



Introduction



Each year, I have the absolute privilege of attending the National Problem Solving Conference in Burton Upon Trent.

Practitioners, portfolio leads and senior managers from across the UK and Northern Ireland come together to contribute and develop in the problem-solving field, all for the benefit of our communities, organisations and staff.

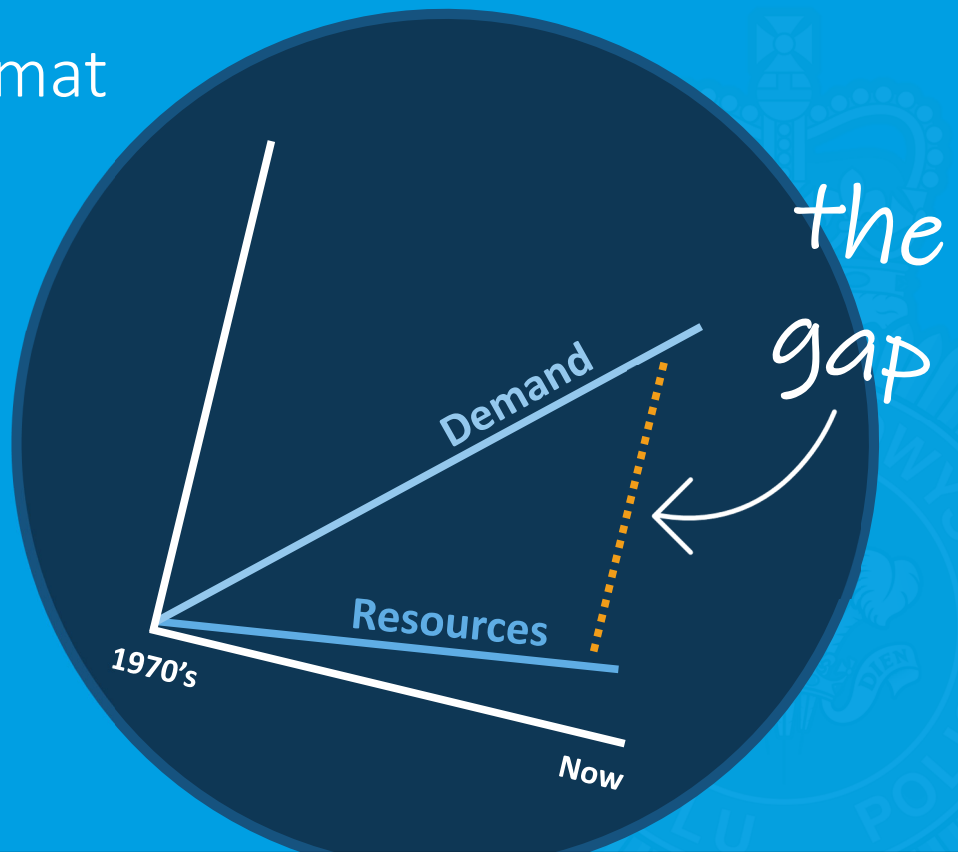
This presentation has been adapted from an input I routinely deliver to acting and newly-qualified Sergeants. It's the 'hard-sell' for getting people on the problem-solving bus.

We [the police service] are missing a trick.

Effective problem-solving is the essential means of reducing demand and vulnerability. It really works and it's underpinned by a strong and compelling evidence base.

Problem solving provides us [the police service] with the means to create a space to pivot towards emergent demands, especially at a time when increasing demand is often mistakenly considered **inevitable** or **unalterable**... which simply isn't the case!

'POP' on a beer mat



Back in 2001, the dilemma that we face in modern policing was scribbled on the back of a beer mat by **Michael Barton**, the former Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary.

The principle behind 'POP on a beer mat' is simple...

Since the 1970's, demand on police has risen quicker than any rises in police resources. This has created a gap which impacted on service delivery and has over-stretched the people in our organisation.

Reducing demand is possible but it requires some 'out of the box' thinking, especially as increasing resources is unrealistic. The way that we use resources is key in achieving this.



