

POLICE

Police Magazine Update

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Police officers should target areas of 'predicted crime'

Police officers could use 'down time' to target areas 'predicted' to be more likely to suffer from crime, according to a commanding officer from the Los Angeles Police Department.

Speaking at a Policy Exchange event on pre-crime and predictive policing this week, Captain Sean Malinowski spoke about how to effectively 'deploy resources' based on an analysis of crime patterns, something which some forces in the UK are also looking at as resources dwindle.

Mr Malinowski, commanding officer of the LAPD's Real-Time Analysis and Critical Response Division, told *Police* magazine that they estimated that officers have between 45 minutes to an hour of 'available time' in which they can make their presence known in problem areas between responding to calls.

He told delegates that they want to ensure officers are disrupting crime and that it does 'not make sense to patrol randomly' because data showed particular locations and times are predicted to have an increased likelihood of crime being committed.

The LAPD is involved in a project based in the San Fernando Valley which uses three years' worth of crime data focusing on property crime, which accounts for 75 percent of all crime there, and 'predicts' problem areas. Police officers are expected to target specific areas, called 'boxes' which are geographical areas measuring 500ft by 500ft seen most at risk of crime. The force reports seeing an eight to 16 percent improvement in their ability to predict crimes.

The event, chaired by filmmaker and criminologist Roger Graef, heard from Professor George Tita, an associate professor in the department of criminology, law and society at the University of California. He said that that predictive policing could help target 'scarce resources' and that by examining human behaviour, like 'foraging', they could predict crime trends.

He added: "If you reduce opportunities for crime it is not simply displaced but becomes extinct."