



# CitySafe: Our Streets, Our Kids.

April 2008

## Introduction

The CitySafe campaign is a community-led response to the problem of crime and the fear of crime, aimed to complement existing practices. This proposal has been developed by the TELCO CitySafe team meeting regularly over the past 18 months. The group contains community leaders of different ages and backgrounds, youth workers and young people. At the centre of the work has been the voice of those young people deciding on what would make the streets safe. This has led to a proposal that says that safety on the streets is all of our business.

In specific localities, it involves a partnership of volunteers from the community, the police, schools, transport companies, organisations with workforces that are present on the street and the local Council. With co-ordination, training, and support, we can greatly increase the number of young people and adults taking responsibility for the safety of young people in targeted areas.

## Our analysis of the problem:

- A lack of relationship, accountability and interaction between older and younger people in the same neighbourhood.
- Young people feeling isolated and fearful, contributing to them spending time in groups and potentially carrying weapons.
- Adults fearful of young people, fuelled by sensational reporting of small number of violent incidents.

## The effects:

- Increased anti-social behaviour as groups of young people feel anonymous and therefore unaccountable in their actions.
- Spiralling violence between young people as they are drawn to spending more time in groups and carrying weapons due to fear of attack.
- Increased fear of crime amongst older and younger people as a lack of interaction leads to mistrust.
- A crisis in the confidence of adults to take reasonable steps to get to know local young people and intervene when safe to do so.

## The proposal:

That funding is made available to employ CitySafe Co-ordinators who in specific pilot areas build a partnership of organisations (see below for possible partners). This partnership is focussed on greatly increasing the number of trained young people and adults taking responsibility for building up a relationship with young people and increasing informal supervision. The pilots could proceed along the following phases:

1. Building a working relationship between the relevant partners, working out what each partner can contribute and wants from the project.
2. Research into the specific problems in that area: streets, times of day, transport routes, problems between schools / postcodes, etc.
3. Commitments from the partners to joint action, whether that is putting forward volunteers / staff to be trained as CitySafe Reps or pledging PCSO's to liaise with the CitySafe team.
4. A time-limited and place specific introduction of these CitySafe Reps onto streets, outside schools, onto buses, etc.



London's communities acting together for change

5. An evaluation of the success of the pilot in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour and violence between young people. And reducing the fear of crime amongst young and old.

**What TELCO / London Citizens brings:**

- A dues-paying membership of over 100 schools, churches, mosques, trade unions and other community associations.
- Strong relationships into these communities and a track record of engaging local people in a volunteer capacity.
- Over 10 years experience in training community leaders to build relationships in their communities.
- A successful track record in encouraging large organisations to improve their practice, eg. Living Wage Campaign.

**Possible partners:**

Home Office

- Financial support for the CitySafe Co-Ordinator, for training of the CitySafe Reps and for the publicity and accreditation of the scheme.
- Using their influence to encourage large organisations to join the partnership, eg. Royal Mail.

Mayor of London

- Financial support for the CitySafe Co-Ordinator, for training of the CitySafe Reps and for the publicity and accreditation of the scheme.
- Access to GLA employees and contractors staff, in particular Transport for London, to engage with the programme, eg. Tube cleaners, train station staff.

The Metropolitan Police

- Ensure that local Safer neighbourhood Teams connected up to any CitySafe Reps in their patch, providing support and sharing knowledge.

Borough Councils

- Financial support for the CitySafe Co-Ordinator, for training of the CitySafe Reps and for the publicity and accreditation of the scheme.
- Access and encouragement to local authority employees and contractors'/providers' staff to engage with this programme.

Schools

- Access to young people to understand the specific local problems and secure their co-operation with the project.
- Volunteers amongst the older students and teachers to be CitySafe

Transport companies

- Co-operate with CitySafe in improving supervision on specific bus routes / train routes.
- Offer free transport to CitySafe Street Reps in return for their efforts.

Employers eg. Royal Mail, Primary Care Trust, Market Traders Association

- Those employers that have significant numbers of employees on the streets could encourage staff to be trained as CitySafe Reps.

## Related responses and connection to CitySafe

### PCSO's and Safer Neighborhood Teams.

Police Community Support Officers and higher police presence at street level within a locality are having a beneficial effect. A common comment is that the presence of people whether police or PCSO stops ASB from occurring. With CitySafe we have the opportunity to increase this type of intervention by increasing the number of individuals involved as "eyes and ears" within the community.

### Neighbourhood Watch.

The perception of Neighbourhood Watch, particularly amongst young people, is that it is a symptom of a community where older people are suspicious of young people and that the purpose is to spy on groups of young people and report them. CitySafe aims to take the positive aspects of this scheme, that local people are involved in the guardianship of their area, but change the tone to one of building relationships and countering fear.

### Quotes on

*"Teenage behaviour has always been a cause of adult concerns. But something important has changed in the way adult society perceives teenagers today. For better or worse, large numbers of British adults have become totally estranged from the world of young people. Many adults, especially the elderly, feel anxious, even scared, when they encounter groups of youths in the streets... The problem is the inability of adults to take responsibility for guiding and socialising children. Men and women rarely interact with children other than their own, often feeling too awkward to intervene when children misbehave and too confused to give support to those who are in trouble. A long time before they become teenagers, children sense and know that they face no sanctions from any adult other than their parents."* **(Frank Furedi, Adults Behaving Badly, 2006)**

*"Once I would have been able to answer questions about the families in my street because I would have seen and even talked to the children playing outside - skipping, kicking balls around, chasing each other - and I would have seen and heard the parents, too, popping out to call their offspring for a meal or bedtime or to admonish a child who had upset or injured another. Now children are invisible and so, as a consequence, are most adults.... So the more conscientious parents, afraid of drug pushers, bullies, paedophiles, speeding cars, or just "bad company", think it safer to keep their children indoors and fully occupied with swotting for SATs and learning the violin. The streets become dominated by children from the more antisocial and dysfunctional families, and they are restrained only when somebody calls the police and demands an ASBO or a dispersal order."* **(Peter Wilby, The Guardian, August 2007)**