Policing, as you're all aware, is about the law, legislation, policy and procedure. There are standing orders, routine orders, operational orders... we have tactics, standard operating procedures, models and frameworks that stipulate how almost everything that we do must be done.

We're actually really comfortable with processes and frameworks to get the job done.

National Decision Model



Operationally, we find ourselves dealing with incidents that present a degree of threat or risk and, in those dynamic situations, we use the NDM as a framework to make decisions; often quickly, following specific parameters, reacting to symptoms or presenting issues based on the information available to us at that time.

There's absolutely a place for the NDM and I'm not here to tell you otherwise... BUT... **making decisions** and **problem-solving** are very different beasts.



In terms of solving problems, sustainably, ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL.

Policing, to a large extent, has been about deploying tried and tested methods. We often limit ourselves to 'criminal' outcomes and, historically, take a scattergun approach to intervention deliver in the hope that one of those old methods will 'do the trick'...

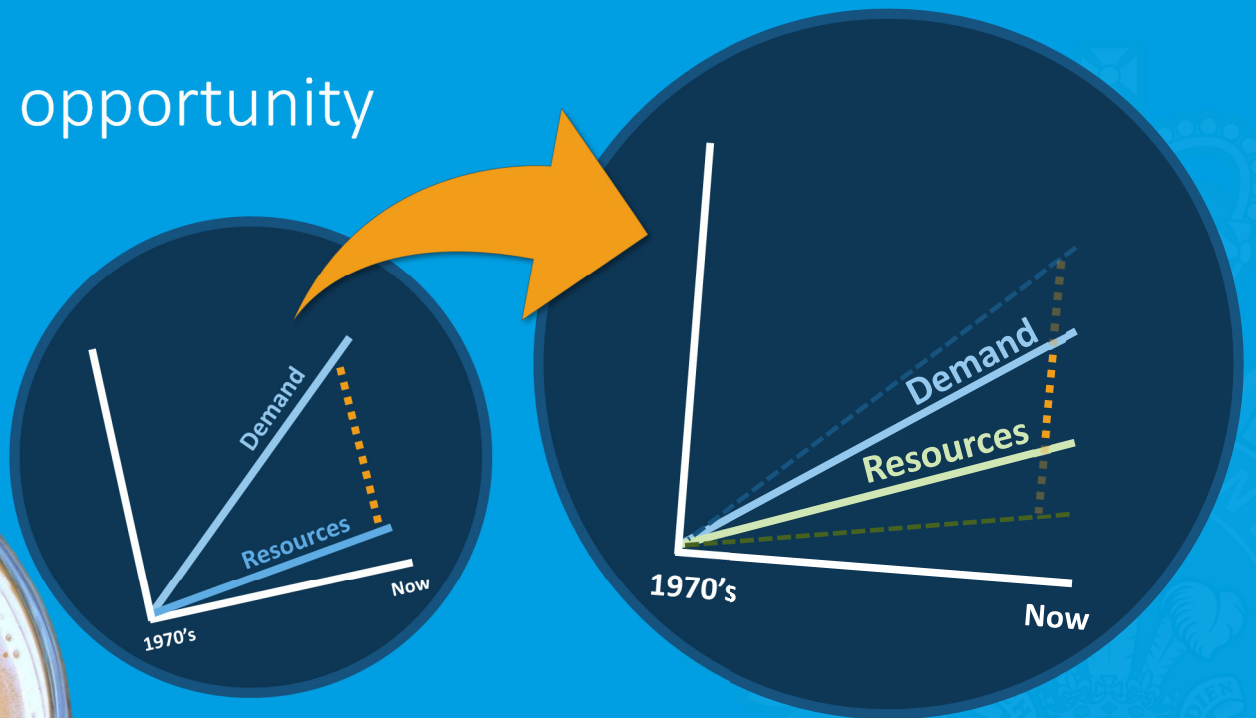
... there may be short-term gains but, in the end, the problem comes back, the situation escalates, the vulnerability is critical.

It's also true that, in taking that 'scatter' approach, we can never be sure which intervention (or combination of) was actually successful.

