

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

Welcome to the Community Safety Open Learning Programme.

This text, 'Introduction to the Community Safety Open Learning Programme', provides guidance on studying as an open learning student and introduces the key concepts on which the Community Safety Open Learning Programme is founded.

By the time you have completed this text you should be able to:

- Describe the scope of the open learning programme
- Create a study plan suited to your individual needs
- Define key concepts such as community safety, crime, fear of crime, victim, and community
- Outline the core themes which run throughout the open learning programme

Your module planners (supplied separately) list the materials that you should have received when you enrolled. Check that they have all arrived before you continue to work through this introduction. If you don't have all the materials listed contact Tina Shortman your Student Advisor to obtain the missing ones.

2 The community safety open learning modules

2.1 Scope of the Open Learning Programme

A range of open learning modules concerned with community safety and crime prevention have been developed for this Programme.

Enhancing community safety involves improving the quality of life for people by reducing crime and fear and providing the support that vulnerable groups, including victims, need to feel safe and secure in their living environment.

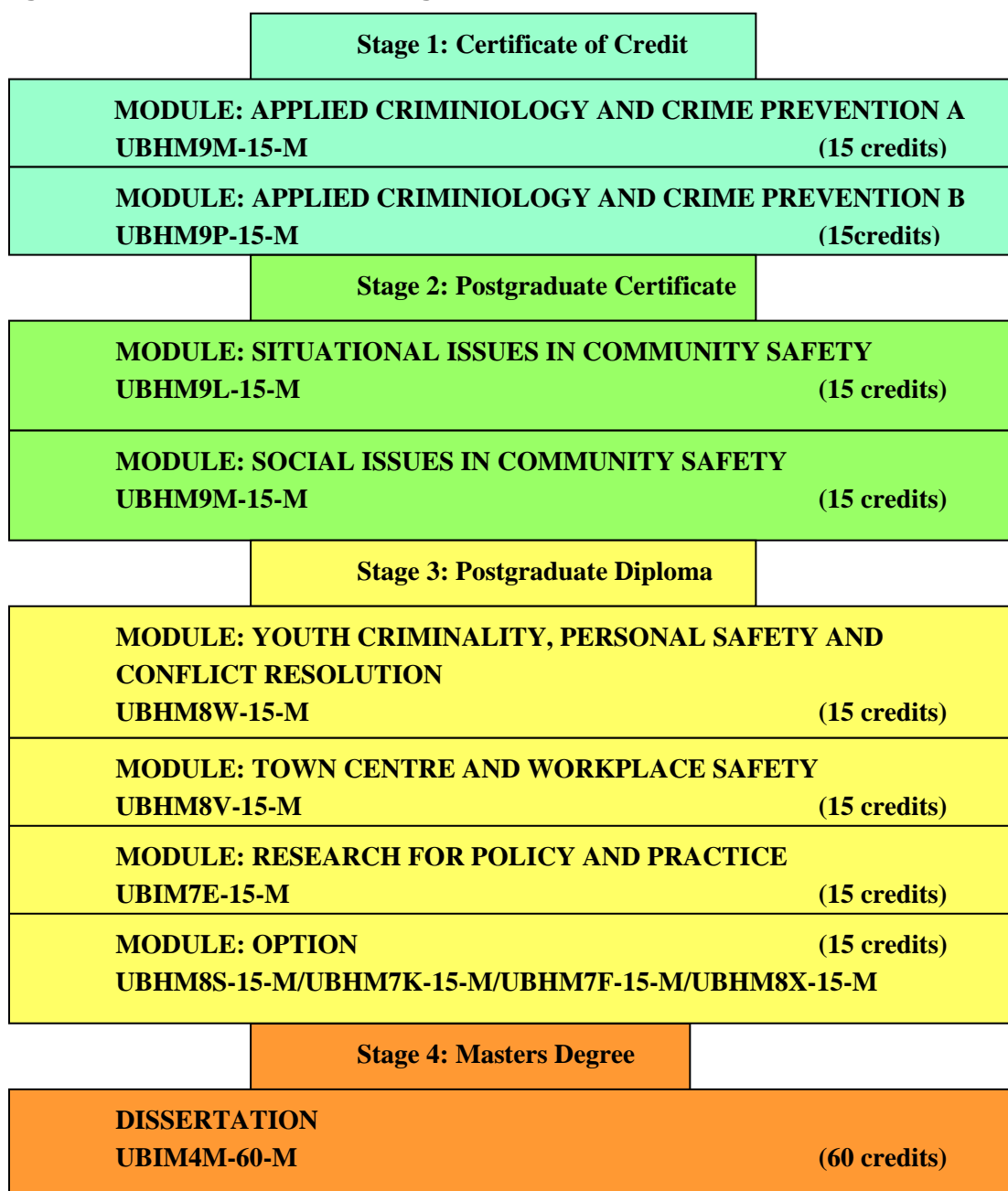
For this reason, the open learning programme is aimed at a wide range of potential students, including residents, town planners, housing managers, wardens, police, probation officers, fire-fighters, architects, social workers, youth workers, community workers and academics and researchers.

Because the open learning programme targets so many different people, it has been designed in a modular format so that you can select the modules that suit your particular situation and interest. There are four stages to the programme of study each taking on average about 1 year to complete (although you can choose to take a shorter amount of time depending on your judgement and circumstances). The four stages are:

- Certificate of Credit
- Postgraduate Certificate
- Postgraduate Diploma
- Masters Degree

Although it is possible to study individual modules rather than a full certificated course, we strongly recommend that you work through the modules in the sequence outlined in the chart below. The modules are designed like building blocks and set the foundation for the next stage of the course. Students can stop and gain a qualification at the appropriate stage, or can continue right through to the MA degree. The diagram below illustrates the structure of the course.

Figure 1 The Structure of the Programme



Further details about the content of these modules can be found within the course prospectus.

Distance learning material and group work

The modules involve the use of distance learning material. This means that you will be able to study wherever you live, and whether you are in full time work, have child care responsibilities or are unemployed.

