several different methods of data collection and analysis²⁶. Most of the research data was gathered between July 2001 and December 2001.

Five primary sources have been utilised in this study;

- a) A Local *Quality of Life - Drugs and Crime Survey*
- b) Semi-Structured Interviews with state agency officials or other specified individuals
- c) Existing Data Sources
- d) Community Policing Forum Incident Reports and Meetings
- e) Unobtrusive Measures

3 (b) Quality of Life - Drugs and Crime Survey;

The principal methodology incorporated into the research was a local crime survey. The use of local crime and victimisation surveys has been identified as a way of complementing existing measurements of crime²⁷. In Ireland, the principal source of information about crime are the statistics contained in the *Annual Reports of An Garda Síochána* produced by the Garda Commissioner²⁸. These statistics, which have been compiled annually since 1947, record the number of offences reported to the

²⁶ For a discussion see Jupp V (1989) Methods of Criminological research. London: Unwin; Sayer (1992) Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach. London: Routledge.

²⁷ Although the underdevelopment of criminological research in Ireland has meant that few such surveys have taken place, the value of local crime surveys has been well established in Britain and elsewhere. For a discussion see Maguire M *Crime Statistics, Patterns, and Trends: Changing Perceptions and their Implications* and Zedner L *Victims* in Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner eds., (1997) The Oxford handbook of Criminology Oxford. For a recent localised survey which looked at perceptions of crime seriousness in Dublin see O'Connell M and Whelan A *Taking Wrongs Seriously- Public Perceptions of Crime Seriousness* British Journal of Criminology Volume 36 No.2 Spring 1996. see also W

²⁸For a fuller consideration and critique of Irish Crime Statistics see O'Mahony P (1993) Crime and Punishment in Ireland The Round Hall Press and McCullagh C Crime in Ireland (1996) Cork University Press and more recently; The National Crime Council (2001) Crime in Ireland: A report by the Institute of Criminology UCD

Gardaí in the particular year. One of the strengths of such statistics is that they are collected at, or close to the incident. A major weakness, which has been identified with these statistics is that they are dependent upon victims actually reporting their victimisation and of such reports actually being recorded²⁹.

The discrepancy between the actual rate of crime and the reported and thus recorded rate has been described as the ‘dark figure of crime’. That this difference is quite substantial in Ireland has been highlighted in a number of recent crime victim surveys. The first Victim Survey conducted in the State, in 1982/83, suggested that under half of the domestic burglaries which had occurred in a given calendar year, had been reported to the Gardaí³⁰. These kinds of results have been confirmed by a 1994 Dublin crime survey³¹, and by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in its 1998 Quarterly National Household Survey³², and again by the Community Policing Forum Panel Survey conducted by the author as part of the evaluation of the CPF³³. In Ireland, for some crimes, it has been estimated that the rate of crime recorded in victim surveys is five times that which appears in the annual report of the Garda Síochána.

Although victim surveys such as that conducted by the CSO enable us to get a broader sense of the crime problem they are also limited in that they tell us little about the distribution of crime. The first large scale British Crime Survey (BCS)³⁴ looked at unrecorded crime. It also however, as Maguire suggests, “tended to distort ‘real’ experiences of crime...especially those of women, ethnic minorities and the very poor”³⁵. The BCS was followed by a series of more localised crime surveys³⁶. These surveys discovered the extent to which victimisation is unequally distributed among

²⁹ For a comprehensive account of the issues surrounding official crime statistics in Ireland see Young P et al (2001) Crime in Ireland A report by The Institute of Criminology Faculty of Law, University College Dublin.

³⁰ Breen R and Rottman D (1985) Crime Victimisation in the Republic of Ireland Economic and Social Research Institute, Paper No.121 Dublin.

³¹ O’Connell M and Whelan A (1994) Crime Victimisation in Dublin Irish Criminal Law Review Vol.4,pp 85-112.

³² Central Statistics Office (1998) Quarterly National Household Survey Central Statistics Office. Dublin.

³³ Connolly (2001) Community Policing Forum Panel Survey Unpublished.

³⁴ Hough J and Mayhew p (1983), The British Crime Survey Home Office Research Study No.76.

³⁵ Maguire M OpCit. p169.

³⁶ Kinsey R (1984) Merseyside Crime Survey, Merseyside Metropolitan Council; Hamner and Saunders (1984) Well Founded Fear; Jones et al (1986) Islington Crime Survey; Jones et al (1987) Saving the Inner City; The first report of the Broadwater Farm Survey; Crawford et al (1990) Second Islington Crime Survey.

the population. They have shown for example, the extent to which crime is concentrated in specific areas, predominantly those with high levels of poverty.

Local surveys have also sought to ascertain information about victims' encounters with the police, to elicit public perceptions of police priorities, the quality of service delivery and issues of police accountability. They have considered reporting patterns to the police, asking questions about "perceptions and reactions to crime"³⁷. They have also begun to address the role of other agencies in responding to crime, for example housing authorities.

By going beyond the simple counting of crime they have facilitated queries as to the impact of crime on specific categories of victims and communities'. One area which has caught the imagination of criminologists in particular is that of the 'fear of crime'. One of the principal criticisms of the larger scale victim surveys is that, by ignoring the specific impact of crime on particular groups or localities, their generalised findings led commentators to question the legitimacy of fear of crime concerns. For example, fear of street violence expressed both by women and the elderly were shown to have been disproportionate to their likelihood of actual victimisation. This led to the inference that such fears were irrational³⁸.

More localised surveys however, by revealing the uneven distribution of crime, have enabled criminologists to investigate in greater depth the link between fear and risk assessment and also to look at other causal factors which underlie fear and anxiety about crime. As Zedner³⁹ points out, fear of crime may be seen as a reaction to "'local incivilities' such as poor street lighting, vandalism, boarded-up buildings, youths loitering on street corners, drunks, and other signals of a hostile environment". Here we begin to see linkages between fear of crime and general quality of life or environmental concerns.

The *Quality of Life – Drugs and Crime Survey*, which was conducted as part of this study has developed upon the *Community Policing Forum (CPF Panel Survey)* which

³⁷ Zedner OpCit p585

³⁸ IBID

³⁹ IBID

was conducted by the author as part of the evaluation of the CPF⁴⁰. The CPF panel survey was conducted on forty individual residents representing a total of 29 different streets or flat complexes throughout the North Inner City. The survey revealed a high level of local exposure to drug related crime in the area, and also looked at data related to perceptions of drug-related crime. Attitudes to state agencies and fear of crime data were also included.

However, the CPF panel survey was conducted among people who had participated in the process of establishing the Community Policing Forum⁴¹. Thus the sample was conducted with people who had already shown a willingness to work with the state agencies in combating the drug problem or who at least had shown a willingness to join local residents' committees. Also, most of those who participated in the CPF survey were of a similar age group and gender. The current survey adds another dimension to our general knowledge in this area in that it was conducted on a door-to-door basis. Therefore it was likely to obtain views and perceptions from a more diverse sample of residents. Also, they were not necessarily people who might have been locally active in their community and thus would possibly have a different perspective on community problems and needs. The sample includes both public authority residents (in semi-detached housing and flat complexes) and private residents.

Furthermore, the survey incorporated a more qualitative and semi-structured approach in that it encouraged respondents to expand upon their answers in a more general way. Respondents were asked to consider the impact of the drug problem on their families and the wider community, whether they had used drugs themselves⁴², and whether they had suffered any family drug-related bereavments. They were asked to consider various responses to the drug problem from state agencies and community groups including anti-drugs activists. They were asked about their willingness to become involved in community activity and their willingness to work with state agencies. Respondents were also asked for their views in relation to ongoing interventions such

⁴⁰ Connolly (2002) Final Report and Evaluation on the establishment of the North Dublin Inner City Community Policing Forum: Forthcoming.

⁴¹ IBID

as the policy of evicting people associated with drug dealing from local authority dwellings under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 and other contemporary approaches to anti-social behaviour and crime. Respondents were also asked their views as to whether certain drugs should be decriminalised as has happened in some other European countries.

Area Profile

Following consultation with the CPF the Supply/ Control Sub-committee identified a specific location upon which the research was to focus. Five streets and a flats complex were designated. The motivation behind this location was three fold; that it is within the North East Inner City, that it is in an area where illicit drug use/ dealing is prevalent and that it contains a mixture of public and private housing.

The area consists of both City Council housing and private dwellings. Many privately owned dwellings are occupied by private tenants. The City Council provides housing in most of the streets in the designated area. These dwellings are all houses with the exception of Matt Talbot Court, which is a flat complex. The population breakdown in the Council dwellings is approximately 500⁴³.

Survey Profile

A door to door survey was conducted throughout the designated area with 44 local residents between August and December 2001.

Type of Residency: 33 of the respondents were Dublin City Council tenants; 3 were in private rented dwelling and 9 were house owners.

Area Breakdown by Survey Respondent: Matt Talbot Court - 20; Rutland Place North – 1; Sean O’Casey Avenue - 11; Summer Street North - 6; Summerhill - 4; Thompson Cottages - 2; Healy Street -1.

Respondent by Sex: Female - 29; Male - 15.

Respondents by Age Category: Under Twenty Five – 6; Twenty Five to Thirty Five – 11; Thirty Five to Forty Five – 13; Forty Five to Fifty Five – 7; Over Fifty Five – 8.

⁴² The use of self-report studies attempts to acquire a picture of criminal offending from the perspective of the offender rather than from official statistics or victim studies. See Maguire in Oxford Handbook of Criminology OpCit.

⁴³ Above information supplied by Dublin City Council (Formerly Dublin Corporation).

Employment Status: Full Time Employment - 9; Part Time Employment - 17; Unemployed - 7; Full Time Parents - 6; Other (Including retired) - 6.

Survey Research Issues:

A number of research issues arise as a result of the survey. Firstly, the survey, when combined with the *CPF Survey* provides a useful indication of the problems in the North Inner City area. In research, a representative sample means that the sample has approximately the characteristics of the study population relevant to the research in question. Although this was a pilot survey it did provide a broad cross section of the local area population in terms of housing type, age, gender and employment status.

However, given the low numbers surveyed, it would be useful to follow it up with a more comprehensive survey such as have been carried out elsewhere⁴⁴. Such a survey could be broader in scale and also in terms of the range of information sought including other quality of life issues such as local health, education etc A survey of this kind would compliment the larger scale national surveys carried out by the Central Statistics Office but, by focusing in on a local area, would be a useful guide to policies implemented at a local level. Also, a specific component on drug-related crime might usefully be added to the National Victimization Survey.

Recommendation One - Local Crime Survey: ***The Task Force should consider commissioning a larger Quality of Life Survey, which could follow on from the Community Policing Forum Survey and the Quality of Life Survey. This survey might be based on the area covered by the North Inner City Drugs Task Force as a whole. Such a survey, while looking at drug-related crime issues, might also include broader quality of life questions such as family breakdown due to drug use, and health and education issues.***

Recommendation Two - National Victimization Survey & Drugs: ***The National Crime Council has recommended that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law***

⁴⁴ See Footnote 30.

reform commission a National Victimisation Survey in 2002. It is recommended here that this survey should include a special component on drug-related crime.

In preparing for such a localised survey, along with the general issues raised in the area in social research literature⁴⁵, a number of issues which arose during the current study need to be considered. Firstly, one of the advantages of face-to-face interviews is that it enables the researcher to overcome problems relating to literacy levels. Postal surveys for example, would be an inadequate means of obtaining the information sought in this survey. All of the surveys were completed by the researcher in the presence of the respondent.

A number of other issues arise due to the sensitive nature of the research topic. It needs to be acknowledged that there are many within the community who benefit either directly or indirectly from the drug trade and this might raise problems of safety for the researcher. For example, the author was advised not to knock on the door of a particular house as it belonged to a well-known drug dealer. As it happened, during the course of the research, this happened inadvertently through confusion on the part of the researcher. When the individual in question answered the door, it was probably fortunate that he was accompanied by a young child and his rebuff was not as aggressive as it might have been. It was felt important that respondents were made aware of the nature of the research and of its focus on the drugs issues, before they agreed to complete the survey. Also, the presence of the researcher in the area over a sustained period of time might have raised a number of suspicions locally, particularly among younger people congregating at 'The Steps', an area where there were severe problems regarding drug dealing and anti-social behaviour.

It was hoped that by conducting the interviews in the surrounding houses, it would become clear to local people that the research was being conducted independently. On a number of occasions, respondent's asked whether I had been at a particular house and a consistent reply given was that all houses were being approached and the same questions were being asked of all resident's. People appeared to accept the transparency of the research on that basis. On one occasion however, the author

requested that the local community Garda, who had also been the subject of an interview, operate discretion in the event that we met on the street in the area.

Another major difficulty which arose was identifying the correct time in which to conduct the survey and in which to find people at home. Meal preparation, work schedules, children's school collection all had an adverse effect. There was nobody home in approximately 60% of cases.

A number of people refused. Although all refusals, except for the one above, were polite, some people were reluctant to answer questions relating to crime or anti-social behaviour. Many people agreed to conduct the interview at a different time and, on many occasions, they were not in or refused to answer their door at the appointed time.

A number of the surveys were carried out by a female researcher and she found that many of the ground floor flats in Matt Talbot Court contained single men and, on occasion, particularly on dark winter evenings, this gave her cause for concern.

Once respondent's agreed to be interviewed they were extremely cooperative and forthcoming and the interviews were found to be extremely productive and the data rich. The presence of children or other family members in some cases, raised difficulties regarding certain questions. For example, there would be a reluctance to ask and, one would assume, correctly answer a question relating to one's own drug use in the presence of young children.

3 (c) Semi-Structured Interviews;

A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with officials from the state agencies working 'on the ground' in the research area and with other relevant individuals. These included;

⁴⁵ See May T., (2001) Social Research: Issues, methods and process Third edition; Maguire M (1997) OpCit; Watson D (2000) OpCit.

Two Garda members with extensive experience of working in the local area. Due to concerns expressed by the Gardaí regarding the nature of the questions asked, these interviews were confined to acquiring general perceptions of the Garda members about the area in question. The concerns related to a request by the author for statistical information regarding drug-related policing activity such as the number of drug-related arrests made during the research period. The Garda Síochána is reluctant to divulge this information for reasons discussed below.

A series of six semi-structured interviews were conducted at regular stages during the research period with the local Dublin City Council attendant for Matt Talbot Court flats⁴⁶. As with the interviews with the Gardaí, these interviews were semi-structured. The Council official was asked to monitor any drug-related paraphernalia such as discarded syringes or other forms of anti-social behaviour encountered and report this to the researcher in our regular meetings. These reports also contained the official's views with regards to maintenance issues which arose from time to time and his general perceptions of the area.

Two interviews were conducted with local residents who were prominent in local residents' organisations. These respondents were based in Healy Street and Summer Street North.

One interview was conducted with a local youth worker with many years of experience in the local area.

