



BID Hub:
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11th July 2023

Dear Businesses,

Changes to the BID's Business Crime Reduction Services: How this affects you

Following consultation with business members from the BCRP Steering Group earlier this year, changes are being made to the way the BID delivers crime reduction services for members. This letter outlines the changes that are taking place, explains what happens next and details any action you need to take.

Changing from delivering a Business Crime Reduction Partnership to providing business crime services.

Delivering an effective BCRP requires staffing to manage the flow of reported incidents, to stay informed and share local intelligence with other stakeholders and BCRPs, and to support business members through regular in-person visits, training, and opportunities to meet as a group to discuss issues. An enormous amount of administration, record keeping, and data protection is required to ensure a BCRP is robust and compliant in order to meet accreditation standards.

Unfortunately, the BID's annual budget hasn't ever been able to afford the dedicated staffing needed to deliver this specific role AND fund two-thirds of the cost for the Community Warden service that businesses really value. The BID is currently working with other stakeholder partners to explore the idea of a district wide Business Crime Reduction Partnership, with a dedicated BCRP Manager for Councilors to consider. While that work is being carried out, the BID will continue to offer its businesses the same access to crime reduction services – we're simply changing the way it's delivered, and by whom.

Reporting and information sharing through DISC:

The most significant factor in getting the outcomes businesses want to see in terms of business crime is making sure the police and other agencies that can take action have an accurate picture of what's going on. That's why reporting the issues impacting your businesses – including any anti-social behaviour you see going on in the town - is so important.

Recognising the importance of a convenient way for businesses to report incidence and intelligence, there is **no change to the BID's provision of the DISC app**. This means you'll still be able to report incidents and public realm problems, keep up to date with local issues and offenders and browse subject galleries.

The change is in the organisation owning and managing the data on the Bognor Regis DISC platform. Since November 2021, the BID has worked with a third-party service provider, National Business Crime Solution (NBCS) to process all of the DISC reports submitted by businesses. The processing for Bognor Regis's data is carried out by a dedicated Business Crime Liaison Officer (BCLO), employed by NBCS. Since working with NBCS, the BID's BCRP Manager (most recently Heather Allen) has had fortnightly meetings with the

dedicated BCLO for Bognor Regis to review incident reports, as well as day to day contact with them about emerging issues.

The NBCS BCLO has fortnightly “tactical meetings” with an officer from Sussex Police’s Business Crime Team (Investigation & Resolution Centre) to share details of the top three offenders in Bognor Regis, based on the DISC reports you’ve submitted. These offenders are then prioritised for attention by policing teams.

All the time the BID was delivering a formal Business Crime Reduction Partnership, the BID was the data controller for the Bognor Regis DISC platform. The data submitted through DISC and held on DISC belonged to the BID’s BCRP, and the BID was fully responsible for that data. However, the BID’s BCRP was officially “dissolved” at the BID Board Members’ Meeting on 15th June 2023, and no longer exists as a formalized structure. National Business Crime have therefore been appointed to act as both the data processor AND the data controller for all information you submit on DISC. The information on the Bognor Regis DISC platform now “belongs” to NBCS, and they are fully responsible for the data.

How does this affect you?

If you are an independent business, you won’t notice any difference at all to the way you report incidents on DISC. You will, however, benefit from access to Maybo (accredited) online conflict management training, with a licence for up to 5 employees per business. Maybo will add to your existing training processes and equip your business with basic skills required to reduce the risk of violence.

If you are a national chain, and your company is already a member of NBCS for their other services, you may benefit from an integration of your organisation’s reporting system directly into DISC and those of the NBCS, giving better visibility of your incidents with a process to manage this data. This is real progress, as it means there’ll be a more accurate picture of the number of incidents affecting businesses all collected on one system.

What happens next?

- The BID will continue to fund access to DISC for levy paying businesses, at a cost of £195 + VAT per business, per annum. There is no additional charge to levy paying businesses for this service, so this represents direct value for your business.
- Each BID Levy paying business that is currently registered to use DISC can carry on using DISC.
- While you do not have to make any payment to NBCS, each individual business will need to enter into an agreement with NBCS, as NBCS are now delivering services directly to your individual business, not to the BID.
- When you “contact the administrator” through DISC, you’ll be contacting the dedicated Business Crime Liaison Officer at NBCS.
- The BID’s Business Crime Engagement Officer, Jimmy Upton, is currently visiting businesses to identify the most appropriate person to email the NBCS agreement to.
- You will receive the NBCS agreement for your business by email, sent from heather@brbid.org by Friday 21st July.
- Please carefully read and sign the agreement – an electronic signature is fine – and return it directly to NBCS. I will include details in the covering email.
- There are still no limits on the numbers of people within each business that can access DISC.
- As well as signing your business agreement with NBCS, all DISC users will need to read and agree to NBCS’s data protocols – this will be a pop up on DISC when you login.
- The BID has agreed a three-month transition with NBCS in order for them to drive activity to increase business engagement with DISC.
- Over the course of that three-month period, BR BID and NBCS will consult with businesses to establish reasonable performance indicators for engaging with the DISC platform.

- After this three-month initial period, businesses that are not meeting the reasonable engagement expectations will be at risk of losing BID funded access to the DISC platform.
- Non-levy paying businesses will be able to access the BID's Business Crime Reduction services, at an annual charge of £225 + VAT.