If you go on to study for the Diploma, you will be required to study further modules, some of which are shared with postgraduate students studying for other community and environmental awards.

To obtain the MA, you also have to write a dissertation based on a piece of original research you have carried out. You will have a dissertation tutor to support you with the dissertation.

Tone and level

Because the range of people who have a part to play in enhancing community safety is so wide, we recognise that some students could be operating at a senior level in their organisation, with many years' experience, and at the other extreme, some students could have no work experience at all. In order to make sure the modules are accessible to all these groups, we have designed the materials so that students need not have any previous qualifications, although we do assume you have been actively involved in community or neighbourhood issues and are confident about reading and writing. There are no exams and, if you wish, you may study the modules for interest only, although if you change your mind you have the option of enrolling separately for the tutor marked assignments. The modules are flexible in their design, so that those of you with more experience can work through sections with which you feel confident at a fast pace. Some of the work will be of a reflective nature, which you will record in a log/journal (see section 2.4 for further details about the log/journal).

2.2 How do the modules relate to each other?

Each module is designed to be self-contained - you can study it on its own. Unless you have a lot of knowledge about other aspects of crime prevention and community safety, your learning from an isolated module may not be as valuable as if you had studied some of the other connected modules (as shown on the diagram; figure 1 on page 5).

2.3 Assessment

In many cases you may be interested in receiving some kind of formal credit for the study you have engaged in and the learning you have achieved. For example, you may need to show that you have fulfilled certain Continuing Professional Development requirements, you may wish to accumulate credits that you can transfer to another course or qualification, or you may wish to acquire the Certificate of Credit in Community Safety, the Postgraduate Certificate in Community Safety, the Diploma or the MA offered by this programme. In these cases your work and learning will have to be assessed, as follows.

Log/journal

You will get most benefit from your studies if you reflect on what you have learned and relate it to your work or local environment. The log/journal is designed to help you to do this. The Log Journal is an important part of your study. It is designed to help you reflect on the material that you have learned in the workbook and apply it to both your practical work experience and your thoughts and wider reading.

The Log Journal is presented so that the Learning Outcomes of each part of a module are included at the top of the Log Journal page. These can act as pointers for you to structure your journal but they aren't questions that need to be answered (for further guidance refer to appendix 3).

In the Log Journal it is highly recommended that you include examples from your own experience or from your observations and wider reading. It is not advisable to include text directly from the workbook.

Although the Log Journal is not formally assessed (it will either pass or fail), it will be scrutinised by your tutor who will look for evidence that you have absorbed the information within the module, reflected upon it and applied it. It may be useful for you to consider submitting your Log Journal for

comments from your tutor before you submit your assignment. In this way you will benefit from the comments about your progress and be able to use the feedback to inform your assignment. Otherwise the Log Journal should be submitted alongside the assignment.

Assignment Plan

It is common that people leave out the most important part of 'planning' an assignment. In a hurry to complete work, you may not prioritise time spent in the 'planning' stage. One of the skills that you will need is to be selective with material in order to present a comprehensive and cohesive structure to your assignment. We have produced a guide to writing assignments (contact your student advisor if you have not received this). In here you will find templates (that are also included in the module planners) to allow you to plan your assignment. Submitting this plan (which should not be longer than one side of A4) to your tutor for initial feedback on the content of your assignment could help enormously to ensure that you are on the right track with your assignment.

Tutor marked assignment

The module assessment will be based upon your completion of an assignment, which will be in the form of an essay or report linked to the learning outcomes of the module. Upon satisfactory completion of both the log/journal and a tutor marked assignment you will receive a formal credit for the module you have been studying. This can be used as credit towards one of the Certificates in Community Safety and may be recognised as credit towards other qualifications of the same level. (The Course is compatible with the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme recognised by most British Higher Education Institutions) You will be provided with guidance about each assignment when you are sent the study materials for each module.

2.4 Hand – in – Dates

Each time you begin a module you will be required to choose a 'hand –in- date' (the deadline for your log journal and assignment). The Student Advisor will be able to help you to decide on an achievable deadline.

In due course, your coursework will be submitted to an Examination Board, this is usually one month after your coursework submission date. These happen three times per year and it is likely that your work will be sent to the next scheduled exam board. The Student Advisor will be able to help you determine these dates, and together with your tutor will also monitor your progress throughout in meeting your deadline.

It is really important that you meet this deadline to ensure that you do not incur late work penalties. If you fail an assignment you can always re-take it, but if you do not hand in any work you will have to repeat the whole module (and pay for it).

There is a procedure for the late submission of work and extenuating circumstances, so please contact your tutor or student advisor if this situation arises. **It is really important that you contact the student advisor if you are having issues with completing your assignments by the submission deadline.** If we know that there is a problem we can try to find the most effective way to support you. For further information, please refer to the Student Handbook.

When you have finished your log journal or assignment send it to **THE PROJECT ROOM** at this address: The Project Room, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of the West of England, Bristol, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol, BS16 1QY

2.5 Diploma and MA

You have to complete the Postgraduate Certificate stage before you can proceed to the Diploma and the MA. You can stop and receive an award at any of the stages, but you can only receive one award cumulatively (eg: you cannot be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate and an MA – you will just get the MA).

3 Studying by open learning

If you have only studied in a traditional way until now, the idea of studying by open learning may be a little daunting. First of all let's look at some of the benefits:

- You can study when and where you want.
- You can study at your own pace, subject to deadlines agreed in advance.
- You can make mistakes in private.
- You can miss out the bits which are not relevant to you.
- You can save money and time because you do not have to travel to and from the university.

Of course, there are disadvantages too. For example,

- You may feel isolated because you do not have the company of other students.
- You may find it hard to motivate yourself to study without having to attend college at certain times.
- You will rarely meet your Tutor face to face.