Five local businesses were visited to ascertain the views of the proprietors with regards to the impact of crime on their businesses.

Two members of the Probation and Welfare Service were also interviewed.

Interview Research Issues:

The semi-structured interviews proved a useful way of obtaining a broader picture of the area and the problem associated with drugs and anti-social behaviour. In

particular, the Council attendant in Matt Talbot Court has a unique perspective on the problems as he must often clean up after them. Also, in his every day interaction with resident's he can present a picture of ordinary life in the community. The interviews with the Garda members are of interest in so far as they reveal how different Gardaí respond to the area. Both of the Gardaí interviewed were perhaps quite unique in that they had both worked in the area for very many years and were thus well known and, it appears, well liked in the area. It had been originally intended that the Garda members would be interviewed at regular intervals throughout the research. However, it was felt that, given that the researcher was not permitted to obtain detailed statistical information from the Gardaí on their everyday policing activities, number of drug-related arrests etc, that repeated interviews would not be as valuable a source of data.

Late in the research period, a request was made for access to interview all of the Community Gardaí (approximately six in total) in the designated area, as this would broaden out the sense of perceptions among the Gardaí and different Gardaí could then be compared. As this was not what had been originally agreed and as it would require all the Gardaí concerned to be briefed by a more senior officer, this request was denied.

Initial informal conversations were conducted with a number of local business people. It was clear that many problems of anti-social behaviour were related to businesses in the area. For example, a motor vehicle garage with a yard full of rubber tyres was a source of particular concern for some residents during the lead up to Halloween as children would try to obtain the tyres for use on bonfires. Also, where business premises backed onto people's homes and where there was no private security, such premises were seen to operate as access routes to people's homes. Although some of the business people stated that the drug problem had little impact on their businesses, further research into this area would be necessary before any significant conclusions could be drawn.

⁴⁶ The terms Dublin Corporation, the corporation and Dublin City Council are used synonymously throughout this report.

The interview conducted with the Youth Worker was also extremely instructive. Given the amount of problems associated with young people in the area, it is essential that their perspective on the problems be obtained.

Also, the interviews conducted with those resident's who were involved in organising resident's committees were valuable. Such people perform a highly significant role in their areas and indeed many of the interventions by the state agencies are dependent on such people. They also have an extensive knowledge of what is happening in their area.

The interviews conducted with the members of the probation and Welfare Service revealed a great deal about the work done service locally, information that is not available in its annual report but which indicates an extensive and important criminal justice intervention in the local community.

3 (d) Existing Data Sources:

One of the central aims of the research was that it would complement existing measurements rather than duplicate them. One focus of the work therefore has been concerned with identifying those measurements and developing upon them. A great deal of data is available to, recorded and retained by state agencies. This data might be compiled for operational purposes by the agency concerned rather than for public use. The researcher, in discussion with representatives of the two principal state agencies, Dublin City Council and the Garda Síochána has sought to identify this data where it exists and utilise it in the research so as to enhance our overall understanding not only of the impact of the problems being considered but also of the interventions of the relevant state agencies. Contact was also made with the Probation and Welfare Service in order to obtain relevant information about interventions in the area by the Service.

c) (i) Dublin City Council:

In the initial stage of the research, an interview was conducted with the Dublin City Council representative on the Drugs Task Force and the official responsible for estate management issues. A request for information regarding area profile, local

community organisation, City Council activity, relevant City Council personnel and the current systems for monitoring interventions was requested and complied with.

Abandoned cars and graffiti removal are dealt with by a specific Council official. Discarded drug paraphernalia is dealt with by the caretaker in flat complexes and by waste management in other areas. Damage to public property is dealt with by the relevant Council department, e.g. damage to a playground would be dealt with by the parks department. Such incidents are passed onto the relevant section. Incidents related to anti social behaviour alleged on the part of local tenants is recorded in a more specific and controlled way as such information might ultimately form part of a legal action for eviction under anti-social legislation contained in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997.

Further interviews were conducted with the official responsible for overseeing the Lord Mayor's Litter/ Abandoned cars and Graffiti Hotline established in May 2001. This program includes a monitoring and recording process which can complement other research findings. A second interview was conducted with the Council official responsible for abandoned vehicles and for graffiti removal. Again, this work is recorded. The purpose of the above two interviews was to assess current systems for recording anti-social behaviour and to ascertain whether such data sources could enhance our knowledge of the impact of such behaviour on the Quality of Life of the local area.

c) (ii) An Garda Síochána:

An initial interview was conducted with the Garda representative on the NICDTF. This led to a letter to the Chief Superintendent of Store Street Garda station which led to a meeting with the Superintendent of Fitzgibbon Street Garda station. The purpose of this interview was to outline the research proposal and to make a formal request for specific access to a number of data sources. As the study was very local in nature, the request for information reflected the need to provide information which could be of assistance in terms of complementing the other research methods being employed. Also, it was necessary to obtain information as to the manner in which statistics are

complied in order to see if any improvements might be suggested for future research purposes.

As was stated above, the primary source of information available to the public about crime is contained in the Annual Report of An Garda Síochána. The most recent report, the Annual report for the year 2000, was published in February 2002⁴⁷. These statistics include information on drug offences.

The following tables look at such statistics contained in the Annual Report of the Garda Síochána over a four year period. The first four rows of Table (i) provide information for Dublin North Central only while Table (ii) provides statistical information for the country as a whole.

Offence Category	1997	1998	1999	2000
Heroin Related Offences where Proceedings Commenced	76	221	126	136
Cannabis Related offences where proceedings Commenced	105	104	138	84
Persons prosecuted for Possession (Section 3- Misuse of Drugs Act)	83	112	144	114
Persons prosecuted for Supply/Dealing (Section 15 Misuse of Drugs Act)	182	360	174	154
Total Drug Offences Where Proceedings Commenced Dublin Metropolitan Region	1839	2941	2719	2576
Total Drug offences Where Proceedings Commenced for Country as a whole	4156	5631	7137	8395

Table (i) Recorded Drug related Offences 1997 – 2000

Drug Type	1997	1998	1999	2000
Cannabis	66%	64%	62%	60%
Heroin	10%	13%	10%	8%

⁴⁷ In the introduction to this report the Garda Commissioner states that the reason for the delay was statistical problems which arose as a result of the introduction of the Garda Síochána's new computerised crime recording system known as PULSE.

Ecstasy	6%	7%	15%	24%
Cocaine	3%	2%	3%	3%

Table (ii) Type of Drug seized 1997 – 2000.

Table one suggests a dramatic change in 1998. In that year Dublin North Central recorded the highest number of Persons prosecuted for Supply/Dealing under Section 15 of the Misuse of Drugs Act for the country as a whole. Although the total drug offences where proceedings commenced for the country as a whole continue on an upward trend from 1998 to 2000, they decline steadily for the Dublin Metropolitan Area. In Table (ii) we can see the type of Drugs seized by Percentage. There appears to be a gradual although quite steady decline in cannabis seizures, with ecstasy seizures showing a steady increase.

Statistics such as those presented in Tables (i) and (ii) above provide us with some useful information by which we can observe trends over time.

A number of issues have been identified in relation to the Annual Report of the Garda Commissioner, the principal source of statistics on crime in Ireland⁴⁸. Firstly, it is widely accepted that not all crimes which occur are recorded, this is referred to as the ‘dark figure’ of crime. Secondly, the research shows that the process by which crime figures are constructed is very much affected by discretion on the part of the public in terms of whether they decide to report a crime and then on the part of the police in terms of whether the crime is actually recorded⁴⁹. Most police forces operate what are known as ‘Counting Rules’, the purpose of which is to ensure consistency in the exercise of discretion and in recording practices. As the National Crime Council points out, “In some jurisdictions, the principal ‘counting rules’ are described in the published criminal statistics...but this is not the case here (in Ireland)”⁵⁰.

In the Annual Report of the Garda Síochána for the year 2000 there are 8,395 recorded drug offences. In the report these are divided into headline and non-headline offences. The distinction here is sometimes referred to as the distinction between

⁴⁸ National Crime Council (2001) *Crime in Ireland* Chapter One

⁴⁹ For a fuller discussion see National Crime Council OpCit and Watson (2000) OpCit.

⁵⁰ National Crime Council OpCit Page 9.

indictable and non-indictable offences. The media, and public attention, tends to focus on the indictable offence, hence the term ‘headline’. Recorded headline offences include *Cultivation or Manufacture of Drugs (14 offences)*, *Importation of Drugs (17 Offences)*, *Obstruction Under Drugs Act (70 Offences)* and *Possession of Drugs for Sale or Supply – Section 15 Misuse of Drugs Act (1,706 Offences)*⁵¹. Non-headline offences include *Possession of Drugs – Section 3 Misuse of Drugs Act (6,485 Offences)*.

Drug offences are unusual relative to other recorded offences in that they reveal a 100% detection rate. That is, all offences recorded are also listed as detected. So, for example, in the year 2000 there were 15,964 offences of the *Unauthorised Taking of a Mechanically propelled vehicle* recorded. Of these, 919 were detected. In the same year there was a recorded 6,485 offences of *Possession of Drugs (Section 3 – Misuse of Drugs Act)* with a corresponding 6,485 detections. The general detection rate used by the Garda Síochána has come in for some scrutiny in recent times.

Interpol data for 1998 shows that 44% of indictable crime in Ireland was solved, compared with 29% in England and Wales. Following the launch of the recent Annual Report by the Garda Commissioner, a degree of controversy arose due to the high detection rate for crime recorded for County Waterford, which was reported at 68%. The highest detection rate for the Dublin Metropolitan Region was Dublin North Central at 50% which was significantly higher than all of the other Dublin areas⁵².

Four principal factors are considered by the Gardai in determining the detection rate. These criteria comply with the standard set by Interpol⁵³. A crime is considered detected if;

- a) The Gardai are satisfied that a person is guilty due to the weight of evidence or because a person has made a confession,
- b) The offender was caught in the act even if the offence is denied,
- c) If the Gardaí know the identity of the person although he might be in custody, deceased, have left the country etc.

⁵¹ An Garda Síochána (2000) Annual report of An Garda Síochána

⁵² Annual Report of An Garda Síochána (2000) Page 83.

⁵³ International Criminal police Organisation (1998) International Crime Statistics

- d) If a subsequent police investigation reveals that no crime had actually been committed.

With regards to drug offences therefore, the fact that an offender is caught in possession of drugs ensures for statistical purposes, that a crime has been detected, regardless of whether or not a conviction has been secured in the courts⁵⁴.

What the statistics as they appear in the Annual report of the Garda Síochána do not tell us and something which is very important in terms of quality of life, is how many drug related crimes have been reported to the Gardaí or how many drug related arrests occurred for the year in question. Also, figures such as those presented in the Annual Garda Report tell us little about how crime figures relate to policy changes on the ground. This study sought to illuminate matters in each of these areas.

In order to ascertain whether improvements could be made in relation to these issues and which might improve our ability to monitor the impact of the Drug problem in a more detailed way at a more local level, a series of questions were presented to the Gardaí by the author.

The type of data being sought included a description of the current system by which local incidents and crimes are recorded; the changes which have been introduced under the new Garda Síochána Information Technology System PULSE (Police Using Leading Systems Effectively); the number of drug related arrests which occurred during the period in which this research was conducted; the number and type of incidents which do not end up in the Annual Report but which are recorded elsewhere. Also, information was sought on the difficulties which arose for the Garda Síochána in providing such information.

The data was first sought in July 2001 and this request was forwarded to Garda Headquarters in Phoenix Park. Following further discussions with the Chief

⁵⁴ Anecdotal evidence and evidence from the Community Policing Forum meetings reveals a high degree of concern locally with regard to the way in which drug related cases are processed in the courts, conviction rates and sentencing patterns in particular.

Superintendent of Store Street Garda Station, a further list of questions was submitted in February 2002 and a response from the Gardaí was received in March 2002.

The following Questions and Answers give an indication as to the way in which such statistics are compiled, particularly in the area of drug-related crime, the facilities available under the new PULSE system, and how they are responded to;

1) Research Question: Could you offer me your general views on the distinctions between drug offences and what are referred to in local parlance as “drug related” offences?

Garda Síochána: “Drug offences are those incidents which involve directly seizures of drugs, whether under S.3 Misuse of Drugs Acts (simple possession) or S.15 (possession for sale or supply), are recorded on an on-going basis *at Station level* and are reported in the Commissioner’s Annual Report. All S.15 offences and S.3 offences proceeding on indictment are recorded on PULSE. Drug-related offences are those crimes committed by persons as a direct result of drug activity, eg robbery to feed drug habits, etc. PULSE contains a facility for the recording of an offence as drug-related.”

2) Research Question: What is the current system whereby crimes are recorded?

Garda Síochána: “All crimes are recorded on PULSE.”

3) Research Question: What is recorded and how?

Garda Síochána: “All crimes are recorded on PULSE. The details are directly inputted to PULSE by the reporting Garda.”

4) Research Question: How are reported incidents or crimes prioritised and acted upon?

Garda Síochána: “Through the Command & Control System, emergency calls receive an immediate response. Other calls receive attention as required. Investigative follow-through is determined by the nature of the offence and these are

recorded on PULSE. Serious matters are referred to named Gardaí or Detective Gardaí for attention. Traffic, Drugs, etc are referred to appropriate sections for on-going attention or investigation. In every case a response is required to be reported, charging, caution, etc.(sic)”

5) Research Question: What is not recorded?

Garda Síochána: “All relevant information is recorded on crimes as defined above.”

6) Research Question: What goes into the Garda Commissioner’s Report and what information does not?

Garda Síochána: “Generally, categories of crimes/incidents are reported upon in the Commissioner’s Report. This is normal practice as there is a need to balance the level of necessary detail with the requirements of clarity.”

7) Research Question: Even if statistics do not appear in the Commissioner’s report, are they still retained and available to the Superintendent or Chief Superintendent of a specific station or division? –

Garda Síochána: “All information entered on PULSE is available to all officers.”

8) Research Question: Can you describe the C9 Report ?

“The headings of the C.9 report include ‘Type of Crime or Incident/ Place/ Time/ Date/ PULSE ID No./ How the incident came to light/ Description of the Crime or Incident, include MO if relevant/ Name of Injured Party/ Names, etc. of persons arrested/ Name of Garda i/c case/ Name of Patrol Officer (Inspector on duty). The C.9 is used to bring to immediate attention matters considered worthy of such attention. It is forwarded to A/C (Assistant Commissioner), Chief Supt (Superintendent), Supt & Inspector or relevant units. This form contains a synopsis of information contained on the PULSE incident.’ (Information in brackets added by the author)

9) Research Question: Can crimes be located by place/date and location?

Garda Síochána: “A number of management reports are available to local officers which provide sufficient information to allow for deployment or redeployment of resources if necessary. In addition, specific search requests based on any inputted data can be dealt with at Garda HQ. As this requires specialist personnel requests are only made in serious cases, eg major investigations. Such searches cannot be made at local level by non-specialist personnel without appropriate access facilities. The Command & Control system has limited search facilities and is not generally used for statistical purposes.”