With little or no assessment or evaluation, we're forced to continue using all available responses for recurring and developing issues but, again, have no evidence of our results and learn little from the process.

POP requires a departure from the more traditional policing methods and is most successful (it's essential) when conducted collaboratively with our partners and communities.

... the opportunity



Remember the beer mat?

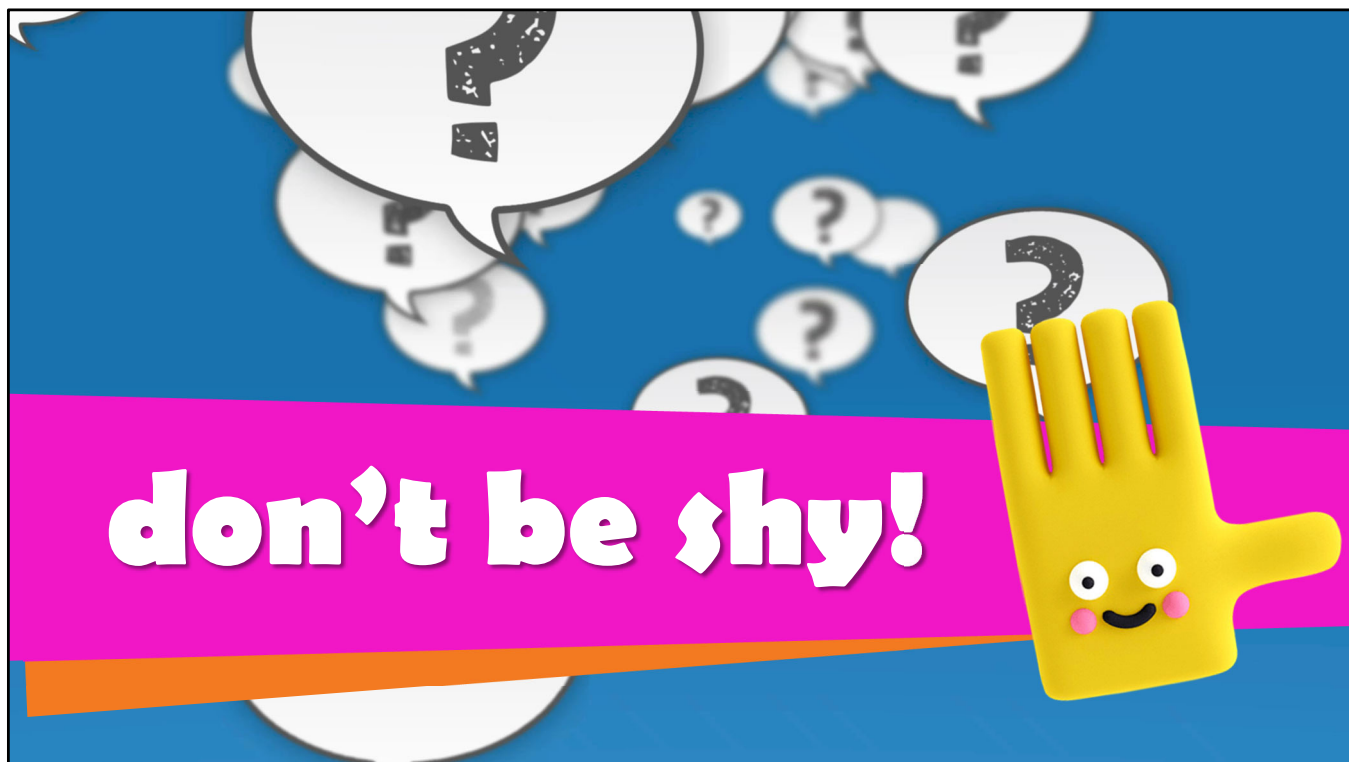
So the good news, of course, that we can do something about it.

Working together, ultimately, is about pooling our resources... and... in doing so... recurring issues are targeted and resolved sustainably... which reduces that demand on public services more generally.

So effective problem-solving is capable of driving down demand AND vulnerability by working collaboratively with partners and communities to UNDERSTAND problems and develop tailored solutions to tackle enabling conditions/ underlying causes.