Open learning courses are designed to overcome some of these disadvantages. For example, you will have tutors to help you with your studies and you are encouraged to keep in contact with your tutor via telephone or/and e-mail. You will have a Personal Tutor, who will remain the same no matter how many modules you study. Your Personal Tutor can advise you about specific content of the course and how to structure your assessed work. Your Tutor can help you if you have any difficulties coping because you are studying independently, or if you have any problems with the activities or self-assessment questions and feedback. You also have access to other tutors who are experts in specific subject matter; although in some cases the Subject Tutor and Personal Tutor may be the same person.

Another person you will have regular contact with is the Postgraduate Student Advisor, who will help you organise your study timetable and assess your progress. You will find information about study support for open learners in Section 6 of this Introduction.

The modules are studied entirely by distance learning. We encourage you to join our Student Network so that you can contact other students who may be studying the same module as you, to discuss your work and to share ideas about community safety problems. You will receive a username and password when you register on the course. This can be used to access the Faculty's internal intranet (fbc web) where discussions relating to each of the modules can take place and you can benefit from the support of others who are studying the same module. These discussions will be monitored by the Programme Leader (Dr. Sara Williams).

Another way in which we try to overcome the disadvantages of studying independently is to write the materials in a 'user-friendly' style. This means that the authors write as though they are talking to you directly, just as they might in a lecture or a tutorial. The workbook is organised into manageable chunks of study time, called sections. Each section is designed so that you can complete it at one study session. Within each section you will find activities. Most of these activities will ask you to make some kind of response and space is provided for you to write in the workbook. We don't ever need to see the responses you have written into your workbook – they are your own private comments, but you may wish to draw on them or modify them to include in your log/journals and assignments. The answer or comment on the activity appears immediately after the activity, so if you don't wish to peek at this before completing the question, you may find it helpful to cover the page below the line with a piece of paper.

Try completing the following activity now.

Activity

Read the following list of features of open learning materials. Tick the appropriate boxes to indicate which features appeal to you. Put a question mark next to the features which concern you.

- You can work at your own pace, subject to deadlines agreed in advance
- You can choose where to work
- You can choose when to work
- You will be working on your own, with back-up from your Tutor
- The layout of the material is attractive, with key points emphasised
- The materials includes activities for you to complete
- You are encouraged to write on the materials
- The activities give you the opportunity to make mistakes in private
- You are given feedback immediately after each activity
- If you choose, you can look at the answer before completing the question
- You can work through the material in a variety of ways
- You are responsible for organising your own learning
- The activities help you to link the material to your own situation
- The activities encourage you to interact with the material

Comment

If any of the disadvantages of open learning really worry you then perhaps open learning is not for you. Contact your Personal Tutor if you wish to discuss any problems further.

If you want to improve your skills as an open learner, or you are returning to study after a long gap, we suggest you obtain one or more of the following books:

Powells (1999) *Returning to Study – A Guide for Professionals* Open University Press

Rowntree, D (1991) *Teach yourself with Open Learning*. Sphere Books

Talbot, C.J. (2003) *Studying at a distance: a guide for students* Open University Press

Access to the Library Facilities and Further Reading

At the end of most sections in your workbook you will find details of recommended further reading. Because you are likely to be studying at a distance from the University, we have placed

photocopies of many of the recommended articles in the Reader that accompanies the Workbook. As a student enrolled for a course at the University of the West of England, you are entitled to use the University Library. The Library at UWE houses a good collection of community safety reference materials, including books, periodicals, newspapers, and a variety of computer facilities for tracking down information. You can access and perform searches for information in the library through the university website.

You should have received a 'Library Services' handbook. Contact the Postgraduate Student Advisor (PGSA) if you have not received this. This contains a wealth of info about services that the library offers (including special services for distance learners) and all the contact numbers that you require.

You should also be able to borrow reference materials from your own local University library under a scheme called '*UK Libraries Plus*'. This is a co-operative venture between higher education libraries which enables distance learning students to borrow material from other libraries in close proximity to where you live or work. To check if your local University library participates in this scheme, please consult the website: www.uklibrariesplus.ac.uk.

4 How to make the most of your module materials

We are conscious of the fact that a wide range of people are involved in promoting community safety, including architects, town planners, surveyors, housing managers, wardens, residents' leaders, police, probation officers, fire-fighters, social workers, health visitors, youth workers, community workers, community safety staff and teachers. Students for these community safety modules are likely to include any or all of these groups. Not all students will be working. Some students will be in a senior position in their organisation, others will be in junior positions and some may be full time students. The only thing this wide range of students have in common is that they have an interest in improving community safety. Different people have different styles of learning and bring with them different experiences and interests. For example, at one extreme there will be students who will work through all the activities, never peeking at the answers first, and at the other extreme there will be students who are nervous of making mistakes and prefer to check the answer and then work out how it was arrived at. The advantage of open learning is that it allows you to decide for yourself how to work through the module. This section explains how to use your workbook to meet your particular learning needs.

Objectives

At the beginning of each workbook you will find a list of learning objectives. You should study these carefully to work out whether the module is going to cover the ground that you expected. The workbook is divided into sections, and the objectives covered in each section are clearly stated in the first paragraph, or 'overview'. Keep the learning objectives in mind as you work through each section. The log/journal will give you the opportunity to reflect on their relevance to your work situation or local environment.

Activities

The activities are an integral part of the workbook so that you will not be able to make sense of the workbook if you skip them. They are designed to help you interact with the information in the text and link the information with your own experience. Contact your Tutor if you have any difficulties. Many of the activities are based on a case study of an imaginary neighbourhood called Yourville (see appendix 1). Becoming familiar with Yourville gives you the opportunity to complete the activities even if you do not have a great deal of knowledge about your local neighbourhood. One of the advantages of using open learning materials is that they allow you to make mistakes in private. If you are one of the many people who have developed strategies for avoiding making mistakes in learning situations, you may feel quite alarmed about trying out the activities and writing down your response in the workbook in case you get the answer 'wrong'. Often there are no 'right answers' to the activity and this will be made clear in the comments that follow the activities. Although you can learn a great deal by making mistakes, don't worry if you are the kind of person who likes to look at the answer first. Another advantage of open learning materials is that they allow students to learn in different ways.