10) A request for a detailed breakdown of drug-related crimes and other incidents for the specific research period, was denied for the following reasons;

Garda Síochána: “You request information on a wide range of crimes/incidents within a small geographical area. I give hereunder a breakdown by category for the area that you are looking at as a whole. There are a number of reasons why this specific information cannot be provided in the format that you request.

These are:

1. As explained above...there is a difficulty in generating the required information easily at local level. The area is so small that there is a possibility that persons/addresses could be identified from the specific figures. This is contrary to our rules on disclosure of information.
2. The manual recording of crimes in the research area would place a large extra workload on Gardaí in Fitzgibbon Street which could not be justified.
3. Even if they were available there is a danger that interpretations drawn from figures from such a small area that would be unsound. For example, crimes/ incidents/ searches/ arrests which occur in Sheriff Street may have an impact on Summerhill. If only activities in the small area is measured then activity outside of that is discounted. The nature of anti-social activity is such that there is a fair degree of randomness to it. Thus, a dealer who affects Summerhill may be living on the Phoenix Park side of the NCR and would not show up anywhere. The number of **arrests** in a

particular area, especially one as small as the one you are examining will not reflect the activities of the area. In addition, arrests for offences such as robberies, drugs offences and other serious matters may be made some days or weeks later and in areas other than the one affected. I am concerned therefore that conclusions could be drawn from these bare figures, which would not be justified. The statistics for **searches** are compiled on a *Station* basis and not on an area basis. **House searches** are recorded. For the reason above I cannot give this information to you.”⁵⁵

Although information requested for the Six Month research period specifically was denied, information on certain crimes for the designated area was provided for the years 2000 and 2001.

Table – Incidents Recorded in Area Requested for the years 2000 & 2001

Assault/Obstruction/Resist Garda	4
Assault	11
Burglary	17
Drunkenness	3
Handling Stolen Property	12
Larceny (other)	7
Larceny from Vehicles	46
Larceny from the Person	47
Poss of Article with intent to commit crime	4
Public Mischief (Nuisance Calls, etc.)	3
Public Order (Serious Only)	19
Robbery	17
Unauthorised Taking (Stolen Cars, etc.)	55

c) (iii) Probation and Welfare Service:

Two interviews were conducted with probation and welfare officers. These interviews focused on general involvement of the Probation and Welfare Service in the North Inner City and also on matters related to their data sources. The more general work of

⁵⁵ Response from Chief Superintendent Al McHugh, An Garda Síochána, March 2002.

the Service will be considered in the conclusion. Here I wish to focus on the data source available to the Service.

The annual Probation and Welfare Service Report presents a quantitative account of the work undertaken by the service, “including in particular details of reports prepared for courts and supervision of individuals on community sanctions”⁵⁶. The Service is, at present, implementing a new computer system which, when completed should provide accurate up to date statistical information, improve the management of individual cases, facilitate networking between service personnel and generally improve internal operations⁵⁷.

Existing Data Sources – Research Issues:

The principal problems associated with the existing data sources of state agencies is the difficulties encountered in identifying if, how, why and where their data is recorded, the length of time it takes to access such data and the need to reconcile issues of confidentiality with the requirement for accurate information which can allow policy interventions to be evaluated at a point close to service delivery.

With regards to Dublin City Council, relatively basic information sought in June 2001 was not received until January 2002. Also, there was no central source of information. Information was sought through various individuals who were involved in specific aspects of work related to anti-social behaviour. Although there was no great reluctance to offer information sought, provided that issues of confidentiality were considered, the delay and the lack of centralisation of data sources did constitute research obstacles.

With regards to the Garda Síochána, it is clear from the answers provided by the Garda Chief Superintendent that there is a great deal of statistical information available to the Garda Síochána which is entered in to the PULSE system. This can also be categorised by type, i.e., if it is drug related and also by location. Drug related arrests are also recorded. Although the Annual Report of the Garda Síochána allows

⁵⁶ Probation and Welfare Service (1999) Annual Report

us to identify trends over time, they do not permit a more detailed analysis, which would enable us to identify the impact of interventions at a more local level.

With regards to the Probation and Welfare Service, although the introduction of a computerised system will undoubtedly enhance internal operational efficiency, the extent to which such innovations will improve public knowledge of the work of the Probation and Welfare Service is unclear.

It appears that state agencies, in developing their data recording systems, focus only on internal operational needs. In doing so, they reduce the potential for networking with and between other agencies. Also, this approach renders external evaluation of inter-agency and community-based approaches to problems more difficult.

It is important that, as new inter-agency approaches to crime develop, reflected in locally based policing and estate management initiatives, the means by which these interventions can be evaluated also needs to change accordingly. It needs to be recognised by state agencies that inter-agency/community initiatives create new operational realities, and information recording and external communication processes must develop accordingly.

One obvious step would be for state agencies to standardise 'counting rules' and areas or boundaries covered so that their statistics are consistent with each other. With regards to the last point, a recent development in England and Wales might be instructive.

In the most recent annual crime Statistics for England and Wales figures were included for the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)⁵⁸. These were created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. As partnerships between police forces and local authorities (together with police authorities, health authorities and probation committees) to tackle crime within local authority boundaries. In addition to

⁵⁷ Interview with Vivian Guerin, Senior Probation and Welfare Officer. April 2002.

⁵⁸ Home Office United Kingdom. Statistical bulletin 12/01 'Recorded crime'. I would like to thank Cynthia Tavares and Mittra Bikash for this information.

the CDRP data, the English and Welsh statistics also contain figures for Basic Command Units (BCUs) the units into which police forces divide their areas for operational purposes. Efforts have been made in that jurisdiction to make CDRP and BCU statistics as consistent with each other as possible.

Within the National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is to “oversee the establishment of a framework to monitor numbers of successful prosecutions, arrests and the nature of the sentences passed”⁵⁹. The North Inner City Drugs Task Force and the National Crime Council have also highlighted a number of concerns with regards to the provision of data by state agencies. The NICDTF, in its Strategic Plan (2001) highlighted the “need for information provision on all aspects of the drug use issue to the local Task Force; this could be especially improved in relation to those agencies constituent to the Task Force. The difficulties in assessing the extent and nature of the local drugs situation are compounded by the lack of structural and regular dissemination of data”⁶⁰.

Similarly, the National Crime Council has identified “the need of the key stakeholders within the Criminal justice system and the wider research community to get appropriate information on crime statistics”⁶¹.

The concerns expressed above are borne out by this study. Improvements in this area should identify the existing needs for information; standardise recording and dissemination practices; assess the potential and capabilities of existing Information Technology Systems such as Pulse; reconcile the need for information with the issues of confidentiality and disclosure which arise and ensure that increased inter-agency approaches and interventions develop hand in hand with complementary data recording and dissemination practices. The following steps are therefore recommended;

⁵⁹ OpCit Page 112. It is unclear from the National Drugs Strategy report what type of framework is envisaged. Also, following discussions with the representative of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the Drugs Task Force, it appears that this matter has not progressed very far.

⁶⁰ NICDTF (2001) OpCit Page 3.

⁶¹ National Crime Council (2001) Crime In Ireland Page vii.

Recommendation Three - Research Needs: *The Task Force should identify the data needs of the Stakeholders, the Research community and the local community.*

Recommendation Four - Comparing Data: *State agencies should seek to ensure that their recording practices and the 'counting rules' used in the compilation of their statistics are consistent with each other. Also, the geographical boundaries covered by their statistics should overlap as much as possible. This would facilitate enhanced networking between agencies, comparisons between data and also render policy interventions more externally accountable. (Reference Page 44)*

Recommendation Five - Monitoring Local Initiatives: *Data recording and dissemination practices should be developed within state agencies so that they facilitate the evaluation and monitoring of inter-agency and community-based approaches and interventions as close to service delivery as possible. The Potential offered by new Information Technology systems such as PULSE should be explored in light of this recommendation.*

Two areas in which improvements could be made with regard to monitoring the policing of the drugs problem, and which would complement the existing statistics, relate to the number of reports of drug-related crime and the extent of drug-related arrests made by the Gardaí. It is unclear from the answers provided by the Gardaí to the questions posed by the researcher, whether all reports by the community regarding drug offences are recorded. The Gardaí have also raised concerns above with regards to providing detailed information regarding arrests in such a small area, and issues of confidentiality which might arise. However, a larger area could be identified such as that covered by the Drugs Task Force as a whole and a pilot project could be established to monitor the number of reports made to the Gardaí regarding alleged drug offences and also the number of drug-related arrests. This pilot study should be broadened to encompass the other significant stages of the criminal justice process, prosecution and sentencing.

The National Drugs Strategy identifies the need to establish such a framework. However, it is unclear what type of framework is envisaged in the strategy. Also, it is apparent that this particular action has not progressed a great deal. It is therefore

suggested that a more practical step would be to proceed with a more localised pilot study.

Recommendation Six - Counting Drug-Related Crime: *The National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 identifies the need for the Department of Justice, Equality and Law reform to ‘oversee the establishment of a framework to monitor numbers of successful prosecutions, arrests and the nature of the sentences passed’. This research supports that objective. However, it is unclear from the report what type of framework is envisaged. Also, following discussions with the representative of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the Drugs Task Force, it appears that this action has not progressed very far. It is recommended therefore that the authors of the National Drugs Strategy provide further clarification as to the framework envisaged and that it be established on a pilot basis in a designated location. Such a pilot study should also seek to ascertain the number of reports of drug-related crime made to the Gardaí in a given period for the specified location.*

Recommendation Seven - Confidentiality: *Issues of confidentiality will need to be considered in relation to the establishment of all monitoring systems. Confidentiality requirements need to be reconciled with the requirement for reliable and up to date information.*

3 (e) Community Policing Forum Data;

As part of the process of establishing the Community Policing Forum, minutes of local community meetings and CPF meetings are taken and filed⁶². Since the CPF process was initiated there has been 119 Local Community Meetings and five larger Community Policing Forum meetings held under the auspices of the CPF. Another source of information established by the author in his role as Advisor/Evaluator to the CPF were Incident Reports. These reports monitored progress in relation to specific drug related incidents addressed by the CPF. These sources of data provide a useful insight into local concerns about drug problems and related anti-social behaviour and of the way in which interventions are negotiated at a local level and they have been extremely useful in this research.

It is suggested that these sources of information should be maintained and standardised. Also, it would be useful that other similar initiatives should, as part of their establishment, consider ways in which their ongoing progress can be monitored and recorded. Monitoring systems should be built into all projects so as to aid in the process of evaluation. Issues of confidentiality should also be considered in respect of such community based initiatives.

Recommendation Eight - Monitoring the Community Policing Forum: *The data compiled as part of the Community Policing Forum process offers a useful source of information in terms of the background to and progress made in relation to local incidents. It is recommended that these systems of monitoring be standardised and maintained as part of the CPF. This finding supports the commitment made in the National drugs strategy 2001-2008 to establish project-monitoring guidelines, something being undertaken by the NICDTF.*

3 (f) Unobtrusive Measures;

Unobtrusive research methods are defined as those, which are collected by a method, which in no way affects the phenomenon under study. In this study such data includes drug paraphernalia such as that to be monitored by the City Council Attendant at Matt Talbot Court.

Research Issues:

The Council Attendant did identify one syringe and a number of indicators of cannabis smoking during the research period. Very little drug paraphernalia of this sort was uncovered however. The Attendant believed that the drug problem was not as significant in the flats as a number of years previously. Also, he noticed that on some very cold winter nights, cannabis smoking on the steps in the flats appeared to increase. The Attendant reported that many of the local female residents tended to wash down the steps to remove such paraphernalia and this in itself was a positive indicator of Quality of Life, that local residents were maintaining the flats themselves.

⁶² Connolly J (2002) The North Dublin Inner City Community Policing Forum

It was reported to the author by another resident, of Healy Street, that he regularly cleaned away drug paraphernalia at Lourdes Church. Research of this sort is useful although, to ensure reliability, it would need to be conducted by the researcher.

SECTION FOUR – IMPACT OF ORDINARY CRIME⁶³

4(a) Local Crime Priorities;

Q; We would like to know what you regard as the most important policing and estate management issues in your immediate area at this time. Please List the Crimes/ Anti-Social Behaviour (hereafter ASB) in order of importance.

Crime/ASB	Ranking	%⁶⁴	No. of Cases⁶⁵	Community Policing Forum (CPF) Survey
Heroin Selling	1	64	30	1
Cannabis Selling	2	40	30	2
Young People (YP) Gathering⁶⁶	3	32	31	6
Joy Riding	4	17	30	3
Mugging	5	15	26	5
Noise at Night	6	10	30	7
Graffiti	7	4.5	22	4
Burglary	8	5.5	18	8

Table 1. Local Crime Priorities

4(b) Personal Victimization;

Q; Have you been a victim of any of the following crimes in the past 12 months?

⁶³ A clear distinction does not exist between ordinary crime and drug related crime. However, for the purposes of the survey and in keeping with the drugs focus of the research, a distinction is made.

⁶⁴ Denotes percentage of the total sample who responded to the question.

⁶⁵ Denotes number of respondents to the question.

Crime	Victim	%	No.	CPF
Burglary	2	4.5	44	4(10%)
Mugging	1	2	44	0
Assault	3	7	44	1(2.5)

Table 2. Personal Crime Victimization

Note: Drug offences clearly remain the top priorities for most residents. The presence of young people gathering is a higher priority in the current survey than the CPF. This may be explained by the large concerns expressed in the survey about a specific location close to all respondents; ‘The Steps’⁶⁷. The CPF respondents were more dispersed throughout the community and thus such specific sites of disorder might not have as great a daily impact on them. The current survey reveals a higher number of assaults and muggings than the CPF survey. The high priority afforded to mugging might also be explained with reference to respondent’s proximity to the steps where many of them claimed to have witnessed or heard of muggings taking place (See Below) Although very few respondents ever recalled a house burglary taking place in their area the incidence of burglary remains high relative to the National Crime Victimization survey conducted by the Central Statistics Office. The CSO survey recorded a rate of 1 in every 30 households, the CPF I in every 10 and the current survey approximately 1 in every 22⁶⁸.

4(c) Witnesses to Crime;

Q Have you witnessed any of the following crimes or forms of ASB?