Problem-solving, therefore, is a real game changer in terms of working **SMARTER NOT HARDER** to find sustainable solutions to problems we face in policing.



SHOW OF HANDS

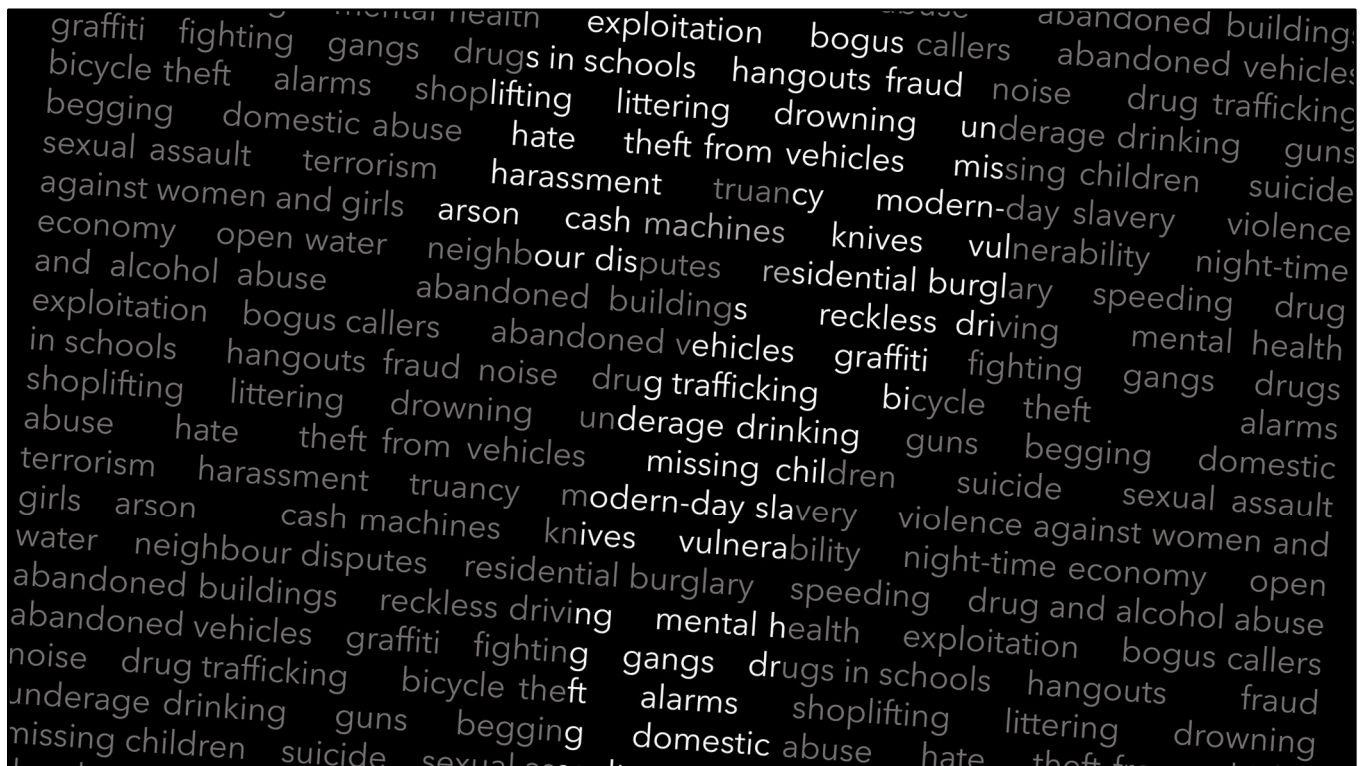
QUESTIONS

What do you know about problem-solving?

Have you heard about oSARA?

Have you used oSARA?

What kind of situations in policing would benefit from a structured problem-solving approach?



The opportunities are almost endless.

Begging, burglary, hate, knives, modern slavery, terrorism, violence... not limited to those, of course!!

The model can also be used for any issue.

QUESTION

What are the biggest problems or challenges you face in your roles?