Sequence

The workbooks have been carefully sequenced to introduce the information in the most logical manner. Jargon is explained when it is first introduced. This means that the workbooks have not been designed on a 'pick and mix' basis. As we have said, different students will want to use these materials in different ways, but we recommend that you start at the beginning and work through. One of the benefits of open learning is that it allows you to work at your own pace, you don't have to keep in line with other students. You are encouraged to reflect on what you have learned at the

end of each section and you can go more slowly through the sections that are of particular interest to you.

Summary and evaluation

At the end of each section you will find a summary and an activity that gives students the opportunity to evaluate their progress so far and to relate what they have learned to their own work situation and thinking. It can be tempting to skip this activity, but it is probably the most valuable part of the whole section. It is no good working through a module, only to forget what you have covered a few weeks later. This is the time to ensure that you can apply what you have learned to real life. The activity will help you plan your entry for the log/journal. If you have enrolled for the Tutor marked assignment, you can also use the activity to plan your assignment.

Further reading

At the end of most sections you will find the heading Further Reading and Extension. It contains suggestions for visits and sources of additional information as well as the titles of articles and books. Photocopies of essential reading material will be available in the Readers which are provided as part of the learning materials. You may want to conduct your own research through using the Universities on-line databases to identify all the latest research in the area that you are studying.

Yourville Case study

In order to enhance learning and to ensure that the material is applicable to 'real life' situations we have developed a case study. Yourville, which is in the borough of 'Ourtown' has been developed to reflect a neighbourhood with some of the common issues that may affect the community safety of any community. Yourville runs through all the modules and is used to illustrate how certain issues may be dealt with.

Some of the assignments will also refer to Yourville. You will find a photograph, a plan and a brief description of the estate in Appendix 1 at the end of this Introduction.

5.1 **Your study aims**

Before you launch into your workbook it is a good idea to take some time to reflect on what your expectations are and why you have decided to spend approximately fifty hours of your time studying this topic.

Activity

Jot down your reasons for studying this introduction module. It will help if you include as many reasons as you can think of, including any benefits you anticipate and exactly what you hope to learn.

Comment

Now turn to the list of objectives at the beginning of the workbook and compare these with your own study objectives. In order to do this you may find it helpful to:

- *Tick the workbook objectives which match your own*
 - *Place two ticks next to any objectives that you already feel confident about (If there are too many of these, do you really need to study this module?)*
 - *Consider the remaining workbook objectives. Tick the ones that, although not part of your initial list, are relevant to you.*
 - *Identify the personal study objectives that will not be met by the module. If they form a substantial part of your list, contact your Personal Tutor to discuss what you should do. It may be that these objectives are covered by a different module.*
-

Comment

If there is a poor match between your personal objectives and those for this module, then you need to consider whether you should really be studying it. If you cannot draw up a study plan which will help you to meet most of your personal objectives, then you may find it hard to find the motivation to study. Contact your Personal Tutor if you have any concerns.

5.2 Creating your study plan

It can be very hard to find time to study amongst all your other commitments. However, one of the requirements of the course is to agree deadlines for the submission of your coursework, which ensures that your studies don't lose momentum, or that you don't lose the motivation to finish. For this reason, we recommend that you find time to study for approximately 10 hours per week. However, there are no hard and fast rules about this. You will probably find it hard to concentrate for more than two hours at a stretch. This means that you should try to find 5 x 2 hour slots in your busy week which you can set aside for study time.

Activity

Use the template below (or something similar) to draw up a timetable of a typical week in your life at the moment and note the days and times when you are able to study. Try to be realistic about the pace at which you are likely to work. Don't make unrealistic expectations of yourself – it is all too easy to lose the motivation to continue if you start dropping behind. We recommend that you try to find 5 x 2 hour slots, but some people will be able to study for longer than this and others will have difficulty keeping up this pace. Consider where you will study too. It's no good timetabling in a study slot at 6pm if your children will be playing computer games in the same room. If you know other people studying the same module you may like to timetable a session when you all meet up (See the Section on support)

Day/time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

Comment

Example Study Timetable:

Day/time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
6am-8am	STUDY						
8am-6pm	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Shopping	Family
6pm-8pm	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family
8pm-10pm		STUDY	STUDY		Leisure	Leisure	STUDY

The timetable above has been drawn up by a student who is in full time work. If this is your situation, you may be able to negotiate study time at your work place. However, this will only succeed if you can find a quiet spot, uninterrupted by telephone calls and so on, for a period of 1 – 2 hours. You will need the full support of your colleagues to achieve this (see section on support). If you are studying at home, you will need to decide at which time of the day you study best. For example are you an early bird or a night owl? Some people prefer to make time at the beginning of the day to fit in studying. Don't timetable out all your leisure activities or you will find that

studying becomes a chore and you will resent the time you spend on it. If you have access to a reference library, you may find it easier to concentrate there rather than at home.

Once you have identified your study sessions, you should then draw up a study plan which identifies when you intend to study the various sections in the module workbooks. You will need to do this each time you start a new module. The purpose of the plan is to help you monitor your own progress, but it should only act as a guide. One of the advantages of open learning is that you can re-schedule your study times to suit you, and you will probably make adjustments in the light of experience, each time you start a new module.

Whilst drawing up your study plan you need to allow time to complete:

- Each workbook (allow 1 – 2 hours per section)
- The log/journals
- The tutor marked assignments (allow up to 15 hours for each)

When planning your assessed work submission date, which your student advisor can help you with, remember to allow for a bit of additional time which may be taken up by holidays, illness, unexpected events etc.

Disciplining yourself to keep to a structured plan of study is probably the most difficult part of open learning, but our experience has shown that students who do this are more successful on the course!

The workbook

When drawing up your study plan, we recommend that you study the sections in the sequence they appear in the module workbooks. The workbook has been divided into short sections to aid you with your study plans. It is difficult to say how long it will take you to complete each section because each person works at a different pace. If a topic is completely new to you it may take you much longer than one with which you are already familiar. But as a rule of thumb, allow 1 – 2 hours to complete each section.