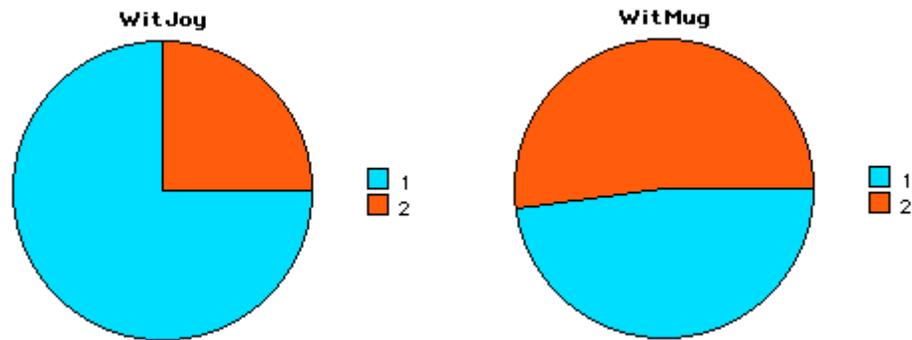
Witness	Number	%	Cases
Mugging	21	48	44
Joy Riding	33	75	44
Public Nuisance	28	68	41

Table 3. Witnessing Crime

⁶⁶ Denotes Young People gathering in Groups

⁶⁷ References to ‘the steps’ throughout relate to a particular site which has attracted a great deal of anti-social behaviour throughout the years. Given the extent of the problems associated with ‘the steps’ they were removed as this research was being completed. This issue will be covered in more detail in Section 9.

⁶⁸ See discussion in Connolly (2001 Unpublished) The Community Policing Forum Panel Survey



Py 1- Number Who Witnessed Joy Riding **Py 2 –** Number Who Witnessed Mugging
Key: Where 1 (Blue) = Yes: 2 (Red) = No.

Note: Certainly one of the most striking features of the study is the numbers who reported having witnessed a mugging or who have witnessed joy riding. 48% of the total number of respondents had witnessed somebody being mugged while 75% had witnessed joy riding. The latter is even more striking given that joy riding is generally perceived as occurring late at night or early in the morning.

4(d) Numbers Affected or Disturbed by Crime/ASB;

Q Have you been affected or disturbed by any of the following?

Crime/ASB	Number	%	Cases	CPF
Joy Riding	25	80	31	28(70%)
Mugging	13	48	27	
Public Nuisance	18	78	23	
Noise	23	58	39	31(77)
YP Gathering	24	60	40	34

Table 4. Number Affected/ Disturbed by Crime

Note: 80% of those who responded said they were affected or disturbed by joy riding, 78% by public nuisance and 60% by young people gathering in groups. 58% were affected or disturbed by noise late at night time. In general, we can see that there is a significant issue for residents regarding the general environmental conditions in which they live and that this has a significant effect on their overall quality of life. The following commentary will give the reader some indication as to the particular circumstances behind the above statistics.

4 (e) Local Commentary on Crime/ Anti-Social Behaviour⁶⁹

Joy Riding: “I hear joy riding every second night” “Joy riding is constant” “They burn the cars and run up to Matt Talbot” “Joy riding is down because of the bollards” “Around the back lane in one month three cars were driven up and down” “Joy riding is worse in summertime” “My friends daughter was killed by joy riders” “Cars are brought to summer arch and burnt.” “You just have to put up with the noise late at night. I listen at two to three a.m. and the Gardaí follow and crash into a bollard” “Sometimes the joy riding is drug related.” “With joy riding you hear it more than see it. It wakes you up” “You hear it and see the damage in the aftermath - Joy riding”.

Mugging: “A policeman coming from Croagh Park was attacked.”⁷⁰ “When the police are afraid of them that is how bad it gets” “A Garda caught someone stealing a mobile. He was plainclothes but he told them he was a Garda. They are high on gear they have no fear” “A young policeman got beaten up”; “From the age of ten they are robbing phones” “I saw the mugging in Summerhill” “I was mugged on the stairs. I have a dog and it makes me feel safe” “I was mugged three years ago and assaulted in Summerhill three years ago” “Foreign people are mugged” “I witnessed a bad assault” “I have seen them knocking people off bikes and I believe coloured people get a hiding” “Its foreign people going by who are attacked” “People should be able to walk around with out being mugged or have their phone robbed” “The mugging was very disturbing” “The muggings... they are plain animals”; “The mugging is sickening. Its probably about money for drugs” “The young people wait for a mugging a snatch or drugs” “A lot of foreigners get robbed” “I saw a mugging at the steps. A girl had her phone taken”.

Public Nuisance: “There was a lamp post pulled down at the steps yesterday” “The kids can be a nuisance when they are out of their heads taking ‘e’ and smoking” “Vandalism and graffiti are big problems but I cannot say anything” “I have a problem with the kids burning tyres from the garage behind for bonfires” “Young people are not a nuisance all the time” “When the children are asleep there is noise from motorbikes” “It bothers me when they pull the Avenue apart” “there is more noise in the summer” “Not all the nuisance is drug related...they drink cans all night some times” “The poles at the steps were pulled up” “You just have to put up with the noise late at night” “They bang on the gate” “The kids are wrecking the place with graffiti” “I repaint it but they do it again and their mothers know they have pens”.

Young People Gathering in groups: “Gangs hang around at night up to all sorts” “Problem is on the steps and Sean O’Casey and kids gathering on the steps” “Summer arch attracts young people” “Kids are bored” “The gangs are getting bigger and bigger...some of them just do not care” “The young people gathering are between twelve and fourteen” “There is a continuous gathering of young people. They are always there in the lane” “There is nothing for the kids to do...they hang around” “Most of the kids in the gangs here do not belong to the area” “Young people sit outside an old woman's house with radio playing...outside number ten.” “Youth are bored” “Its kids getting their kicks” “The younger kids rob for clothes”.

⁶⁹ Each quotation represents an individual resident.

⁷⁰ During the course of the research two Gardaí were seriously assaulted at the steps on Summerhill Avenue.

Note: A number of points are noteworthy from the above. Regarding joy riding, a distinction is made between summer and winter time. The section of Dublin City Council responsible for abandoned vehicles has recorded approximately 9 abandoned or burnt out cars in the area or on the streets immediately adjacent to the area between 2nd July 2001 and 31st December 2001⁷¹. The City Council official who monitors the Lord Mayors litter and graffiti programme recorded 12 incidents of anti-social behaviour including general anti-social behaviour in the area around and adjacent to the location of this research⁷².

There was significant concern expressed regarding the assault on two Garda members during the course of the research. Although it appears that those assaulted were off duty and plainclothes, anecdotal evidence suggests that their identities as members of the Garda Síochána did become known to their attackers. Also, interviews with Garda members indicate that certain uniformed Gardaí, particularly those who are new to the area, have been harassed on occasion. Although further research needs to be conducted in this area, anecdotal evidence suggest that an aggressive or ‘macho attitude’ on the part of some Gardai in their relations with local youth might contribute to this.

Respondents have also commented on the youthfulness of those causing local disturbances. Many respondents admitted to having means of protection in their own homes, something that relates to fear of crime to be discussed below.

There also appears to be a high incidence of attacks on ‘foreigners’, presumably locally resident asylum seekers or refugees. The tearing down of lamp posts and the crashing of cars obviously reflects residents general environmental concerns. There is also an acknowledgement among many respondents that, despite the serious problems being caused locally by some young people, the young of the area have little to do. A final comment relates to a tendency for some residents to apportion blame for crime and anti-social behaviour to people from outside the area.

⁷¹ I would like to thank Paul Rainsford of Dublin City Council for supplying this information.

4(f) Local Responses to Witnessing Crime;

Q When you witnessed the above, what was your response?

Respondent Commentary on Witnessing Crime: “I used to go out to them but my husband got ten stitches when he asked them to watch out. He got hit in the face with a helmet. Now I mind my business” “ I mind my own business” “I tell them to stop” “You keep your hall door closed” “With mugging I have sympathy (with the victim) but it would always be in my best interest not to involved” “ I would be afraid to say anything to the kids as I have my own kids” “You get used to it after a few years” “Sometimes I call the cops” “You are better off walking by for you would be battered” “You would love to run after them but you would be tormented” “There is not a lot you can do” “A lot of people mind their own business. Not me. I am not afraid. I let a roar about the mugging” “There was nothing I could do about the mugging at the time” “We put a jacket under his head and rang for an ambulance” “We mind our own business” “Two foreigners ran to me but I could not help them for fear of the local response” “I couldn't help the person who was mugged. I felt sorry for them” “You would be called a rat if you informed. I told them, but I would be battered...I phoned the police and stayed with her (victim of a mugging)”.

Note: While the seriousness of the problems being confronted with regard to crime and anti-social behaviour are clear, it is also evident that respondents, having witnessed such incidents, experience a sense of powerlessness rooted partially in exasperation and partially in fear.

While there is clearly a great deal of reluctance among respondents to ‘become involved’ due to fears of retribution it is also apparent that there remains a prevailing sense of concern for the victims and for the area in general.

⁷² I would like to thank Geraldine O’Toole Toner for supplying this information. This information was passed onto her by local resident’s who know her from the area.

SECTION FIVE – LOCAL DRUG SELLING

5(a) Local Exposure to Drug Selling;

Q Have you or any member of your family been offered drugs in the last 12 months?

Q Have you witnessed drug selling in this area in the past year?

Category	Number	%	Cases	CPF
Offered Drugs	16	36	44	6 (15%)
Witnessed D/S	23	53	43	32 (80%)

Table 5. Number Offered/ Who Witnessed drug selling



Pye - 3 Number Offered Drugs

Key: Blue = Yes Red = No.

Q What was the type of drug being sold?

Type of Drug	Number	%	Cases	CPF
Heroin	15	83	18	15 (37%)
Cannabis	16	84	19	9 (24%)

Table 6. Type of Drug

Note: Tables 5 and 6 look at respondent's personal experience of having been offered drugs or having witnessed drug selling. 16 respondents or 36% of the total sample had been offered drugs in the past year while 53% had witnessed drugs being sold in the past year. When asked to identify the type of drugs being sold, the sample who answered was significantly smaller although the percentages of respondents who were able to identify the type of drug being sold was very significant, with 83% and 84% identifying heroin and cannabis respectively. It is possible that local knowledge of those who are dealing might partially explain respondents' ability to identify the type of drug being dealt. One respondent who was herself a recovering drug user, could identify the type of drug by the dealer and she insisted that those dealing heroin did not generally deal cannabis. The high numbers who had witnessed or being offered drugs can also be explained by the proximity of the dealing sites, which is looked at next.

5 (b) Location of Drug Dealing Sites;

Where did you witness the drug selling?

Respondent Commentary Regarding Drug dealing Sites: "All around" "Near the Home statue" "All over the Avenue. Front, top and middle" "Even people who do not live here. Selling hash and heroin" "Buckingham Street, Lourdes House, 'The Steps'" "North Circular Road, The Steps and Summerhill" "On the top balcony" "Outside my door" "Every day and night at 'The Steps'" "Outside my window" "Outside the door, 'The Steps', the Avenue, everywhere" " Sean O'Casey Avenue" "Summerhill" "End of the cottages. They are all on phones. You can see them waiting. By the time the police arrive they are gone" "Wherever you walk. Everywhere" "It's not really heroin on the steps, it's mostly hash. Occasionally heroin" "You can get whatever you want from a guy in the big house on Summerhill. On the way to the clinic this morning I was offered drugs three times. On Buckingham Street, near the methadone bus and at the bus facing the city clinic"

Note: Of the 29 respondents who offered a site location for drug dealing; 6 mentioned ‘The Steps’ where Sean O’Casey Avenue meets Summerhill⁷³. 3 mentioned Summerhill, 5 stated that they witnessed dealing outside their door every day. 2 respondents mentioned Buckingham Street where there had been significant street level dealing a few years ago, including at the ‘Home’ monument established as a memorial to those who have lost their lives locally due to drug related deaths. Lourdes House has also been commented on at a number of stages of the research. Although one resident of Matt Talbot Court witnessed dealing ‘on the top balcony’ of the flats, according to the caretaker of the flats there does not appear to be a great amount of dealing taking place in the flats. At different occasions during the research stage, cannabis smoking increased in the flats.

This indicates the mobility of drug use throughout a small area and also the way in which locations within a hundred yards of each other can experience significant differences in terms of exposure to drug use and drug dealing. A final important point is the final comment from a recovering drug user, who on her way to obtain her methadone from the local clinic had been offered drugs three times. The difficulties encountered by drug users attempting to come off drugs are obviously exacerbated in such circumstances.

⁷³ These steps were blocked off during the course of this research.

SECTION SIX – PERSONAL & FAMILY IMPACT OF DRUGS

6(a) Personal and Family Drug Use;

The following questions were asked in order to ascertain the extent to which the drug problem had impacted on respondents and their families or relatives. The first of these questions employs a crime self report component.

Have You Used drugs?

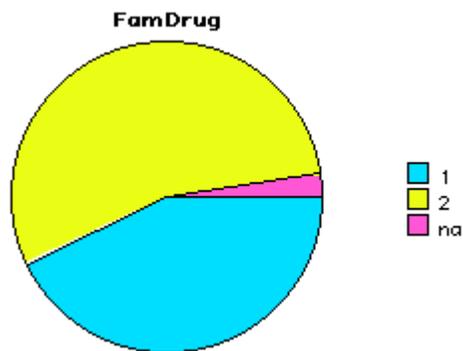
Have any members of your family used drugs?

Have any relatives of yours used drugs?

If so, was such use short term or long term?

Drug Use	Number (%)	Short Term	Long term (%)	Sample
Personal	9(22)	4	4 (19)	41
Family	18(43)	3	13(56)	42
Relative	21(50)	1	10(50)	42

Table 7. Personal Drug Use



Pye 4 – Respondents whose family members used drugs.

Key: 1 (Blue)= Number of respondents whose family members had used drugs.

2 (Green)= Number of respondents whose family members had not used drugs.

3 (Pink)= No Answer.

Note: While 9 respondents or 22% of the sample who answered, had used drugs themselves with 4 of those users long term, over half of the sample had a family member or relative who had used drugs. Over 50% of the latter were long-term users. Given the increased awareness of the difficulties encountered by families of drug users, this is a significant finding.

6 (b) Family Bereavement Through Drug Use;

Q Have you suffered any drug related bereavements in your family?



Pye 5 – Family Bereavement through drug use.

Key: 1(Blue) = Have suffered family drug bereavement.

2(Red) = Have not suffered family drug bereavement.

Note: Pie chart 5 represents total reported deaths by drug use as 7 or 17% of the total number who answered which was 41. It has proven extremely difficult however to quantify those whose deaths can be attributed to drugs due to official recording systems. For example deaths, which might have resulted from AIDs, where HIV was contracted through drug use, might be recorded officially as death through some other illness. Where a drug dealer is murdered by other drug dealers, such deaths might also not be recorded as drug related. The above statistic is significant therefore in that it sees the death from the perspective of the next of kin. The Family Support network is currently seeking to develop an instrument by which it can more accurately record the numbers of local people who have died as a result of drugs⁷⁴.

Respondents were asked to comment in their own words on the impact of the drug problem on them and their family.

Q How in general would you say the drugs problem has impacted on you and your family?