So perhaps the first things we need to remember is the effectively problem-solving cannot be achieved if we work in isolation.

We tend to work in our own little silos. Whilst we might be aware of the work of others, sometimes it can become a bit 'them and us'.

But, thinking back to the beer mat, partnership working (internal or external) is about sharing information and resources to develop and deliver solutions the benefit everyone.



problem-oriented policing

refers to the strategy and infrastructure required for problem-solving to occur

an approach for improving police effectiveness



PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

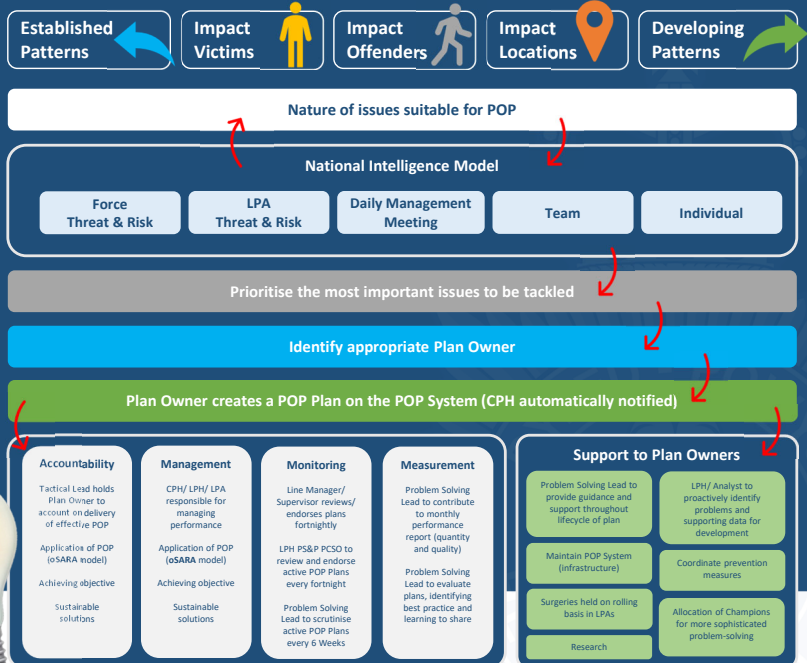
Problem-oriented policing (POP) is a policing strategy that involves the identification and analysis of problems in order to develop effective and sustainable solutions in response.

As a basic approach to service delivery, we are committed to embedding problem-solving as a core discipline across the organisation.

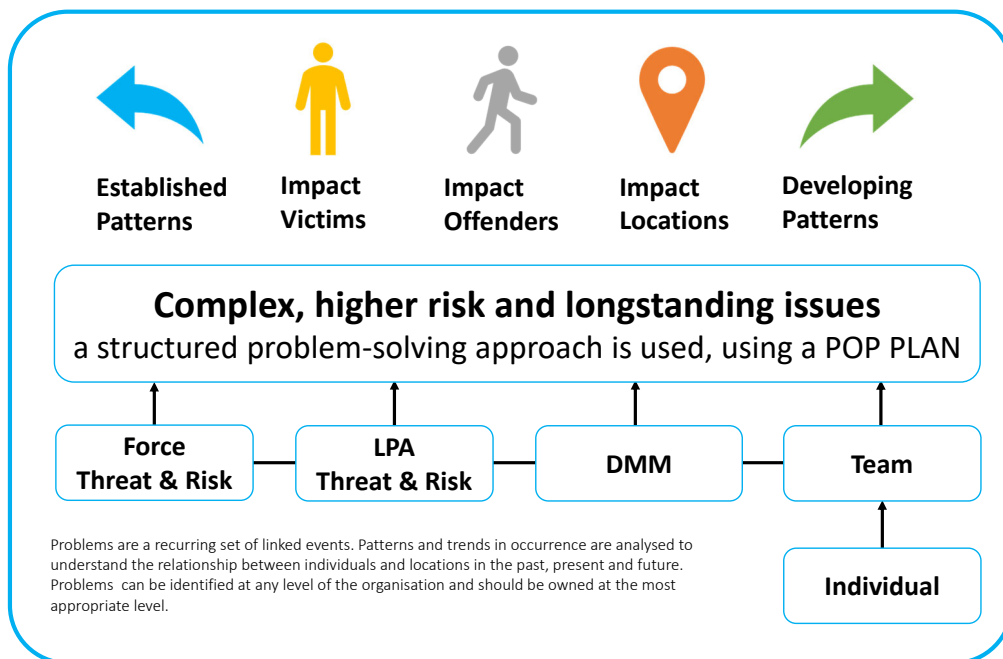
'smarter interventions in policing'