Log/journal

If you are keeping a log/journal you should write it up upon completion of each section. You will also need to do some summary work in it, at its completion. You should be able to do the section entries within the time allocated above, but you may need a few hours at the end of the whole module to go back through your log/journal, checking entries and drawing threads together, before sending it off.

Tutor marked assignment

You will need to allow time for completing your assignment in your study plan. Ideally, you will be preparing for the assignments as you work through the module. You will receive guidance in preparing for the assignment when you enrol. Allow up to 15 hours to complete an assignment. Each assignment will have a limit to its length, which will be referred to in the guidance. It is important that you adhere to these limits to ensure that you do not incur penalties through a reduction in marks if you exceed the limits.

To ensure consistency with academic standards any work that is submitted to the University should be written using the default format of:

Arial 11 point 1.5 line spacing on A4 paper, with a left hand margin of at least 3 cms

Pacing yourself

On average, students take about 6 months to complete the work for each module. This timescale can vary hugely according to other occupational commitments, but hardly anyone completes the work in less than 12 weeks.

Activity

Using the space below, or a blank sheet of paper, complete your own study plan for your first module. Then send this, together with your Module deadline form and Exam Date form, to the Postgraduate Student Advisor. We recommend that you also send in a copy of your study timetable. In certain cases the timetable may need to be renegotiated.

6 Study support

Section 3 referred to four forms of support which are available to help you through your studies:

- Your Personal Tutor
- The module Subject Tutor
- The Postgraduate Student Advisor
- The Student Network

Personal Tutor

Your Personal Tutor will remain the same no matter how many modules you study. He or she will be able to advise you on any aspect of the substantive content of the course and the structuring of assessed work. You should feel free (and encouraged) to contact your personal tutor as often as you want.

Subject Tutor

This Tutor will be an expert on the module subject, which means that you may have different Subject Tutors for different modules, depending on which combination you study. Sometimes the Subject Tutor and Personal Tutor may be the same person.

Your Subject Tutor will:

- Be available to support you through the completion of a module should there be anything that you want to clarify or discuss by phone or e-mail.
- Mark your assignments and give you written feedback on these and your log journals
- Issue confirmation that assignments and log/journals have been satisfactorily completed and will be available to discuss with you, by phone or by e-mail, any clarification you require about the content of your assessed work

Communicating with your tutors

You are encouraged to make regular contact with your Tutors. There are several ways to do this:

1. Telephone:

Dr. Sara Williams (0117) 32 81377

Henry Shaftoe (0117) 32 83082

2. Letter:

The Faculty of the Built Environment, The University of the West of England, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QY

3. **E-mail:**

Sara3.Williams@uwe.ac.uk

Henry.Shaftoe@uwe.ac.uk

4. **Fax (0117 328 3346)**

You can also leave a message with the Postgraduate Student Advisor (Tina Shortman) on 0117 328 3055 (voicemail is also available for messages). Tina's e-mail address is Tina.shortman@uwe.ac.uk.

Postgraduate Student Advisor (Tina Shortman)

The Postgraduate Student Advisor will:

- Help you plan your study timetable, study plan, and submission dates
- Check your progress alongside your tutor
- Help you if you have any difficulties coping because you are studying at a distance
- Advise you if you are having problems meeting your deadline
- Put you in touch with Personal/Subject tutors

Student Network

Since most of the modules are studied entirely at a distance, we are conscious of the fact that you could feel rather isolated.

On your enrolment you will be connected to the Universities intranet, and to the faculty of the built environments intranet (fbe). You can access this from the main university website. Your username and password will allow you to access the virtual learning environment where the student network is located.

Here you can begin to respond to discussions about the course. It allows you the opportunity to pose questions for other students who may have some interesting thoughts on particular modules. You are encouraged to make use of this facility – many students find it invaluable to be able to exchange information about the course. The network will prove of use not just in relation to your studies, but to your work in community safety. For example, you can use the network to;

- ▶ Discuss problems with your studies
- ▶ Share articles, publications and audio-visual materials
- ▶ Share examples of good practice in community safety that are happening in your neighbourhood or organisation
- ▶ Research ways in which other agencies are tackling community safety problems
- ▶ Arrange meetins and visits
- ▶ The Programme Leader will monitor this network regularly

Study Visits

Annually we organise study visits for enrolled students, to look at particularly interesting projects or

programmes 'on site'. These visits are optional and you will be circulated from time to time with details of proposed study visits. In the past we have visited France, New York, Manchester & Prague.

7 Evaluating and updating the modules

The Safe Neighbourhoods Unit and the University of the West of England would greatly appreciate your help in improving these materials. Community Safety is an ever evolving subject area. We have deliberately produced these materials in a word processed, loose-leaf format so that we can update and improve the modules as easily as possible. You can help us in several ways:

- ▶ By giving us feedback on the value of particular modules
- ▶ By sending us information about what is happening in your neighbourhood in the field of community safety
- ▶ By telling us any way that we can improve any aspect of the course
- ▶ Giving us ideas for new ways in which we might use the modules

Once you have studied the modules you may decide that other people would benefit from studying the materials too. Because the modules are offered by open learning they are very flexible and can be used in a variety of ways. For example, you could contact the University or the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit and ask us to run one of the modules as a short course for several members of staff in your organisation, or for a group of agencies involved in community safety in your neighbourhood.

8 Introduction to community safety

8.1 Key terms

Below we introduce some key terms and core themes that recur throughout the Community Safety Open Learning Programme. We have provided the information in the form of a glossary so that you can refer back to these headings whenever you want.

Community safety

Some people use the term community safety to cover a much broader constituency than we do. These people use the term to include prevention of accidents in the home and the street, as well as some aspects of environmental health. We intend to contain our definition within the realm of crime and fear reduction, and support for vulnerable groups and victims. The definition here is the same one which appears at the section 2.1 of this introduction.

Enhancing community safety involves improving the quality of life for people by reducing crime and fear and providing the support which vulnerable groups, including victims need to feel safe and secure in their living environment.

