

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION GUIDANCE NOTE No. 1

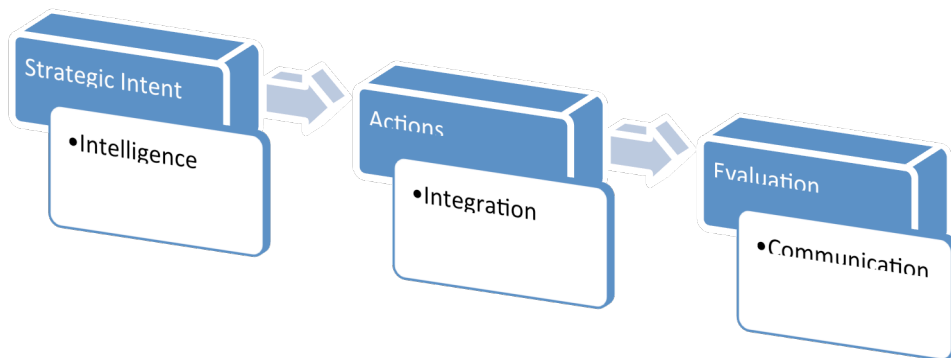
THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

The Acuity model for Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is built upon a suite of components. Taken together, these provide a robust and integrated approach to a complex challenge, capable of being planned for, implemented, and evaluated.

As an example, in the UK, the development of the approach has encouraged the Government to provide national guidance for all fire departments which outlines what an integrated risk reduction plan will comprise.

“(the Plan) must set out an Authority’s assessment of local risk to life and, in line with this analysis, how it is going to deploy its resources to tackle these risks and improve the safety of all sections of society ... (the Plan) should be a strategic and forward looking document with the approach and detail of business and change management plans”. (UK National Framework 2004/5)

So what are the main components of CRR?



The Components of Community Risk Reduction

1. Strategic Intent

At the heart of any approach to CRR lies a clear statement of strategic intent. It is important that this is easily understood, and accessible to anyone who reads it (inside or outside the organization). The better statements of strategic intent will focus clearly on outcomes, rather than process or outputs and will be at the heart of the corporate strategy of the organization. It should provide a clear “rallying point” for everyone in the Department to understand precisely what their purpose is. Whilst such statements will often be represented as “straplines”, especially for the purposes of external communications, good statements have a life and a purpose beyond advertising.

2. Intelligence

The use of the word is deliberate – this is more than mere data. Good quality information about risk and activity lies at the core of any CRR strategy and it is the intelligent use of this information that distinguishes the more effective CRR interventions. There needs to be clarity about

- The range of information sources being used (and how imaginative these can be);
- The clear link between the information and the deployment decisions that result;
- Understanding what the information is actually telling you about risk and how it is changing or evolving;

The other critical issue is how information is gathered, collated and analyzed. Organizations implementing the most effective and incisive CRR initiatives will usually have developed a dedicated capability for doing this with a clear link in strategic and operational management processes between the analysts and the decision makers. In more mature organizations, the awareness of information and the sources are also embedded in the front line, creating an additional information gathering capability.

3. Implementing Actions

A coherent and detailed plan of action, clearly informed by the intelligence, and in support of the strategic intent, is the vehicle by which the CRR intervention is put into place. Plans should have clear outcomes, responsibilities and accountabilities, timescales and monitoring arrangements, as well as the resources identified as necessary.

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4. Integration

Starting a CRR intervention, for example a home assessment program, will often be done as an isolated, stand-alone project when a Department is first setting out to implement a new approach. While this will probably provide value, the real impact of CRR comes when the full range of Department activity is incorporated within the approach. The strategic intent to reduce risk, and the gathering and analysis of operational intelligence needs ultimately to inform a coordinated approach across all three main branches of activity – operational response, protection (passive and active fire suppression systems, inspection and regulation) and prevention activity. Strategic decisions can then be made about the relative priorities in resource allocation between the activities so as to achieve the greatest impact.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation to demonstrate the worth and impact of CRR activity should be planned for at the outset, with clear success criteria and robust monitoring arrangements in place in order that any necessary adjustments can be made. More detail on this is provided in Guidance Note No 5

6. Communications

This often one of the more overlooked elements of a CRR strategy but it is nevertheless vitally important. Any CRR program will have a number of stakeholders or interested parties and a well thought through communication and engagement plan will help to gain support for the program. Typically, a good communications plan will need to address

Staff	who will be implementing the actions
Political Leaders	who will provide the resources
Citizens	who will benefit from the service (as well as those who may not)
Other Agencies	whose activities may help, or benefit from your program
Media	who can support with helpful coverage

And Finally ... A Word About Leadership

Leadership runs through each of these components and if any one thing will distinguish the more successful Departments from the more mediocre in terms of

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CRR, it is clear and committed leadership. The introduction of a new approach to CRR is likely to be a change process for any Department and clear leadership from the top of the organization is key to success. The range and impact of a CRR initiative requires clear and consistent advocacy from the leadership. They will look for every available opportunity to reinforce the key messages of strategic intent with audiences internally and externally. It conveys seriousness, determination, and deals effectively with anyone who doubts the commitment of the Department to seeing through the strategy.