Heddlu Police
DYFED-POWYS



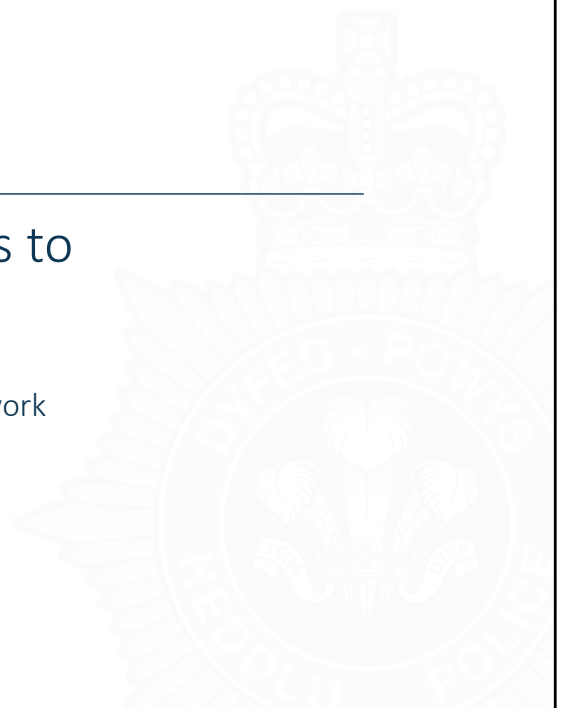
The effectiveness of problem-oriented policing cannot be contested



problem-solving

the process of finding solutions to problems

the steps and processes that individuals follow to work through a problem and the response



‘oSARA’

the problem-solving model used
by Dyfed-Powys Police

oSARA (SARA) is the problem-solving model most
commonly used in policing



Problem-solving, problem-solving policing, POP are all, therefore, perhaps best
described in the concept of oSARA

Skilled Helper Model | Gerard Egan (Counselling & Psychotherapy)

1 **Exploration Phase**
What's going on? (present)

2 **Challenge Phase**
What do I need or want instead? (preferred)

3 **Planning Phase**
How do I get what I need or want? (action)



Gerard Egan published his work 'The Skilled Helper' in 1975.

He drew on an eclectic mix of counselling theories to create a pragmatic, three-stage model for helping practitioners of any kind. In it, he set out to enable people to, 'manage their problems in living more effectively and develop unused opportunities more fully' and also to 'help people become better at helping themselves in their everyday lives'.

It created a framework to help people move forward.





SCANNING

Is there a problem?

What's happening? Established or developing **patterns**?
Who's involved? Impact and risk? Do think it's a problem?



ANALYSIS

What are the root causes?

What's the actual problem? **WHY** does it occur?
What are the underlying issues? What is the **root cause**?



OBJECTIVE

What do you want to achieve?

What do you want to achieve? This is the end game or preferred situation. **SMART**.



RESPONSE

What will you do? Let's do it!

Develop and deliver your response plan, based on your analysis. Intended outcomes, unintended consequences and contingencies. (EBP and 'Clear, Hold, Build')



ASSESSMENT

Did it work?

How're you getting on? Objective achieved? Can you attribute change to your interventions? Results, failings and learning

oSARA...