Respondent's Commentary regarding family/ personal impact of drugs: "A big effect. I have small children. I have a son on drugs. I am trying to get him to a clinic. He is out of prison. The judge said he had to go to a clinic but there are no spaces" "The younger ones look at the bigger ones. They are going to do it" "I got two sons moved out. That was good" "My cousin died of aids via drug use" "Has not affected me much. I have no kids. I have had friends who have died from years back. I have been at a few funerals" "I am on a methadone program and someone sells outside my clinic. I do not feel safe coming off methadone with all the dealers about. I will slip" "I am terrified if my children are out late or if they go to parties" "I am worried about the kids being offered drugs at school. My niece started using about age twenty-three. She was using for two years before she was found" "I have a friend who stayed here. He was in Rutland Street but he got into drugs big time" "I have an addict. My son has created chaos" "I was a user. It affected me and my family badly" "I would not normally let my kids out to play. They would think the drugs are normal" "I am nervous of my child seeing it. She gets the message that this is a way of life" "My cousins family. Three died. It was very hard on one family burying the children. It's affected my extended family...nephews and nieces" "My eldest son was on drugs. He got out of the environment and got off them"

"My son had a drug problem...he is fifteen years clean and lives outside the area. The whole family was affected. It was four years before we discovered... he went on a low ebb. It took him five years to get sorted out" "I lost my first cousin. He got aids

⁷⁴ The author would like to thank Philip Keegan of the Citywide Family Support Network for his assistance.

through it” “My younger brother. He was in Oberstown house. He smokes hash. He was grand and when he hit fourteen he went out of control. Smoking hash all day” “None of mine take it...They are mixed up in the anti-drugs movement” “Since he was young he was in reform schools. What chance had he?” “I had two children on heroin. My daughter de-toxed. My son was done for robbery. I had to put my son out” “Sister and brother smoke hash. My sister maybe more heavily. My cousins and uncle” “The drug problem has impacted on my family a lot. We were both formerly drug users. My partner is out on the street more and this makes it more difficult for him to stay clean” “We have found syringes thrown into the back garden” “I am sure half my family has been offered drugs. My older brother is an addict. My cousin died”.

Note: 30 of the 44 sample respondents responded to the above question. The above is a summary of their answers. For many of the respondents a dominant concern is the impression street level drug dealing and use has upon younger children. The fear that for children drug use and drug dealing will be seen as a way of life. The presence of bereavement, the difficulties in attempting to manage families where one or more members is a drug user and the difficulties for those who are attempting to come off drugs when they see it around them are all significant impressions.

SECTION SEVEN – COMMUNITY IMPACT OF DRUGS⁷⁵

7 (a) Perception of Community Impact of Drug Problem;

In this section respondents are invited to offer their views on the impact of the drug problem in such terms. In order to ascertain the depth of respondent’s experience of the community they were first asked to state how long they had been resident in the area.

Q How Long have you lived in this Community?

Of the 42 respondents who answered this question, the range of answers was from 4 months to 63 years. The average residency in the local community was 11.5 years. Many respondents had also moved to their current dwelling from a nearby street.

Q How in general would you say the drugs problem has impacted on your community?

All but one of the total sample response answered this question. Their perceptions of the impact of the drug problem on the community have been broken down as follows;

⁷⁵ The term ‘Community’ should not be seen as an uncontested term, particularly regarding the way it has been employed in often contradictory ways within criminal justice policy. A proper discussion of this matter is beyond the scope of this study but see Crawford (1999) The Local Governance of Crime: Appeals to Community and Partnerships Oxford.

Bereavement and Family Disintegration: “If they are not locked up they are in a coffin. Twenty or thirty of my mates. Fifty per cent are dead or strung out” “An awful lot of deaths of young people. You look at them and say ‘oh God it does that to them’” “In ten years thirty children in this area. In one year every third night there was a coffin in the church. One hundred and thirty seven people in Sean Mc Dermot street area died of drugs overdoses and aids” “I know five or six who have died and if I go back further a lot more” “My neighbour died” “Some women I know have never been the same since their children died” “It affects the whole family. I cannot leave my bedroom open. Will he be on the pillow dead in the morning? You learn to live with it”.

Community Disintegration: “A lot of good people moved out” “in eighties until three years ago it tore the community to pieces” “It’s badly affected the community” “Neighbours get vicious at each other” “ On Summerhill it has decimated the community” “People will not stand together. They are afraid. All you can do is pray” “There is no community. I do not think so anyway” “There is no prospects for the community” “People are more afraid to come out at night. They are nervous. The community spirit is gone”

Effect on Young: “All teenagers are affected since drug users hang around outside schools on Gardiner Street” “A lot of dead parents. . .a lot of harm kids do is related to absence of family and parental guidance” “You look at kids and they are stoned. They are like the dead. Its bad for the young” “They see kids growing up with it” “You see kids out of their heads. They do not listen to their parents but there is nothing for them. We need a kids club” “There’s no ambition for the kids, it’s now a normal way of living. It used to be shameful but now there is no shame. Whatever the corporation did they spawned these little bastards” “You get upset at young people dying”.

Environmental Impact: “The area has gone to hell” “Elderly people are terrified. That I know” “ If you could get rid of dealers it might be a nice area. The new flats are gorgeous but they will not remain that way” “ If you apply for a job it might affect you that the area has been marginalised. When people are trying to get back on track they are isolated” “It has devastated the area. No matter what money you put in” “It is very run down” “It’s more open. Its done out on the street” “It’s wrecked the place” “No one walks up and down Summerhill on their own and at ‘The Steps’ at night“.

Note: One of the most significant manifestations of the impact of the drugs crisis in the North Inner City has been the number of people who have died as a result of drug use. The public display of community grief in the form of the annual Christmas tree in Buckingham Street symbolises such community loss. Also, a regular church service is conducted in commemoration of those who have died. The impact on the quality of life of an area of such massive and sustained loss of life over many years is inestimable. One respondent refers to drugs as having contributed to the marginalisation of the community within wider society thus leading to stigmatisation of the community as a whole. Some respondents refer to the absence of unity within

the community, the absence of proper amenities, the fear among many including the elderly and a sense of haplessness among the young.

7(b) Perception of Most Harmful drugs;

Q Which drugs have been most harmful? (Heroin, Alcohol, Tobacco, Cannabis)

Of the total sample number of 44, 39 respondents answered this question. All of those regarded heroin as being the most harmful to the community.

**SECTION EIGHT - PERCEPTION OF CHANGING LEVEL OF
CRIME/ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR & FEAR OF CRIME
ANALYSIS**

8(a) Perceptions of Changing Levels of Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour;

In this section Likert scales were considered as a useful means of permitting perceptions of small but significant changes to be considered over time⁷⁶. The use of such scales, if asked in repeat surveys, can give an indication of the perceived impact of interventions.

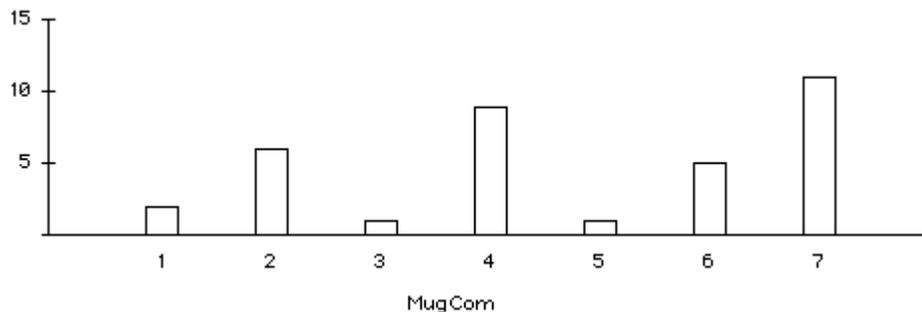
Q We would like to know your views about whether certain crimes or forms of anti-social behaviour are becoming more or less common in your community. Please compare the situation at present with the levels of crime that you recall from one year ago in your immediate area.

⁷⁶ Hoinville G and Jowell R () Survey Research Practice

The Scale is from A to G, Where A = Much Less Common D = About the Same G = Much More Common. Respondents are encouraged to identify a letter along the scale depending on their general perception.

Crime/ASB	Much Less Common			About the Same			Much More Common	Sample
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Burglary	2	8		24	1	1	1	37
Mugging	2	6	1	9	1	5	11	35
Heroin Use	1	5	1	14	2	6	9	38
Cannabis Use		3	1	17	2	7	7	37
Heroin Selling	1	4	3	15	1	4	8	36
Assault	1	6	1	10	1	4	10	33
Joy Riding	3	10	2	8	5	5	6	39
Vandalism	1	6		12	2	9	9	39

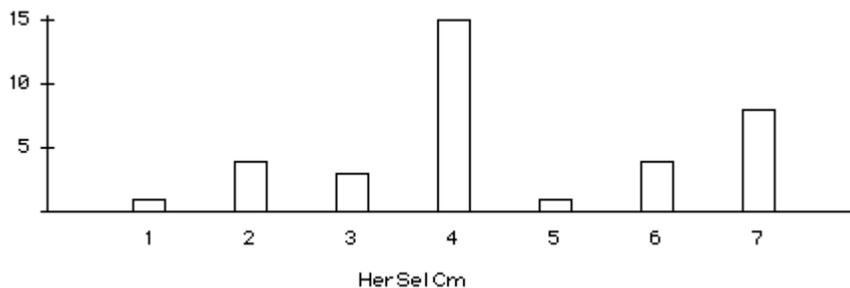
Table 8. Changing Levels of Crime/ Anti-Social Behaviour



Graph 1: Perception of Changing Levels of Mugging.

Note: Scales such as the above can indicate to us whether certain crimes or other forms of behaviour are becoming more or less common over a specified period of time. They can also therefore assist us in assessing whether interventions are working or not. In Table 8 we can see for example that 26 respondents from a sample total of 35 believe that mugging is either the same or a lot more common than the year previously with 11 respondents or just over 30% believing it is much more of a problem now than it was one year previously. See illustration in Graph 1. The high reporting of mugging at ‘The Steps’ on Summerhill might account for this. If such a survey was repeated a year from now, ‘The Steps’ having been removed, it would be interesting to compare statistics.

If we consider the figure for burglary 34 of the respondents believe that it is the same or much less common than last year. This reflects the low rate of burglaries recorded.



Graph 2: Perception of Changing Levels of Heroin Selling.

Note: Graph 2 above reflects the perception among most respondents that heroin selling is the same or more common than this time last year. Most respondents perceive the drug problem in terms of drug use and drug selling as the same or worse than 12 months previously.

8 (b) Fear Of Crime and Quality of Life;

In order to obtain data relating to respondents fears of victimisation by crime, they were asked the following questions.

Q How Likely is it do you think that you will be a victim of any crime in the next six months?

The possible answers offered ranged from Very Likely to Not at all Likely

	Very Likely	Quite Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Very Likely	Not At all Likely	Sample
Fear of Victimisation	3 (7%)	3(7%)	2(5%)	22(54%)	11(27%)	41
CPF	8(21%)	5(13%)	9(24%)	9(24%)	7(18%)	38

Table 9. Fear of Crime Victimisation

Q How safe would you feel walking alone in your area after dark?

Q How safe would you feel in your home at night?

Fear	Very Safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Sample
Walking alone	9 (20%)	4(%)	14(32%)	15(34%)	42
CPF	4 (10%)	11(%)	15(37%)	4(10%)	40
At Home	23 (52%)	16(36%)	3(7%)	2(4.5%)	44
CPF - Home	10(25%)	19(47%)	8(20%)	3(7%)	40

Table 10. Fears For Personal Safety

Note: Interest in fear of crime has come to be seen as an important area of criminological inquiry. Large scale victim surveys however, tended to produce data, which appeared to show that levels of fear did not correlate with actual risk⁷⁷. Local surveys, by increasing our understanding of the distribution of crime among the population, have raised questions about this apparent tendency to diminish the seriousness of crime.

Criminologists have begun to examine more closely the relationship between fear and risk. They have asked respondents both about their fears and the ‘probability of crime in the next year’, they have looked at the way in which fear has impacted on peoples behaviour and lifestyle choices, showing for example, the way in which women and the elderly alter their lifestyles due to their levels of fear. They have also sought to link fear to other environmental factors.

As Zedner points out, “Fear of Crime is primarily an urban phenomenon and may be seen as a reaction to ‘local incivilities’ such as boarded-up buildings, youth loitering on street corners, drunks, and other signals of a hostile environment”⁷⁸. In the previous sections we have looked at respondents personal experiences of crime, the impact of crime upon them, their family and the community in which they live. In this section we have attempted to make links between people’s experience of victimisation and their perceptions of the area in which they live with their levels of fear and anxiety of future victimisation or exposure to drug dealing and anti social behaviour.

In the CPF survey 58% of the sample stated that it was somewhat likely, quite likely or very likely that they would be a victim of crime in the next six months. The equivalent figure in the Quality of Life Survey is 19%. In the CPF survey 42% of respondents stated that they expected they were not very likely or not at all likely to be a victim while the Quality of Life Survey recorded a rate of 80% for the same question. This discrepancy between the two surveys is difficult to understand, particularly given the concerns expressed about crime and anti-social behaviour in the

⁷⁷ For a discussion see Zedner *The Oxford Handbook OpCit* P586

⁷⁸ IBID

earlier sections. It is also difficult to reconcile with respondents concerns regarding fears of walking in their area after dark.

The Central Statistics Office National survey found that almost 30 % of respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe walking in their neighbourhood after dark. As can be seen from Table 10, the CPF recorded a figure of 47% while the current survey recorded a figure of 66% who felt unsafe or very unsafe walking around their area after dark.

The CSO survey recorded a finding that 92% of people felt safe in their homes at night. The CPF survey recorded a lower figure of 72% respondents feeling safe or very safe in their home. The current survey recorded a figure of 88% of respondents who felt safe or very safe in their home at night. It should also be noted that many respondents admitted to possessing a weapon or had dogs for security purposes.

If we take the CPF survey as representative of the North Inner City as a whole then those living within the area currently under study are less likely to fear personal victimisation, more likely to feel safe in their homes at night yet they feel far less safe walking around their area after dark. The most likely explanation for this is that they do not translate the obvious serious local levels of local public anti-social behaviour into the possibility of personal victimisation. These findings also help to illustrate the importance people attach to minding their own business when confronted with local crime and anti-social behaviour. Clearly most of those who are personal victims of crime are from outside the area, be they ‘foreigners’ or other people passing through.

8 (c) Fears About Drug Selling;

Regarding respondent’s anticipated exposure to drug dealing respondents were asked the following questions;

Q How likely is it that you will witness drug selling in this area in the next six months?

Q How Likely is it that you will witness people using drugs in the next six months?

	Very	Quite	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At all	Sample
--	------	-------	----------	----------	------------	--------

	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	
Drug Selling	24(57%)	5(12%)	3(7%)	7(17%)	3(7%)	42
CPF	28 (70%)	3 (7%)	5 (12%)	4 (10%)	0	40
Drug Use	17(40%)	3(7%)	10(23%)	4(9%)	9(21%)	43
CPF	19 (50%)	4 (10%)	5 (13%)	7 (18%)	3 (8%)	38

Table 11. Fear of Drug selling/ Drug Use

Note: 76% of respondents stated that they were Somewhat Likely, Quite Likely or Very Likely to witness drug selling within the next six months. 10 respondents or 24% stated that they Not Very likely or Not At All Likely to witness drug selling in the next six months.