Community

This term has acquired a multitude of uses, but for our purposes we will use the term to refer to a local area and its people. There will be some degree of common interest between the occupants of this area. Usually the area (or community) will be an identifiable neighbourhood such as an estate or part of a town. There are no hard and fast rules about the typical size of such a community (it could contain anything between a few hundred and a few thousand occupants), but the people living and working there will normally be able to identify its boundaries.

Crime

Crime, according to the dry dictionary definition, is an act or omission prohibited and punishable by law. Since laws change from time to time, crime is therefore a relative rather than an absolute concept. In theory, what is an acceptable activity to one group of people or culture may be defined as criminal by other people or cultures. In reality most activities or omissions defined as criminal have attracted majority condemnation throughout cultures and over time; activities such as murder, theft, sexual and physical assaults are almost universally defined as criminal. Less clear cut are activities and omissions such as drug use, some sexual acts, and some types of dishonesty and neglect.

Fear of crime

In addition to the damage, trauma and disruption that many criminal acts cause, there is the separate but related problem of fear. Crime and fear often have to be tackled as separate issues, because fear does not always correlate exactly to the actual risk of being a victim of crime. There are considerable variations in fear, for instance between males and females, old and young, according to people's ethnic background, and between people living in different types of area.

Victim

Literally, a victim is someone who has had a crime or offensive act committed against them. But people can also be victims of the fear of crime (for example, they may be terrified to go out alone after dark). People in high crime areas can also feel indirectly victimised by, for example, the high level of vandalism in public areas, or by the reputation of the neighbourhood as a criminal area.

Deprivation

Deprivation, whether economical or emotional, can be a factor that influences whether someone becomes involved in offending or not. But most importantly, if you write about deprivation, remember it comes from the adjective “deprived”, not from the adjective “depraved”! Depravation (ie depravity) is completely different to deprivation, so make sure you get your spelling right!

8.2 Core themes

Our approach to the topics covered in the programme is underpinned by certain consistent themes which will recur throughout the material. These are summarised below.

Community safety as opposed to crime prevention

Although we wish to prevent crime, we feel that the term 'crime prevention' used alone has acquired a rather negative and exclusive message. Much traditional crime prevention has suggested at best a defensive and at worst an aggressive reaction to the offender. Slogans such as 'cracking crime', 'beating the burglar', 'fighting harassment', and 'stamping out vandalism', suggest that criminals are a breed apart, incapable of changing their ways. This approach also fails to recognise that many offenders are also victims themselves. By using the term community safety, as opposed to crime prevention, we intend to embrace a broader approach to reducing crime which ultimately aims for integration rather than exclusion. This should lead to a better quality of life for all, instead of a scenario where the honest folk have found ways of defending themselves (for the time being) from the villains who await their next prey.

Equal opportunities to enjoy an acceptable quality of life

This is a logical extension of our argument for community safety above, and also recognises that in terms of crime some people are unfairly disadvantaged or are more vulnerable than others. For example, people from Asian and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds are much more likely than white people to be victims of racially motivated assault, and most victim surveys have shown that women are considerably more fearful of street crime than men. To give another example, people living on the poorest council estates are up to four times more likely to be victims of burglary than those living in more affluent suburban areas. We consider that any policies and plans to prevent crime and improve community safety must deal with such differentials so that everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy an acceptable quality of life.

Inter-disciplinary and multi-agency working

In order to deal with the problems of crime and improve community safety, complex strategies are required that cross the boundaries of individual professions and skills. The implementation of these strategies does not fall within the area of responsibility of any one organisation. Effective action nearly always requires input from a range of professions or occupations, and co-operation between a number of different service-providing agencies.

Resident and user involvement

People who live in, work in or use areas affected by crime are essential partners in any strategy to improve community safety in those neighbourhoods. They will know about the nature of the crime problems, they will have good ideas about what will work, and they will be allies in making things work. For these reasons it is most unlikely that durable community safety improvements can be achieved without substantial resident/user involvement.

Research, monitoring and evaluation

How do we know that the key themes listed in the preceding paragraphs are so important? By researching problems as they exist, then monitoring and evaluating subsequent changes;

comparing and analysing successes and failures. Too often, ill-conceived plans are laid and actions taken which leave no lessons for future work, because nobody researched, monitored and evaluated. Without information gathering and dissemination, not only is the wheel re-invented, but it runs the risk of being punctured in the same place over and over again!

If you would like to find out more about these concepts and themes you will find a list of recommended books and reports in Appendix 2.

Yourville is an imaginary neighbourhood but it is based on features and experiences of a number of real ones. It has been devised to offer a scenario in which to apply and relate some of the processes and information found in various units of the Open Learning programme.

Newsclipping from Local Paper:

NEW HOPE FOR NO-GO ESTATE

The Yourville Estate was eerily silent this morning after two nights of mayhem left nearby shops looted, several flats gutted by fire, and numerous cars wrecked. Many residents have fled to the homes of relatives, and those remaining are recovering from two sleepless nights. At a hastily convened press conference the Council's Chief Executive and the Chief Constable announced a brand new initiative for the trouble-torn estate: "We're going to work in partnership with local

people and all the other service providers to turn Yourville into a neighbourhood that people will feed proud to live in. We're determined to show how estates like Yourville can be transformed by co-operation rather than confrontation. "In three years' time, Yourville will be a shining example for others to follow" declared the joint statement. "We have today called an inter-departmental meeting to inaugurate the process of consultation, organisation, resourcing, planning and action on Yourville".

Some quotes from people familiar with the estate

"They don't care about us do they? They think that Yourville is out of harm's way so anyone with any problems, they dump them here. I mean we've got enough on our plates up here already without them sending us more homelsss families and kids out of care. They're alright in their cosy little town hall, and they go home to their cosy little houses in a nice part of town. They don't know what it's like living up here; they ought to try it some time - they wouldn't survive more than a couple of nights, what with the noise and the joy-riding, and worrying about your kids, and wondering whether you can go out at night and leave your flat empty" - resident.

