

SASO 40th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE at PEEBLES HYDRO

13th-15th NOVEMBER 2009.

I had the privilege of attending this conference representing South Lanarkshire Children's panel, there were many great speakers from the criminal justice profession and the conference was chaired by The Right Hon Elish Angiolini QC, Lord Advocate.

The Chief Constable of Strathclyde Stephen House, QPM delivered a great address on "The future and policing of crime in Scotland"

A typical weekend in Strathclyde would have 56 reportable offences.

Knife crime - although very much in the public eye, and widely reported in all our local newspapers, Knife-crime has actually shown a substantial decrease from the previous years figures, 2008/09 had 5,508 cases reported and the year to-date is 3,005. This has been the result of the Stop and Search Policy, which targets the 14 to 30yr old group. Strathclyde police are on target to achieve over 300,000 searches this year, and will top 500,000 in 2010.

The sale of knives from the street shops have slowed, whilst Internet sales are rocketing, it is harder to monitor these sales to a younger age group. Modern technology is being used in clubs etc, to check for knife carrying.

Domestic Abuse - This subject was tackled with the same importance as knife-crime, it is an increasing area of abusive crime and involves all ages, and gender, In the current credit-crunch more and more people are choosing to drink at home, and in some cases this can be the source of D.A. We were told that an increasing number of parents are the subject of abuse from their children who are returning home under the influence of alcohol and substances, how much of this is NOT reported? this also highlights the issue of substance misuse and the sale of it, and the availability of alcohol to under age children.

Strathclyde police have set up a Domestic Abuse Taskforce, and A Vulnerable Persons Database, hopefully by being more pro-active and measuring early Intervention, we will see an increase in public confidence and information forthcoming.

Alcohol Fuelled Violence - Statistics show that this is the most common denominator of crimes committed, What can we do to reduce this.. is it the availability of alcohol, advertising aimed at the younger generation, pricing of alcohol, transfer of Public drinking (Pubs) to private (home) ?.

Alcohol is readily available in our supermarkets at competitive prices, so more and more people are drinking at home before going out to a night club, onward to a party, or indeed drinking into the wee small hours, who knows how much they have consumed ? are they at risk of being a statistic.... ? should the licensing board have a fixed price for alcohol across all supermarket chains... instead of the crazy deals they have. How has the Smoking ban affected A.F.V. well public offences are down and private offences are up! so draw your own conclusions.

Rape - Comes under the umbrella of three main categories.. vulnerability / Alcohol / Predators. Many victims of this crime are vulnerable by being detached from friends, in an unknown area / environment, also by being under the influence of alcohol, many victims are aware of who their perpetrator is. And predators stalk for vulnerable females / males, entice them to have a drink with them to get their trust then violate them,

Statistics show that 2008/09 was 306 reported cases and year to date 226, up 25%.

Murder - 2008/09 was 57 and year to date is 22

What we need to realise is The Impact on the Family

The Impact on Resources.

The Impact on the whole Criminal Justice System.

Future Issues – We learned that there are many new services being looked at, especially building Community confidence in the Ethnic areas of Strathclyde, with Muslim communities interacting with the local police teams. Local councillors working with Youth Justice teams.

Intercept – (Telecommunications) to data capture phone calls etc,

Restructure V Co-operation.

Available Resources will demand which the priorities are.

“There is much to be gained through education, rather than prison sentences”

By Stephen Panton.