From a total of 43 responses, 70% stated that they were Somewhat Likely, Quite Likely or Very Likely to witness people using drugs in the next six months. Given the generally secretive nature of drug use this is an extremely high finding.

SECTION NINE – COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG RESPONSE

In the previous sections the manner in which the drugs problem has impacted on the local community was considered. In recent years many policy initiatives and specific interventions have been developed in response to this crisis. These initiatives have often sought to bring governmental agencies together and to foster links between such

agencies and ‘the community’, the latter represented by tenants organisations and other “locally developed community and interest group networks”⁷⁹.

A prerequisite for the success of such initiatives is the fostering of intra-community networks of support and the overcoming of obstacles which might hinder cooperation between state and community.

9(a) Community Anti-Drug Activity;

It is clear from the previous section however that many within the community are reluctant or fearful about becoming active in response to community problems. As a means of gauging local residents views about such community action they were asked their views on previous anti-drugs activities (anti-drug marches and meetings) which took place in the wider local community. The respondents were asked the following series of questions. The answers are mostly provided in summary form.

Q Was there an anti-drugs group in your area?

Q If Yes, were you involved in it?

Q Do you support it?

Of the 42 residents who responded to this question, 36 or 86% state that there had been an anti-drugs group in the area. 26 respondents claimed to have been involved in anti-drugs activity while 12 respondents state that they had not been involved. From a total response of 41, 35 respondents or 85% stated that they supported the anti-drugs movement while 6 or 15% stated that they did not.

Q Why? Why Not?

Reason For Participation – Commentary: “Because of the children” “I was totally anti-drugs” “Because we were tormented. Getting no peace” “Definitely because of the destruction drugs bring upon a community” “I go on marches to show my anger and fear” “I did it for the area.” “I am anti-drugs and I was showing my solidarity” “No one only God has the right to take your child away from you. To try and give kids hope in the area” “To get rid of the pushers because it makes it more difficult to get the drugs” “Something has to be done. The kids have no life. The kids are robbing people. They don't care who they hurt” “I was trying to help the kids. I had a son on

⁷⁹ NICDTF OpCit Page 38

drugs” “I went on marches because I was angry” “They were selling heroin to kids”
 “We wanted to get people out”

Note: In stating the reason for their involvement in the anti-drugs movement 9 respondents stated that it was for the benefit of the children of the area. 5 stated that they were anti-drugs. 2 respondents declared that they became involved out of anger and frustration with how bad things had got in the community.

Reason For Non Participation – Commentary: “I just watched them. I am against drugs but I would not be interested” “I am not for or against. I just do not get involved” “I was a user. They go after the wrong people. Small people and not the dealers. But it was all they knew how to do” “I was in prison at the time and I can understand why people would rise up against drug selling and anti-social behaviour. In a structured and legal way. They represented some community sentiments such as beatings, general consensus was that it was the only way” “I would not get involved. I would be fearful of the vigilantes. The police should do it” “It did reflect the views of the community. No one likes drugs”

Note: Apathy and concerns about the use of violence are expressed as reasons for non-involvement. Nevertheless there does appear to be a general understanding of anti-drug activity even where it is opposed.

Q Did the anti- drugs movement reflect the views of the community?

Representation of Anti Drugs Movement - Commentary: “It did reflect the views of the community” “Everyone is up for it” “Only half the community supported it” “Loads of the community supported it” “It reflected most but not those in families involved (in drugs)” “It reflected the views of the community but some of it was infiltrated by junkies and they were reporting back to dealers” “It reflected the feelings of most of the community” “It did reflect the community as people marched night after night” ”It did reflect the community but some went too far with attacks on junkies. It is not needed again.”

Note: Contrary to most of the media reports a clear majority of respondents believed that the anti-drugs movement was representative of the community. Some however stated that it caused problems within the community between neighbours where some had children using drugs. 5 respondents stated that some of the activists were dealers themselves or were in it for the money or others were dealers who were using it as a way of monitoring anti-drugs activity.

Weaknesses – Commentary: “It got a bit out of hand between neighbours. It was their kids who were using” “It got out of hand. People got personal” “I used to go to the meetings about drugs in Lourdes house. I think they should make people stop but they

should not kill people or hit people but I think they are right in what they are saying” “Sometimes they picked on the wrong people...if you had no one to speak up for you. Some people lost homes” “My fellas door was marched on. It was rumours spread by bad ‘aul wans’. He was not doing anything. He was one of the junkies in the area.” “They were killing the addicts. I went on a few marches but I do not support the vigilantes. They were very violent and that does no good” “Yes. If they did it right. Help them instead of killing the users. It’s all grown ups in their thirties and forties. You would not have a say in anything” “Only made things worse when they beat up addicts, took their gear and money and left them sick. How could you support that”.

Note: 2 respondents felt that it led to rows between neighbours. 2 respondents felt that the anti-drugs movement sometimes marched on the wrong people and that it did not focus on the big dealers out of fear. 4 respondents were concerned that such activity should be non violent. 3 respondents felt that it led to violence against young people and that it did not help drug users.

Q Did the anti-drugs movement achieve anything?

Achievements - Commentary: “They helped get clinics started and give addicts self esteem” “At the beginning but it attacked the wrong people” “I am sure they achieved something” “I do not know” “I do not think it got people off. Paddy Malone and Fergus got my kids off drugs” “I think the problems will go on” “It cleared town a lot” “It cleared up the area. The dealers were on their backs and they were not getting away with it” “It did. But not drug free. Did not get its full potential. We are still struggling to get services” “It got the pushers out of the flats” “It moved out some dealing” “No. Breaking people up and bringing trouble on themselves was all they achieved” “Pushers were gone for a while.” “The anti-drugs group made people aware of the dangers” “They moved them from one place to another” “We got dealers out. Now you have to go to a committee to move in” “Yes. Drugs are not as obvious anymore” “It brought people together and made them aware there was a problem in the area. Citywide formed a policy and then the task force” “They feared nobody” “It needs to have rehab included”.

Note: 2 respondents believed that it removed a lot of drugs from the community at one time. 11 respondents stated that they believed the anti-drug activity made it difficult for the dealers to operate. 8 respondents felt that it helped unify the community. 2 respondents felt that it helped set up the current system whereby prospective tenants are vetted now before being allocated local accommodation. Another felt that it helped to get clinics started and that the anti drugs movement helped make people aware of the dangers associated with drugs. Other respondents expressed the view that little had changed.

Q Is it needed again?

Current Need:

Note: Respondents were then asked if they believed that such an initiative was needed again. 20 or 58% out of a total sample response of 34 stated that they believed that such activity was needed again while 14 (41%) respondents felt it was not necessary now.

Note: The above impressions of community based anti-drug activity are a useful illustration of the way in which a community can mobilise together in the face of adverse circumstances. On the other hand they indicate the reluctance of some to participate in such activity, some out of apathy or a sense of hopelessness, others out of fear. It should also be considered that drug dealers are well-resourced and potentially very dangerous adversaries. The drug related murder in 1996 of prominent journalist Veronica Guerin is a stark reminder of the lengths to which they might go if they perceive that their trade is affected. Nevertheless, such anti-drug activity reveals a level of concern for and commitment to one's community. It also reveals the divisions which have been created in the community as a result of the drug trade and of drug use and thus the tensions which can be created within such a close knit community by such overt political activity. Finally, many of the comments particularly by younger respondents, give an indication of the need for such activity to be democratically inclusive, non violent and multi-faceted in its approach.

9 (b) Existing Obstacles to Local Community Activity;

One of the means through which it is hoped local areas can be regenerated is through the encouragement of resident's organisations. Dublin City Council has sought to create tenant groups in each area or flat complex. In the area under study there are three prominent residents who form a central role in the maintenance of local residents' groups and who liaise between the local residents, Dublin City Council and the Garda Síochána. These residents are based in Healy Street, Summer Street North and Matt Talbot Court⁸⁰. As part of the survey respondents were asked about their willingness to join such tenant organisations.

Q Is there a Residents Group established in your area, street or flat complex?

⁸⁰ Interview with Resident activists.



Pye Chart Six: Presence of Local Residents Group

Key: Where 1 (Blue) = Yes and 2 (Red) = No

Note: Of the 40 respondents who answered this question, 29 stated that they were aware of the existence of a resident's group in their area while 11 state that they did not know of one.

Q Would You Join One if there was?



Pye Chart Seven: Willingness to Join Resident's Group.

Key: Where 1 (Blue) = Yes and 2 (Green) = No. 11 (Purple) = Error.

Note: Of the 42 respondent's who answered this question, 18 (43%) expressed a willingness to join such a group while 23 (55%) stated that they would not be so willing.

Respondent's were then asked to expand on their answers.

Reasons to Join: "It's good to know what is happening around if your living here"
 "There is a group. One man keeps it together. He is very good"
 "We have to look after the area. If we do not who will?"
 "If everyone stands together you're alright"
 "To see what is going on and secure the area".

Note: The individual referred to above is a prominent individual who has taken on the task of organising a local resident's group, organising meetings, writing to the State agencies, visiting other resident's and monitoring local incidents which are impacting on the community. Most of the streets in which this resident's group operates do not have a significant drug problem although it is adjacent to a number of alleyways and other sites of anti-social behaviour⁸¹. One of the streets in which it operates, Thompson's Cottages, connects on to Summerhill by means of a laneway and has experienced an increase in drug dealing in recent times.

Reasons for Not Joining: "I am getting a hard time as it is. If I joined one of them I would not have a window left" "I am not into it" "I am not long in this flat" "I could not join for fear" "I am an ex user"⁸² "I do not think people have enough interest to stand together. They are looking at it going on. No one has put a stop to it so people feel why waste their time" "We have done it. Meetings... groups...gatherings. They laugh at you." "I do not want to" "I have enough things to be doing. Maybe I could do a half hour per week." "I like to stay on my own" "I was involved but I am not into it now" "I was on a drug committee and not tenants. I was being asked to put people ou." "I was on it but I had enough with internal politics" "I would not bother. If I was asked to speak my mind ok but that is as far as it goes" "It's too dangerous. Someone collecting money for some community benefit was killed over it" "No need" "Not interested" "There is no community. There used to be a tenant's group but a man lost his life over it. He was beaten with a pole" "Too much competition" "Too much hassle" "We were active but we got a lot of hassle from the police. It's not to say all the police are the same" "You are not getting the backing from the people" "There was one. I used to be in it. No one went to meetings. The people around did not support it"

Note: Fear of being singled out for retribution, a belief that their contribution would not be valued to them being an ex drug user, apathy, a concern that the community would not actively support them and a feeling of hopelessness are all prominent in respondent's reasons for not joining a resident's group. Also, a reluctance to become involved in local politics is a factor.

Other: "I am involved but not directly" "I am involved in conducting interviews" "I might join" "I would join if it was about safety for the community" "I would not mind getting involved but I was never asked" "I would pass information to them" "If I thought it would help. Everyone is afraid because your windows will go in" "It's only in one block" "There is a new one" "I might join it next week"

⁸¹ Interview with resident group leader.

⁸² This respondent requested that the researcher contact the head of the local resident's association on her behalf.

Note: Many respondents are prepared to work confidentially with state agencies. This will also become evident in the next section. Respondents have also expressed a willingness to support community work if it is very specific in its focus, for example if it stayed away from contentious matters. This may be a hangover from previous experience with the anti-drugs movement or it might be just related to fear.

SECTION TEN - OBSTACLES TO STATE AGENCY/ COMMUNITY CO-OPERATION

In the previous section we considered people's concerns with working within their own community. In this section we will consider the type of obstacles, which might hinder co-operation between the community and State agencies. Although there will be a degree of crossover between the two, here we will be seeking specific information in relation to the state agencies. Firstly, the respondents were asked questions in order to gauge the current level of interaction with state agencies.

10(a) Current Interaction Between Community & State Agencies;

Q Do you know the name of your local City Council Official/ Community Garda?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Sample
Garda Síochána	12 (28)	31 (72)	43
CPF Gardaí	22 (55)	18 (45)	40
Dublin City Council	7 (16)	35 (81)	43
CPF City Council	23 (57)	17 (43)	40

Table 12. Familiarity with State Agency Officials

Q Have you ever spoken to them?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Sample
Garda Síochána	18 (42)	25 (58)	43
CPF Gardaí	33 (82)	7 (18)	40
Dublin Corporation	16 (36)	28 (64)	43
CPF Corporation	31 (77)	9 (23)	40

Table 13. Contact with State Agency Officials

Note: 28% of respondents stated that they knew the name of their local Community Garda while 16% knew the name of their local City Council official. 42% had spoken to the Gardaí while 36% had spoken to a City Council official. Comparisons with the CPF should be seen as a benchmark, given the intense period of preparation in terms of local community meetings which preceded the establishment of the CPF and at which members of the Gardaí were in attendance⁸³. Also, those who took part in the CPF survey were already active in their community and thus had more than likely already developed communications with the state agencies.

Furthermore, the numbers stating they had spoken with the Gardaí in this survey are significant given the fears expressed in other parts of the survey (and see below) about being seen engaging with the police. Two of the Gardaí interviewed had long established links with the local community, one having worked as a community Garda in the area for five years, the other having worked in various capacities in the wider area for eleven years⁸⁴. Many studies of community policing have emphasised the importance to successful police work and to police/community relations of developing

⁸³ Connolly (2001) Evaluation of the North Dublin Inner City Community Policing Forum Forthcoming.

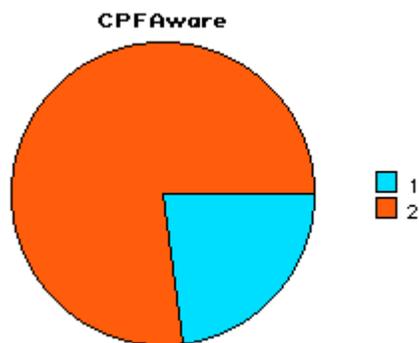
⁸⁴ Interviews with Garda Síochána members.

such consistent levels of interaction between police and community. Regarding the potential dangers for local residents of being seen co-operating with the Gardaí, one community Garda interviewed stated that experience had taught him the need to be discrete in all such matters⁸⁵.

10 (b) Knowledge of the Community Policing Forum;

Given the prevalence of such fears and concerns, the success of the CPF is reflected in its ability to attract consistent local community attendance at its meetings.

Respondents were therefore asked if they knew of the existence of the Community Policing Forum?



Pye Chart 8: Awareness of Community Policing Forum (CPF)

Key: Where 1 (Blue) = Yes and 2 (Red) = No

Of a total of 44 respondents, 10 (22%) stated that they knew of the existence of the CPF while 34 (77%) stated that they did not.