"I'll tell you this much - whoever designed this estate didn't bother to take into consideration the fact that there would be a problem policing it. There's some good families here but they get overwhelmed by the bad ones. I think some people are frightened to tell us about what's going on for fear of what might happen to them" - local beat officer.

"The trouble is Yourville has got the reputation of being the place for crime and problems in the borough. It si not so much the residentes, but this place is a magnet for trouble-makers from outside" - chair of Ourtown Housing Committee.

"It's a nice place really; friendly and that. It's just a few trouble makers who spoil it for everyone else and give the place a bad reputation" - resident.

Yourville Estate Profile

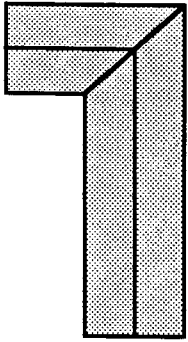
If you look at the diagram of the neighbourhood on the next page, you will see that it is situated at the far northern end of the borough about three miles from the town centre, with industrial land to the south, and a gold course to the north. As part of a deal between the council and a property developer, a thin swathe of derelice land has been reclaimed recently, and a mixed development of low rise housing has been built. This consists of a sheltered housing block, some "fair rent" housing association properties and homes for sale.

PLAN OF YOURVILLE ESTATE

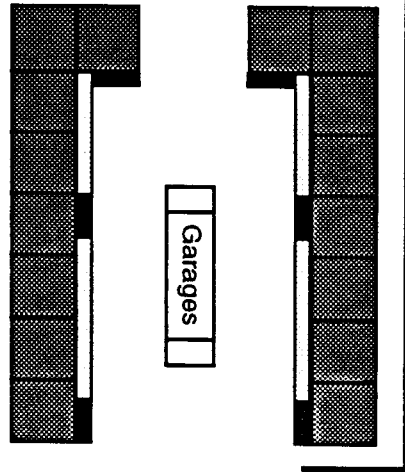


BOROUGH BOUNDARY

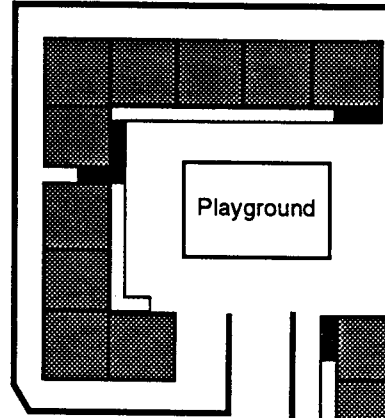
MAIN THROUGH ROUTE TO TOWN CENTRE



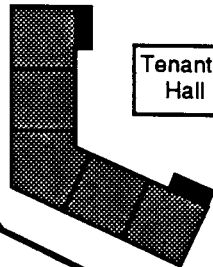
School



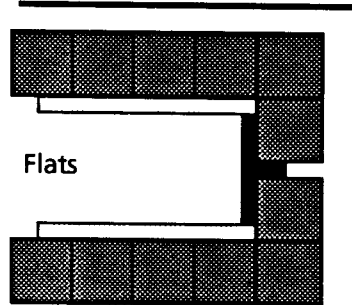
Garages



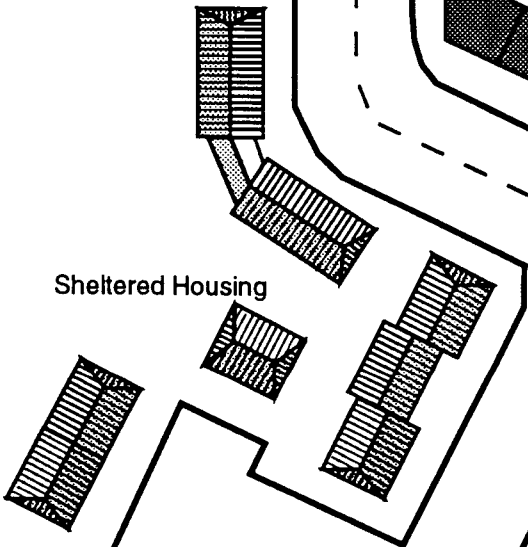
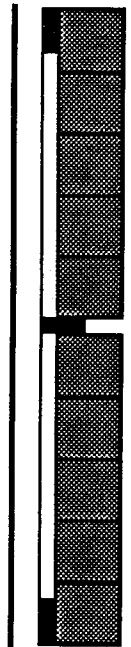
Playground



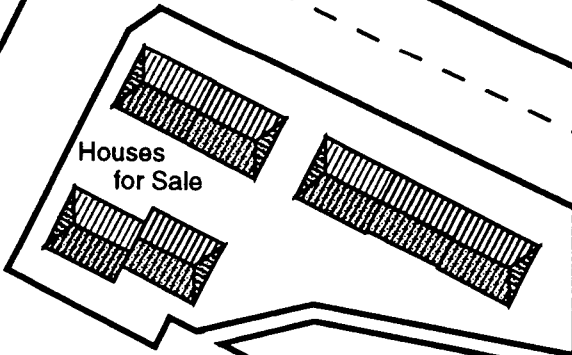
Tenants' Hall



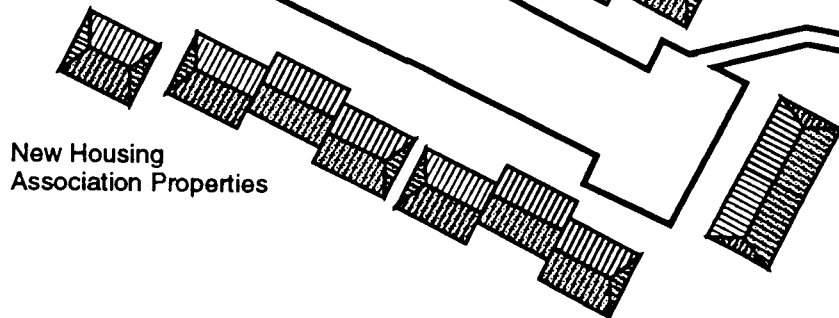
Flats



Sheltered Housing



Houses for Sale



New Housing Association Properties



Shops

You can see from the photograph that the estate was built in the late 1950's and consists of balcony access blocks of between 4 and 5 levels containing a mix of flats and maisonettes. There are nine blocks containing a total of 270 units of accommodation. At the last census, the estate was counted as having a population of 678. There are no lifts, and each block has open access to all its balconies from three stairwells. A minor improvement programme was carried out in the seventies to improve the heating and bathrooms, but the flats are still cold and damp with poor noise insulation. The front doors to individual are easy to break through, due to their construction of ply lower and glass upper panels. The ground floor flats are particularly vulnerable to break ins, and many of those are now empty and boarded up, although some have been subsequently re-colonised by squatters.

