

SAFER ROADS THROUGH CITIZEN PARTNERSHIPS: ENHANCING ROAD SAFETY WITH COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH VOLUNTEERS

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Making Roads Safer



UNIVERSITY OF
GREENWICH



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SURREY



Aims of our research

The police and community working together to enhance road safety in Surrey and Sussex

01

To explore the motivations and experiences of those who volunteer in road safety initiatives

02

To understand the contribution made by volunteers to road safety initiatives and the factors that shape their effective deployment and management

03

To disseminate good practice and improve the operation of road safety initiatives

Our research questions



**Who
volunteers
and why?**



**What
contribution
do they
make?**



**What are
their
experiences
while
volunteering?**



**How are
they
supported
and
developed?**

Fieldwork completed



355
volunteer
survey
respondents

19
stakeholder
interviews

10 focus
groups
with **33**
volunteers

2
speedwatch
shifts



Research on the roadside



Key findings

Six headline themes emerging from our research

01 CSW 'people':

Who volunteers and why?



03 Management, supervision, and support



02 On the roadside: CSW in practice



Key findings

Six headline themes emerging from our research

04 Making a difference, seeing a change



06 Community matters



05 Being recognised, feeling valued





CSW 'people: Who volunteers and why?

01

It's personal: local people; local areas

Embedded and engaged within local communities

Giving - and getting - back

'Speeding is not just a police problem. It is a problem also for our communities... the community can be part of the solution'

'My husband says I run the village! I'm in a couple of other groups too...But, you know, I get a connection with the village'

'I genuinely believe that at some point I'll save a life by being out there'

'I've made some good friends...It's never an hour spent in silence'

(Quotes from volunteer focus groups)



On the roadside: CSW in practice

02

**Equipment and
resources**

'Whatever you do you've got to have resources behind it. Because otherwise you're setting yourself up to fail' (Stakeholder interviewee)

**Regular, frequent
sessions**

'Our ability to be out as much as the community would like us to be out is a little bit restricted by the volunteers that actually are working during the day' (Volunteer focus group attendee)

**Recruiting and
retaining volunteers**

'They [the community] like to see us, but they don't want to join us'

'Getting people involved is very difficult...it is not just Speedwatch...just maintaining the green, picking up the litter and things like that, it is very difficult to recruit people' (Volunteer focus group attendees)



03

Management, supervision, and support

The importance of local co-ordinators

'If he didn't chase us every week for our availability and get things organised, it wouldn't happen...he is to be commended. Every group needs a [co-ordinator name], or someone similar, because otherwise you just wouldn't be out'
(Volunteer focus group attendee)

Dedicated volunteer management and 'buy in'

'You need leadership from the top... if you've got that tone from the top, the priority setting, you can then drive that right the way through the force, and it makes things a lot easier' (Stakeholder interviewee)

Varied experiences of feedback

'It's police business and we can't get embroiled, but it would be really nice to have more feedback, so that we know...you know, we've frozen our butts off for an hour for a worthy cause' (CSW volunteer focus group attendee)



04

Making a difference, seeing a change

Another tool in the box

'We're the boots on the ground...the police simply don't have the time to be out on the two roads that we have. We are a presence...they [drivers] can see us, and that's the really important thing' (Volunteer focus group attendee)

Education? Engagement? Enforcement?

'Our [focus] is enforcement, enforcement, enforcement, so Community Speedwatch gives us that educational side that we can't offer...they give us that additional coverage, insight and intelligence' (Stakeholder interviewee)

Hopes and frustrations

'...being able to make a contribution, however small, to your community. But we'd like to do more. We'd like to make it better. And that's why... we need more feedback, we need more interaction with the police' (CSW volunteer focus group attendees)



05

This is important; this isn't happening enough

Resources are limited - but every interaction matters

A police-community partnership

Being recognised, feeling valued

'If I was running a charity and I had a load of volunteers, you know, I would go out of my way to thank them and make them feel appreciated, but I've never had any thanks or appreciation at all, which is totally fine. I don't mind, but it seems a bit illogical, considering the amount we're sort of freeing police in a way, providing, you know, quite a valuable service for nothing' (Volunteer focus group attendee)

'I don't blame them, they're under incredible resource pressure. But it was great when they did come, and it made an impact, it made us feel good' (Volunteer focus group attendee)

'They're (CSW volunteers) just part of the fabric of road safety'

'The police can't be everywhere, but they could be anywhere, and CSW are very much our eyes and ears on the ground...the value that they bring is the local knowledge...that policing will benefit from' (Stakeholder interviewees)



06

Community matters

Messages from the community

Communicating with the community

'We feel valued very much by the local people, and we get lots of thumbs up and cheery waves and "Well done" and all that sort of thing'

'The community do appreciate us. The flip side of that is you'll get some people that think they know better' (Volunteer focus group attendees)

"It's making the whole thing a little bit more visible, so that people are more aware, and that we're not there to shop them to the police. We're there to re-educate them'

'Some more promotion of the whole concept of Speedwatch, so that people understand why we're there, that it's for the benefit of the community – and that they too can step forward' (Volunteer focus group attendees)



Opportunities

- Local people; 'micro' motivations
- Genuine drive to make a positive contribution
- Diffusion of volunteering benefits
- Potential impacts on road safety



Challenges

- A genuine partnership?
- Infrastructure and 'buy in'
- Policing 'on the cheap';
responsibilisation (Garland, 1996); offloading of responsibilities by a 'governmentalizing state' (Herbert, 2005: 851)
- Understanding the role and contribution of volunteers

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