“Shopwatch Radio Scheme”

Businesses have the option of sharing live information and intelligence between themselves (and Sussex Police PCSOs on duty in town) through the Bognor Regis radio network – commonly referred to as the “Shopwatch radio”. The radio is an additional facility, and there is a cost of £22+VAT per calendar month for businesses that want to join the network.

The radio scheme, including radio equipment hire, the provision and upkeep of the repeater that shares the signal and the annual license used to be delivered by Sussex Communication. Following a change in business direction at Sussex Communication, and to make sure there was no loss of provision for businesses, **delivery of that service transferred to Bognor Regis BID on 26th June 2023.**

All businesses that choose to have a radio must agree to the data protocols and procedures for using it, to make sure best practice is demonstrated when sharing information. NBCS have agreed to include the radio protocols within their data protocols on DISC.

You cannot use a radio without signing up to the protocols on DISC. This will predominantly affect non-levy paying businesses who will be charged £225 + VAT for access to DISC, plus £264 + VAT to join the radio network. Levy paying businesses that benefit from funded access to DISC will still need to pay £264 + VAT per year if they choose to have a radio.

What happens next?

- No change for existing radio users – service delivery has continued without interruption since the change of service provider on 26th June.
- The BID Board of Directors has established charging policies, and the BID Team has developed hire documents and set up the accounting procedures for invoicing needed to deliver this additional service.
- There is no change to the hire rates previously charged by Sussex Communications for the financial year 2023-24, i.e.: £264 + VAT pa (equivalent to £22 + VAT pcm)
- Businesses will continue to be invoiced following the same quarterly or annual billing periods as previously agreed with Sussex Communications.
- Invoices sent to businesses for radio hire will now come from Bognor Regis BID, rather than Sussex Communications.
- Representatives of the BID will be visiting businesses very soon to confirm serial numbers of your radio units.
- Businesses that currently hire a radio will be sent updated hire agreements with BR BID in the near future.
- If you have any problems with the radio, please report through DISC: Report / Public Realm Report / Radio Scheme OR by emailing info@brbid.org

In person meetings:

Two sets of consultations were carried out with businesses in late 2022, asking for your feedback on in-person meetings. A total of nine business representatives replied, and the general view was that the meetings were a valuable way to share information and should continue. As a result, the BID COO

facilitated three in-person meetings in May, June and July, alternating start times between 8.30am and 5.45pm as requested by business reps from the BCRP Steering Group. Unfortunately, business attendance remained low, with only three attendees at the two evening meetings and one attendee for the morning meeting in June.

The BID Board of Directors are responsible for delivering value for money for all levy paying businesses and assess all BID Activity based on value for money and effectiveness in delivering the business priorities the BID committed to delivering in the Business Plan. Each in-person BCR meeting generates a cost of between £100-£140 for the room booking and staff time to prepare, facilitate and circulate information before and after the meeting takes place. The attendance of the Community Warden creates either an additional cost or requires two hours away from active patrolling. The same applies to any police personnel that attend.

As mentioned previously, the biggest factor in achieving the outcomes businesses want to see with respect to reducing business crime and anti-social behaviour is making sure police and other responsible agencies have a clear picture of actual levels of business crime and anti-social behaviour that are impacting you. There is no evidence on DISC that having or not having meetings has any impact on the number of incidents reported, and figures remains frustratingly low. I use the word “frustratingly” as, when businesses attend in-person meetings and start discussions, the wealth of local intelligence about offenders, locations, connections, and activity is clearly evident. The frustration comes as very little of this intelligence can be actioned by police, as very little of it is reported – whether that be via DISC, 101, 999 or through Crimestoppers.

Recognising this, BID Directors agreed to create a “Business to Business Crime Reduction” post - a paid role whereby a motivated existing member of the BID’s crime reduction services would actively encourage greater engagement through the radio network and facilitate regular in-person meetings on a more informal basis. Unfortunately, no-one expressed interest prior to the closing date, and in light of the ongoing work to explore the creation of a district-wide BCRP, Directors agreed to stop recruitment to that post and instead invest the budget that had been allocated into additional Community Warden cover at peak times. This will start with an additional 50 hours of warden cover on key dates over the summer holiday period.

Monthly in-person meetings will therefore **change to quarterly meetings**, with the next meeting now scheduled for October 2023.

What happens next?

- The monthly schedule for in-person meetings shown on DISC (Events) and on the BID’s website (brbid.org/calendar) will be revised, with a move to quarterly meetings with a 5.45pm start time.
- In addition to all of the information currently available, key statistics about the top ten offenders, sentencing outcomes and engagement levels previously shared at in-person meetings will be published in a monthly update from NBCS. This will be shared via DISC, so please make sure you are logging on regularly to stay informed.

In-person support

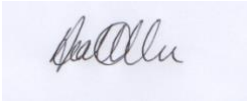
There are **no changes to the in-person support provided by the BID’s Business Crime Reduction Engagement Officer**. Jimmy Upton will continue to be on-site, twice a week for four hours per day, visiting businesses to support with particular issues you’re having problems with, reporting on DISC, and preparing evidence to submit to Sussex Police.

Community Warden

The Safer Streets Funding secured by the BID to provide a seven day a week warden service comes to an end on 31st August. Due to a generous increase in the contribution from Bognor Regis Town Council, the seven day a week service will continue until 31st March 2024. There's a huge amount of work taking place in the background that affects budget allocations for warden provision from the BID and other partners after that date. We'll keep you informed about developments as soon as they're confirmed.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the content of this letter.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background, appearing to read 'Heather Allen'.

Heather Allen
BR BID COO
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