The estate has a swathe of grass on the perimeter - the remaining consists of asphalt and concrete interspersed with washing line posts. These are not used, as washing tends to be stolen if left unattended. The concrete areas are littered with broken glass which has been smashed there by young children. A designated playground consists of a slide and the remains of a set of swings. Repairs are slow and, as there is a high level of burglary (about 5 attempts each week), there are boarded up windows from temporary repairs on every landing. All ground floor properties have graffiti on the walls as do all the stairways. Lighting is poor, with bulkhead lights on the balconies often being out of action for weeks before they are fixed. Tenants are advised to report all repairs needed to the Housing Department, but there is no standard system for doing this.

There is a very high turnover of tenancies on the Yourville estate, and most new allocations come directly from the homeless persons' register. Unemployment is high, partly as a result of the high proportion of single-parent families. There are large numbers of small children on the Yourville estate. Noisy disputes between teenagers are commonplace, and the noise levels from ordinary play activities are very high. There is a youth club on a neighbouring estate but many of the local kids have been banned from it as troublemakers. The flats themselves have no proper sound insulation, and noisy neighbours can be heard through party walls, causing irritation, embarrassment and disputes.

There are a small number of local shops situated close to the Estate, but main facilities are located some way away. The Town Hall is over 3 miles away, and the nearest Social Services office is 2 miles away. All housing management and repairs services are based at the Town Hall. The Town Hall's switchboard is usually overloaded and there is no system for leaving messages if the appropriate officer cannot be contacted. Tenants have complained in the past about the Estate being given low priority by the Police. As a result a community policeman was allocated to Yourville but most people don't know who he is or how he can be contacted. There are no community facilities on the Estate. There was a Tenants' Hall but this was boarded up after being vandalised.

Many residents keep dogs to ward off burglary attempts, and these are often allowed to roam freely on the Estate. Stolen vehicles are frequently left in and around Yourville, and these are sometimes used by children as playthings. There is a row of garages on the Estate, but they were not well used by tenants and are now derelict. They are used as dumps for large items of rubbish, and by some local teenagers for drinking and drug taking. Drugs are easily available in Yourville and it would appear that one or two residents act as dealers.

Yourville has a bad reputation in the borough, and is often unjustly portrayed by local gossip and the media as a haven for troublemakers. As a result very few people want to live there, insurance is difficult to obtain, and local residents are embarrassed to say where they live when applying for jobs.

Appendix 2 Key background texts

Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention (1991) *Safer Communities – the local delivery of crime prevention through the partnership approach*. Home Office.

Hughes G (1998) *Understanding Crime Prevention – Social Control, Risk and Late Modernity*. Open University Press.

Hope T and Shaw M (1988) eds. *Communities and Crime Reduction* HMSO.

Lea J and Young (1992) *What is to be done about law and order?* Pluto Press, London.

Osborn S and Shaftoe H (1995) *Safer Neighbourhoods? – Success and Failures in Crime Prevention*. Safe Neighbourhoods Unit/Joseph Rountree Foundation.

Rosenbaum D et al (1998) *The Prevention of Crime – Social and Situational Strategies*. Wadsworth, Belmont CA.

Shaftoe, H (2004) *Crime Prevention – Facts Falacies and the Future*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

Tiley, N (2005) *Handbook of Crime Prevention and Community Safety*. Deovn, Wilan Publishing.

Tony M and Farrington D (1995) *Building a Safer Society: Strategic Approaches to Crime Prevention* University of Chicago Press.

Walker S (1994) *Sense and Nonsense about Crime and Drugs*. Wadsworth, Belmont CA

Appendix 3 Examples of log/journal entries

Many students feel unsure about how to write their log/journals. There is no rigid formula for what constitutes a 'correct' log/journal entry, try to strike a balance of reflection, analysis, anecdote and personal insight. Some of the questions that you may ask yourself when planning your log journal entry could be:

- What are the main points that I have learnt? – include the main points learnt from a section.
- What do I think about this subject/idea? – Is the source of the information biased? Is there something missing? Is there another angle that could offer alternative interpretation?
- Can I find some support from academic literature / reports etc? Is the research robust? Can opinions be supported with evidence?
- How would I apply this knowledge to a situation (either from my own experience or to the Yourville estate)?

The Safe Neighbourhoods Unit

The Safe Neighbourhoods Unit (SNU) is a not-for-profit organisation which helps service users and providers to devise innovative and cost-effective approaches to improving social housing, service delivery and community safety. It has over fourteen years' experience of working with local authorities, housing associations, central government departments and residents organisations in over a hundred areas throughout the United Kingdom. SNU has also carried out research and development work for the French Government and the European Commission. SNU specialises in the following areas;

- Promoting tenant participation
- Improving service delivery
- Improving housing estates
- Improving multi-storey blocks
- Improving Community Safety
- Improving Design and Security
- Quantitative and qualitative research
- Training and practical guidance

Faculty of the Built Environment, University of the West of England

The Faculty enjoys an international reputation as a centre of excellence for research, consultancy and education in the built environment, urban policy and environmental management fields. It has strong links with employers and professional bodies. It is committed to working for quality, efficiency and social and environmental responsibility in urban and rural communities. It offers a wide range of expertise in the following areas:

- Management, development and tenant participation in housing
- Town and country planning and architecture
- Urban design and regeneration
- Environmental management, and sustainability
- Building surveying and facilities management
- Construction management
- Urban and social policy