Note: Given that the first meeting of the CPF took place in December 1999 and that there has been regular local and CPF meetings ever since, that only 10 respondents were aware of the CPF is of concern. Many respondents, when pressed on this matter however, when given the name of the coordinator of the CPF did state that they were aware of it. Or, at least that they were aware of the work the coordinator did. All responses were favourable in that regard.

⁸⁵ This discussion arose when the author asked the Garda not to appear too familiar on occasion that they met in the area. It was important that no contrary impressions regarding the independent nature of the research be allowed to develop among local residents.

10 (c) Attitudes to Garda Síochána and Dublin City Council Service Provision;

Respondents were asked to respond to the following questions on a Likert Scale.

Q How would you rank the work the Gardaí do in your area in controlling crime?

Q How would you rank the work of Dublin City Council in responding to anti-social behaviour?

The answers provided were; Very Good/ Good/ Average/ Poor/ Very Poor

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Sample
Garda Síochána	6 (15)	8 (20)	12 (30)	7 (17.5)	7 (17.5)	40
Dublin City Council	4 (11)	6 (16)	6 (16)	9 (24)	13 (34)	38

Table 14. Attitudes to Garda Síochána/ City Council Service Provision

Note: A slightly different question was asked in the CPF survey so direct comparisons cannot be made. However, in the national survey conducted by the Central Statistics Office, the same question was asked in relation to the Gardaí. In the CSO survey, 75% regarded the work done by the Garda Síochána in controlling crime in their neighbourhood as Good or Very Good. 25% rated it as average, and 10% regarded it as poor or very poor. In the current survey 35% regarded the work done by the Gardaí in controlling crime as good or very good, 30% rated it as average and 35% regarded it as poor or very poor. There is a very significant contrast here between the national and local surveys and this finding is generally consistent with other such findings regarding support for the Gardaí among poorer sections of society⁸⁶.

Respondents were then asked to comment further on the above.

Commentary Regarding Garda Service:

Positive: “I feel sorry for them and the job they have” “The police should be allowed to do their job. I have no love for them. The drugs squad is doing well with help from people in the area” “The younger kids know the local Garda and he does a good job. Some do a good job” “They are always around” “They are doing what they can. We need a camera in the avenue so that they can see what is going on. They are good. But a policeman in uniform is useless. We need plainclothes police” “They do their best.

⁸⁶ See MCCulagh C (1996) Crime in Ireland Page 156.

It's not that easy" "They have a lot to put up with" "With the resources they have they do their best"

Negative: "Sometimes they do not respond" "They do not come when they are called. They know selling goes on" "They do not seem to deal with the big dealers or the little issues" "They stop young people and harass them" "When they catch the young they batter them. They only see what they want to see"

Other: "Certain crimes like heroin selling and kids hanging around (response is) very poor... other things average" "Some are good. Some are bastards" "Some work others do not" "Sometimes good but then they stop" "They are absolutely hopeless" "They are doing it the wrong way. There is a group of Gardaí, they knew the dealers and their families. They took no shit and they were well respected" They do their best. They could do better. They pull up the wrong kids" "They have a tough job. The young Gardaí are from the country and they do not want to come up here" "Once I spoke to a Garda and someone knocked on my door and called me a rat. I have a wife and I would be afraid if anything went wrong. Something would come through the window" "You do not know how well they are doing".

Note: 26 respondents offered more detailed views on their attitude to the policing of their area. The above commentary offers a broad range of perspectives on the Gardaí and policing issues. Support is expressed for the Gardaí in the job they do although that is sometimes conditional in terms of individual Gardaí and indeed specific units of the Gardaí such as the drug squad. The importance of communication between the Gardaí and the young is also highlighted. Criticisms are levelled at perceived delays in police response time and in a perception of Garda indifference to some community concerns. Some respondents believe that certain Gardaí are scared to police the area. Again the issue of fear regarding the way interaction with the Gardaí might be perceived locally is raised. The final point regarding the invisibility of much police work is a perceptive point, which highlights the importance of effective channels of communication between the Gardaí and the community.

Commentary regarding Dublin City Council Service:

Positive: "Alright in some ways" "Now they are responding... they are on top of it" "The flats are clean" "They are beginning to clamp down. They work with the Gardaí and clamp down on the parents" "They are coming on board now" "They have clamped down since last year" "They try their best".

Negative: "Could be better" "Do nothing when its reported" "Flats are not looked after" "Graffiti" "I went to Gregory. He said there was nothing he could do. The Gardaí said I had to give names. That is impossible" "Not really filling accommodation fast enough. Empty houses are left to be vandalised" "The walls of the building...tenants have to wash dog shit...the smell of the dirt is unhealthy"

“They are worse than the Gardaí because the Corpo. have the powers” “They do not fix the damage done” “They let the property go the way it is.” “They live in different areas. They do not see it or understand”.

Other “They are doing nothing about Sean O’Casey Avenue except the railings. I hope it does good. The people in it should be moved out” “They do whatever they can. There might be a delay. ‘The Steps’ is going to be resolved but its taken a while” “They want to block Sean O’Casey” “Very harsh. Very strict” “We are very overcrowded. Eight people to a two bedroom flat”.

Note: 24 of the total sample expanded on their original answer regarding their attitudes to the City Council. Again a broad response with both negative and positive perceptions can be identified. Some respondents’ perceive a recent improvement in service and the increased co-operation between the City Council and the Gardaí regarding anti-social behaviour is commended. Criticisms are levelled for a perceived lack of response regarding maintenance issues. A point is made regarding confidentiality where a resident is making a complaint about another resident related to anti-social behaviour. Most of the negative comments relate to housing matters. This is a general tendency in the surveys conducted in Matt Talbot Court where drugs do not appear to be a significant matter. During the course of the research a single syringe was discovered by the attendant to the flats⁸⁷. Also, there appeared to have been a periodic increase in cannabis use on the stairwells in the flats. A comment was made regarding perceived detachment from local problems among Council personnel who work but do not live in the area. Support is expressed for the policy of evictions (See Section Nine) and a couple of respondents mention the blocking up of ‘The Steps’ at Sean O’Casey Avenue as a possible improvement.

10 (d) Willingness to Report Crimes/ Anti-Social Behaviour;

Respondents were asked about their willingness to report certain crimes and forms of anti-social behaviour and the obstacles which might prevent them from co-operating in this way with the Gardaí. For example, respondents were asked to respond on a Likert scale to the following question for each type of crime;

Q If I witnessed people selling cannabis in my neighbourhood, I would report the matter to the Gardaí.

⁸⁷ Interview with attendant at Matt Talbot Court

The possible responses ranged from; *Very Likely* to *Not at all likely*.

CRIME	LIKELIHOOD OF REPORTING					Sample
	Very Likely (%)	Quite Likely (%)	Somewhat Likely (%)	Not Very Likely (%)	Not at all Likely (%)	
Heroin Selling	23(53)	3(7)	4(9)		13(30)	43
Cannabis Selling	15(35)	5(12)	1(2)	3(7)	19(44)	43
Drug Use	11(26)		6(14)	6(14)	20(47)	43
Mugging	21(48)	9(20)	2(5)	1(2)	11(25)	44
Burglary	21(50)	7(17)	3(7)	3(7)	8(19)	42
ASB	9(23)	5(13)	7(18)	3(8)	15(38)	39
Presence of Stolen property	10(23)	4(9)	1(2)	4(7)	24(56)	43
Joy Riding	17(40)	5(12)	2(5)	4(9)	15(35)	43

Table 15. Willingness to Report Crime

Note: In table 15 above, there are very significant differences between the current survey and the CPF survey in terms of respondents who state that they would be *Very Likely* to report offences to the Gardai. Table 16 makes a comparison between the two surveys.

Willingness to Report	CPF Survey	QOL Survey
Heroin Selling	90 %	53%
Cannabis Selling	80%	35%
Mugging	92%	48%
Burglary	86%	50%
Anti Social Behaviour	74%	23%
Stolen property	55%	23%

Table 16. Willingness to Report Crime - CPF/ QOL Survey Comparison

Note: The above findings confirm the caution regarding ‘willingness to report’ expressed by the author in relation to the findings of the CPF survey;

“The (CPF) survey reveals a high level of willingness to report most offences, except for being aware of the presence of stolen property which is roughly at a 50% reporting rate. Although there are no recorded cases of mugging, it is obviously seen as a very serious offence and it receives the highest likelihood of reporting rate.

In considering the representativeness of these figures we should be aware that most of the sample, by virtue of their involvement with the CPF, had already developed a willingness to report matters to the Gardaí. These results need to be tested further on a more random local sample.” (Connolly 2001)

10(e) Reasons for not Reporting Crimes/Anti-Social Behaviour;

We will now consider the possible reasons why people were reluctant to report offences to the Gardaí. Where a respondent did not respond *Very Likely*, this was regarded as indicating a degree of uncertainty on their part and was therefore treated as a negative answer. They were then asked for the main reason why they would be hesitant about reporting and their first answer was recorded. These answers were then compared using a series of possible reasons identified in the national survey conducted by the Central Statistics Office. The offered responses are listed below and Table 17 catalogues them for each crime.

Q What was the main reason for not reporting the crime

	Burglary	Mugging	Stolen Property	Drug Use	Cannabis selling	Heroin Selling	Joy Riding	Total
Not serious enough	2	-	-	6	8	-	2	18
Solved it myself	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	6
Knew the Offender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reported it to other authorities	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	5
No Insurance claim	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gardaí could do nothing/ lack of proof	-	-	-	2	2	1	2	7
Gardaí would do nothing	-	2	4	7	5	5	8	31
Did not wish to involve the Gardaí	2	2	2	-	1	3	2	12

Fear of reprisal	8	8	14	6	8	5	2	51
Other reason	7	6	3	6	2	3	3	30

Table 17. Reasons for not reporting Crime

Note: In the CSO survey, the most common reason for not reporting a crime was that it was not regarded as serious enough to report or there was no financial loss. The second most common response was the belief that the Garda Síochána would not or could not do anything about the offence. In the CPF survey, by far the most common reason for not reporting an offence is the fear of reprisal. Aside from this reason, the CPF survey generally corresponds to the CSO survey in terms of reasons given for not reporting crimes. The second reason is the belief that a crime is not serious enough or that there is no loss, the third most common reason is the belief that the Garda Síochána could not do anything due to lack of proof, the fourth the belief that the Gardaí would not do anything.

The results are significantly different than those of the CSO study and the CPF. Like the CPF survey the highest reason given in the current survey for non reporting is fear of reprisal. However it is a good deal higher in each category of offence. Regarding Heroin selling the figures stating fear of reprisal were 2 for the CPF and 5 for the Quality of Life Survey; regarding cannabis selling it is 1 and 8; for drug use it is 5 and 6 respectively; for mugging 3 and 8 for the QOL Survey; for burglary the results are 3 and 8; for stolen property 5 and 14 respectively and for joy riding both surveys record a figure of 2 respondents stating fear of reprisal as their main reason for not reporting. Therefore, although the fear of reprisal recorded in the CPF survey was extremely high when compared to national figures, the Quality of Life Survey reveals a significantly higher figure expressing reluctance to report crime due to the fear of local reprisal.

The issue of fear of reprisal is obviously highly significant and remains as the most significant reason why respondents are reluctant to engage with state agencies on controversial matters that affect local residents.

Another significant finding in this survey is the high number of respondents who when asked the main reason why they will not report cannabis selling or drug use,

they state that it is not serious enough. We will return to this issue at a later stage when we present findings in relation to respondent's views on the issue as to whether certain drugs should be decriminalised.

SECTION ELEVEN – LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESPONSES TO CRIME

This study has sought to reveal the extent to which drug related crime and anti-social behaviour can impact on the quality of life of a local area. In the previous section we sought to identify potential barriers to cooperation between the community and state agencies in responding to the problems faced.

In this chapter we are seeking to gauge local attitudes and perceptions regarding ongoing interventions or proposed solutions. If the purpose of policy is to develop partnership with communities in developing a sustainable response to the drug problem, it follows that ongoing interventions should reflect the views and needs of the community as a whole. Furthermore, if policy is to be effective, it must be in proportion to the problems being confronted. It is necessary to find a balance between

the problem and the response so that interventions are not disproportionate or excessive thereby exacerbating the problems.

Firstly, we look at the issues surrounding drug dealing and anti-social behaviour at 'The Steps', secondly we consider the policy whereby Dublin City Council tenants can face eviction for anti-social behaviour as defined within the Housing Act 1997. Thirdly, we look at the proposal often aired in the media in Ireland, which calls for the de-criminalisation of certain illegal substances such as cannabis. Respondents are asked for their views on this matter.

11 (a) Environmental Solutions – 'The Steps':

An increasingly common form of response to anti-social behaviour, relates to the adoption of environmental solutions to crime⁸⁸. This form of 'situational crime prevention' leads to solutions to crime being advanced by means of altering the physical landscape in which crimes are taking place rather than seeking exclusively to alter those engaging in the behaviour or in altering the socio-economic conditions which many criminologists argue underly such behaviour. A recent environmental response to crime in the area under study was the closing of 'The Steps' at Sean O' Casey Avenue.

During the course of the research at least two respondents in different areas stated that they were organising a petition to have a wall or a gate erected as a means of preventing anti-social behaviour. One resident was seeking to have a wall erected at the top of Summer Street North as a means of preventing people from coming through from Sean O' Casey Avenue. A second resident was seeking a wall rather than a gate at the top of Healy Street in order to frustrate young people from coming through the area and engaging in anti-social behaviour. Another resident was organising a petition to prevent a wall from being erected near her home as part of the plan to remove 'The Steps' at Sean O' Casey Avenue.

⁸⁸ See Bottoms A.E and Wiles P (1997) 'Environmental Criminology' in The Oxford Handbook of Criminology

The problems which have been on going at ‘The Steps’ had reached crisis proportions. As reported above, a series of muggings of people passing through Sean O’Casey Avenue, ongoing drug dealing and assaults against members of the Garda Síochána were just some of the incidents which came to the attention of the researcher. The problems in Sean O’Casey Avenue and ‘The Steps’ were first brought to the attention of the author in his role as adviser to the Community Policing Forum at a meeting of local residents in September 1999⁸⁹. One of the respondents in the current survey mentioned the pulling up of a lamp post during the period of this research. A similar incident was reported to the CPF in September 1999⁹⁰. The CPF heard reports that ‘The Steps’ were being used as an escape route from the Gardaí, that red bricks from the walls were being used as missiles against motorists on Summerhill, that the railings had been pulled down and that robbed cars had been driven down ‘The Steps’⁹¹.

In October 2001 it was reported to the CPF that two ‘Oriental’ girls had been attacked at 6 a.m. in the morning. It was reported to this researcher during the course of the current survey that male friends of these girls, also oriental, had come into the area subsequently with weapons in search of those who had committed the assault. In such circumstances it is no exaggeration to say that the situation had become life threatening.