- ✓ provides structure to problem-solving activity
- ✓ underpins problem-solving in Dyfed-Powys Police
- ✓ promotes partnership working
- ✓ identifies the root cause of a problem
- ✓ develops sustainable solutions
- ✓ improves public confidence
- ✓ reduces demand and vulnerability

**DOES
EXACTLY
WHAT IS SAYS
ON THE
TIN**



Implementation and sustainability

The portfolio delivery focuses on **three core conditions** at a strategic level:

- Leadership
- Developing staff, and
- Infrastructure

The above all aim to ensure that the model is promoted and actively used across business, that sufficient time and space is created to solve-problems, that relevant training is delivered, and that processes and systems (IT) are continuously developed to maximise effectiveness.

The force lead responsibilities include:

- the problem-solving model
- governance (POP Steering Group)
- performance and demand
- the POP System (infrastructure) and oSARA in Niche
- scrutiny of problem-solving activity, providing continuous guidance and support
- evaluation
- Tilley Awards, Knowledge Hub and Practice Bank
- Learning the Lessons Library (force)



Leadership

Creating an enabling environment with a clear long-term vision and strategy for delivering POP.

Police leaders play a key role in embedding POP:

- overseeing the practical task of introducing, resourcing and managing the shift to a problem-oriented way of working
- cultivating an environment where staff are actively encouraged, empowered and equipped to do effective problem-solving

Leadership and senior endorsement are consistently identified as critical factors in implementing POP. You have a key role in embedding POP. This won't happen overnight nor will it happen without your support.

There are a number of ways in which you, as police leaders, can set the stage for POP to take root;

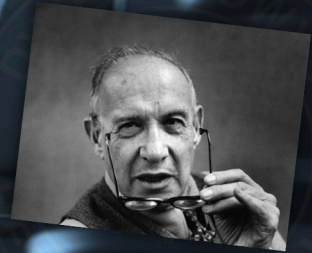
- **Understand POP**
- **Have a POP Plan** (for the delivery of POP) – efforts at police reform encounter challenges. Implementing POP is no different. Resistance rooted in the prevailing police culture is common and to be expected. Conducting an organisational audit when devising your implementation plan is advisable (refer to 'Self-Assessment Tool') as this allows us to judge the organisations readiness for POP and identify any obstacles that might influence implementation.
- **Decide on the penetration of POP.** Is POP to be embedded force-wide or in specific departments. Currently, with a couple of exceptions, problem-solving is mostly observed in Neighbourhood Policing. There are two principles to consider here: (1) the ability to assign ownership of identified problems and (2) empowering individuals to take ownership of problems without the need to pass decision making upwards.

- **Choose a label and problem-solving model.** We currently use problem-oriented policing and the oSARA model (recommended by the College of Policing).
- **Allocate resources in ways that support POP.** Lack of time is a major barrier to problem-solving. One of the reasons why problem-solving is more commonly practiced by neighbourhood policing teams is because their time tends to be protected from requests to respond to calls for service. Allowing officers time to problem-solve is crucial but clearly challenging, especially in periods of austerity. To be able to effectively allocate resources to problem-solving, it's necessary to quantify the levels and resources of demand in force. With a review of repeat calls and repeat victimisation we can consider (1) the method timing and effectiveness of police responses to calls for service, (2) whether specialist units are required to tackle major sources of demand and (3) whether time-consuming processes and activities which add little value to problem-solving could be streamlined (known as failure demand).
- **Recognise the organisational culture: commit and be faithful to POP.** POP flourishes when those who are expected to do problem-solving understand and buy into a shared vision. Consider the POP implementation plan, once agreed, the senior executives should commit to and live by that plan, relentlessly communicating throughout the organisation to achieve that mass buy-in.
- **Get involved.**
- **Support your problem-solvers.** POP is not conventional police work. It requires a different way of working; innovation that challenges known police tactics. Problem-solving, given the multifaceted nature of problems faced police, mean that success won't always be achieved. Recognising that failure is an opportunity to learn and evolve is a different perspective for us.
- **Think about your legacy from the start and avoid complacency.**
- **Demand high standards from problem-solving.** As POP embeds, routine reality testing is vital, paying to attention to whether or not what is promised is actually delivered. There's a tendency to jump to a response and limited analysis and assessment are common.



CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST

Peter Drucker





John Rankin-Hill
Constable, Force Problem Solving Lead