Numerous requests from local residents of Sean O’Casey Avenue and adjacent streets of Rutland Place North, Simmon’s Place, Thompson Cottages and Healy Street were received in relation to the need for a solution to the problem at ‘The Steps’. The Dublin City Council has the authority to extinguish a public right of way and this was approved in January 2002.

The Dublin City Council also received a petition signed by 36 residents of a number of local streets including North Great Charles Street, Sean O’Casey Avenue, Summer Place and Pigs Lane. The petition read;

⁸⁹ Community Policing Forum Minutes of tenants’ group meeting; Summerhill, Sean O’Casey Avenue, 23rd September 1999.

⁹⁰ IBID

⁹¹ Minutes of CPF local meetings.

“This is a petition on behalf of the residents of Sean O’Casey avenue who object to the building of a wall in the middle of the avenue. All the people who signed this feel that the right of way should stay. Some people who signed are over 65 and feel this would be too far to walk and find this very upsetting at this time of their life. And regards (sic) to using the backlane is completely out of the question for old people and young girls, the parents don’t want this. However the people who signed this do not object to the removal of the steps in summerhill. To be replaced by railings or wall. From the residents”

On the 10th October 2001 a meeting was held under the auspices of the CPF to discuss with the residents the proposal to close off the Avenue as opposed in the petition above⁹². The meeting, which was attended by 13 of the local residents (although all of the houses had been notified of the meeting by means of a leaflet) agreed to the proposed closure. When one compares those residents in attendance at this CPF meeting in October with those who signed the petition, which appears to have been organised in early January 2002, only three residents’ names appear on both petitions. It is possible that those residents had changed their minds in the intervening period, or that they had not understood the original proposal or that they felt obliged or intimidated to sign a petition presented to them by one of their neighbours.

While all residents clearly approve of the decision to close ‘The Steps’, what is remarkable is the way in which attendance at the meeting and the signing of the petition might appear to indicate a division between residents. Why did those tenants who signed the petition not attend the earlier meeting as notified and express their concerns at that stage?

What this discussion seeks to show is the way in which environmental solutions to crisis situations are sometimes necessary. However, they can have serious consequences for people in terms of their freedom of movement and possibly their physical safety as implied in the petition and, if not handled carefully, they can create fissures within a community.

11 (b) Local Views on Evictions;

⁹² CPF Local Community Meeting Minutes 10th October 2001

Under the Housing (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1997 provides a range of measures to give local authorities the powers to deal with problems arising on their estates from anti social behaviour, namely drug dealing, violence and intimidation⁹³.

The procedure by which complaints about anti social behaviour are dealt with by Dublin City Council is as follows⁹⁴.

Anti-social behaviour issues are dealt with by the Project Estate Officer and Assistant Community Officer for the area in question. Any complaints about local tenants received are logged. The alleged offenders and the complainants are interviewed. A file is set up. Further complaints lead to further interviews. Recurring complaints could lead to the Executive Manager of the Housing Department seeking a Notice to Quit to be served on the tenant and family in question. Following the expiry of the Notice to Quit, a court order for possession is sought at the District Court. The tenant can appeal the warrant for possession. This appeal is heard at the Circuit Court. The decision of the Circuit Court can be appealed further. This would lead to a judicial review, which is heard at the High Court. A Judicial review can be sought on a point of law only. If this is overturned the eviction is proceeded with.

Alternatively, under the legislation, a Section 20 can be carried whereby the Gardaí can be empowered to remove illegal occupants from a Dublin City Council dwelling. An Exclusion Order can also be sought by the tenant against a sub-tenant who is engaging in anti-social behaviour at the same premises. This will result in the sub tenant being excluded from the premises completely.

During the period of the study, from June 2001 to December 2001, 10 interviews were carried out in the research area by City Council officials regarding anti-social behaviour. 5 of the tenants interviewed were from Sean O'Casey Avenue and 5 were from Matt Talbot Court. In the same period, there were no notices to quit served and no warrants for possession applied for.

⁹³ For a more comprehensive account of the operation of the Act see Memery C (2000) Estate Management and Anti Social Behaviour in Dublin

⁹⁴ I am grateful to Dublin City Council for the following information.

Respondents were asked for their views in relation to this policy.

Q What is your view on the policy of evicting people who are associated with drug dealing?

Commentary regarding Eviction for Drug Dealing :

Agree: “They should be fucked out” “They should do it” “Yes, its a good idea” “I think they should be evicted but it takes too long” “It has to happen especially when you live there” “It should be done” “Its a good idea” “It’s Good. You do not want to live next door to a dealer” “It’s like one bad apple. If they are left they will destroy the rest. They have to learn. You need one thrown out for the others to stop” “It’s quite a good idea if people are selling from their houses they should be kicked out” “Its right and proper” “It’s very good. The only way to deal with it” “From what I hear there is supposed to be a few evictions but the time has passed and they are still there” “I agree” “I agree. If they are involved in drugs why not evict them and not be encouraging other people. If they are given a house they should take care of it” “I do not like to see anyone evicted but if they are killing young kids” “They should be if dealing. You would not want your kids near them”

Conditional Agreement:

- 1) Dealers Only: “Not small dealer/ users and not family” “Only if they are dealers. Not if they are users” “Only the dealers should be evicted” “Only those selling should be evicted. Must be sure they are not users” “They should put people out of the house. They should not evict the parents. If parents do not keep the kids out then they have to talk about evicting them. We have to look after the kids. I know they are sick” “Threat of evictions is good. It’s not fair on the mother but if she is letting the kids run in and out of the house then it’s her own fault” “If the whole family is involved fair enough. If it’s only one person they should be evicted but it has to be proven and that’s difficult” “If they are dealing yes” “The children need to be protected. They have a propensity for crime if their parents are drugged out. There is no discipline. The kids are aggressive” “It’s an awkward one. You probably do not know if your own kids are selling. They should punish the dealer not the parents and other innocent people” “My son was evicted. A mother should not be blamed for her children” “I do not think mothers should be evicted. They have other kids to look after”
- 2) Due Process Concerns: “If they hear just one story they send you a letter. It’s crap. They are moving people out with young kids. Where will they go? They need to find certain facts before they do anything” “It’s good but they should make sure before they throw people out” “I agree. But you must know for sure and not have people being picked on” “If someone sells drugs they have no way of defending themselves so it’s out the door with them. People from the area were being evicted so a local person could be moved in”

- 3) Agree but Spreading the problem: “Where do they put them? Another local authority area?” “It depends on what is done with them afterwards. If there is no rehab the badness is just spread” “They are just moving the problem elsewhere”

Note: 24 respondents out of the total sample of 44 answered this question. Among those who agreed unequivocally, concerns were expressed regarding the perceived delay in the process. Others were concerned with the influence the presence of drug dealers had on the area if permitted to remain. Nobody disagreed with the policy although most of the respondents’ agreement was conditional on the need to meet certain concerns. A strong feeling was expressed that the needs of drug users, other family members and the positions of mothers needed to be considered. A second concern related to issues of due process, whereby some respondents expressed concern that people might be moved out for the wrong reasons. Others questioned the long term results of the policy, questioning whether or not it was simply moving the problem to another area.

11(c) Attitudes to the Decriminalisation of Cannabis;

Proposals to decriminalise certain drugs have always been seen within Irish society as either a ‘hangover from the sixties’, the whimsical fantasies of flamboyant characters such as ‘Ming the merciful’ who has campaigned (extremely unsuccessfully) in elections on the matter, or as the ‘ivory tower’ chattering of middle-class intellectuals. Seldom have such arguments been greeted with any real seriousness by politicians and the Garda Síochána has always rejected such suggestions out of hand. In recent times a number of developments have raised the matter once more. Firstly, people suffering from certain medical conditions have found cannabis as having had a useful soothing effect. Secondly, pressure has been exerted on the drug squad, successfully to a certain extent in the North Inner City in recent years, to focus less attention on cannabis and more on heroin dealers. A more recent significant development has been the proposals from senior police officers in Britain to de-classify Cannabis from a Class B to Class C legal status. Senior British officers have also backed calls for the downgrading of Ecstasy to a Class B drug and for the establishment of ‘Shooting

Galleries' where addicts could legally inject heroin⁹⁵. British Government medical experts recently supported the move regarding the de-classification of cannabis⁹⁶.

Those who have suffered severe consequences as a result of the drugs trade such as the respondents to this survey have understandably not been perceived as being very receptive to such ideas.

Given these developments, it was felt that the current survey might be a useful means to ascertain local residents views on this matter. In order to ascertain the views of respondents on this issue they were asked the following question.

Q What is your attitude to suggestions that different types of drugs such as cannabis should be de-criminalised?

Commentary regarding Decriminalisation:

Disagree: "Absolutely no. Heroin stems from cannabis" "A lot of people say that but it leads to heroin. If they get no buzz they want something stronger" "I do not agree at all. Hash? I have seen videos of what it does to the human body. I have heard the health arguments" "Legality would be abused. It's like taking your first drink" "I do not agree" "I do not think any drugs should be legalised" "I do not think so. Get the whole lot out. There is too much suffering" "I hate all drugs" "No I am a prohibition man myself" "No I do not agree" "No. One leads to another" "No Way" "No. Heroin killed loads of people. You hear stories about cannabis being relaxing but none of them should be made legal" "No. I do not think they should be" "No. I would not agree at all. They say cannabis is good for helping people but I would not agree with it at all" "No. It leads onto other drugs" "No. It will be seen as away of life to the kids" "No. My son started on hash" "No. They are wrong. It's ruining kids lives"

Conditional Agreement:

- 1) Health Reasons/ Harmless: "Cannabis should be legalised. It works on people with pains. It is not harmful" "Cannabis yes. For medical reasons if it kills the pain" "Hash should be because so many people use it for medical reasons" "You could be legalising hash for supervised medication" "Maybe cannabis as a pain killer" "Maybe if people need it for arthritis or that" "Cannabis should be. It's not dangerous. Alcohol causes more damage in my view" "Hash is less damaging than drink. I smoked it myself years back" "Heroin and cannabis should be decriminalised. Prescribed drugs are more problematic than illegal drugs. Nearly every house in my area is affected by prescribed drugs or alcohol"

⁹⁵ See Generally <http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs>

⁹⁶ *The Guardian March 15th 2002.*

- 2) Assist in Policing Harder drugs: “It would bring in more taxes and there would be less money for the dealers” “Cannabis should be legalised. They would not be selling it at the corner then” “Hash maybe” “Hash should be. Then you would have more control”
- 3) Unsure/ Other: “I am not qualified to know. There is no simple solution. Some Gardaí are corrupt and making money from it” “I am not sure” “I am not sure about hash. Its like a smoke to people but it does affect them” “I am not sure. Maybe cannabis” “I do not know. I feel hash leads on to other drugs”

Note: 43 people responded to this question. Those who disagree do so very emphatically believing that cannabis leads to harder drugs. Those who agree do so on the basis that it might help others or because they feel it might assist in the prosecution of more serious drug use. Many respondents are extremely unsure. It is also worth noting the high number of respondents who stated when asked why they might not be prepared to report certain criminal offences to the Gardaí, that they would not report drug use or cannabis use to the Gardaí as they did not see it as serious enough.

CONCLUSION

“It is strongly recommended that the new Local Task Forces, the statutory agencies and central government embark on a period of reflection and analysis, parallel to their programme of practical intervention, in order to absorb the lessons of this momentous, rather experimental period”⁹⁷

Paul O’ Mahony

⁹⁷ O’Mahony P (1997) Inter Agency Drugs Project- Evaluation for World Health Organisation’s Multi-City Action Plan on Drugs.

Nowhere is the above recommendation more appropriate than in the context of interventions made in response to local crime and anti-social behaviour. It has been argued above that the concept quality of life has both positive and negative dimensions. Similarly, interventions made in response to community problems can impact in both positive and negative ways. While intensive police enforcement practices such as ‘Zero Tolerance’ or what is increasingly being described as ‘Quality of Life’ policing can be compelling, particularly when communities face the severe levels of disorder and disruption to everyday life brought about by drug dealing in particular, such policies have also been seen to lead to further deterioration in relations between state and community.

Furthermore, such initiatives are premised on an approach to crime patterns which eschew reference to social and structural determinants of crime and which instead seek to focus on individualistic explanations for criminal behaviour. The ‘solutions’ which follow focus on the need to change the immediate elements of the crime setting - increase security, alter the flow of potential victims and offenders, ensure that property is guarded more effectively etc.

The current study has shown that drug-related crime has impacted severely on the quality of life of the local area. The anti-social activities identified around ‘The Steps’ is indicative of the major disruption that can be caused, often by only a few people. It has been estimated by members of the Garda Síochána, the Probation and Welfare Service, the Coordinator of the Community Policing Forum and a local youth worker that approximately ten to twenty young people have been responsible for the serious disturbances at this location, and that not all of these people are from the immediate area⁹⁸. A local youth worker believes that the source of the problems there is also related to original short sightedness in the development of Seán O’Casey Avenue, where a number of very large families were housed in proximity to each other with little consideration as to the provision of local services for these young people. Furthermore, he believes that young people often come under peer pressure to congregate in such a manner⁹⁹.

⁹⁸ Interviews with Garda Ger O’Sullivan, Probation and Welfare Service Officer Maeve O’Hare, Marie Metcalf, Marie Metcalfe, Community Policing Forum and Paddy Malone, Youth Worker. May 2002.

⁹⁹ Interview with Paddy Malone - Neighbourhood Youth Project.

This study has also shown that community and state led responses to the problems being confronted have been greeted in subtle and complex ways by local residents. A number of meetings held under the auspices of the Community Policing Forum, involving local residents, youth workers, Gardaí, Probation Officers and others sought to tease out these complexities and agree on proportionate responses¹⁰⁰. While on occasion responses will need to be swift in proportion to the damage being caused, sustainable solutions will need to be based upon local realities and arrived at through such negotiation and agreement between local residents, state agencies and other relevant parties.

It can be concluded that the drug problem has severely and negatively impacted on the quality of life in the North Dublin Inner City. Research studies such as this one are designed to expose the problems being confronted within such communities so as to aid policy makers in establishing the means of their resolution. However, focusing on the problems of an area can also be counter productive in that it perpetuates negative stigmatisation of such areas. It is also important where possible to highlight the positive aspects of community life. When asked if the drug problem ever made residents wish to leave the community, of the 44 respondents who answered, 30 said yes. However, when asked to specify the positive aspects of community life, 23 respondents highlighted the presence of family, good neighbours and the existence of a community spirit¹⁰¹. Policy interventions, which seek to contribute to an improvement in the quality of life of such communities, should seek to build upon such community networks of support, networks, which have been sustained in extremely adverse circumstances.

¹⁰⁰ Community Policing Forum. Minutes of Meeting 28th February 2002.

¹⁰¹ 6 respondents stated that there was nothing positive about the area while a further 6 highlighted the positive aspect of living in close proximity to the city centre.

