

BRISTOL ANTI-ROBBERY STRATEGY

SUMMARY

Central Bristol has had a serious robbery problem for many years culminating in 99100 with 13.6 offences per 1000 population (Home Office 'recorded crime' 16 January 2001). These robberies were concentrated in the Ashley area of the central Bristol police district.

Historically, the problem has been addressed by means of virtually every possible offender-based policing approach whether traditional or innovative. The problem has grown faster than the national average for many years suggesting these strategies have not been successful.

A new approach was called for. Use of the problem analysis triangle highlighted a possible solution: -

Victim: - analysis indicated that the majority of victims were white males, aged 17 to 30 living in the northern centre of the city

Offenders: - almost exclusively local males and repeat offenders.

Location: - An area of 500 metres square in the inner city of Bristol centred on the Stokes Croft road

The victim profile identified the largest accessible group of victims as university students. This prompted a partnership approach between the universities and the police. Investigations included examination of other approaches namely Weston Super Mare Police District and the New York Transit Authority Police Department.

A key part of the resulting strategy was the production of anti-robbery advice cards with incentive deals on the back.

Work with Bristol City Council arranging new taxi ranks, service by night buses, and many other actions all formed parts of the holistic solution.

In order that longer-term strategies could be introduced in a slightly more favourable atmosphere, a massive education campaign involving universities, the media, local nightclubs, and the police was launched. The message was delivered by a number of different agencies. This culminated in a high profile Police operation during which potential victims were advised the risks their current behaviour presented.

The strategy has been evaluated many times comparing actual robbery rates, trends, views of the student body, costs, and the effect on the main profile group. As a result of the constant analysis and evaluation, a smaller version of the high profile police operation has been run on several occasions since and the large scale version is to be re-run every year in the autumn to greet the new generation of university students

The result of the strategy to date is, for the year ending March 2001 there has been an 18% reduction of street robbery in the Ashley area.

Produced by; -
PC Clive Thomas 2940
Crime Reduction Officer
Ashley Sector
AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

AIM

REDUCE STREET ROBBERY AND RESULTANT FEAR OF CRIME IN CENTRAL AREAS OF BRISTOL.

SCAN

Nationally robbery has been a problem for many years. The rise in recorded offences has been a concern for consecutive Governments, the media and some police forces.

The Central Bristol District of Avon and Somerset Constabulary (ASC) is among the national top 10 areas for robbery (Home Office BCU 1998 -1999). The 1999/2000 crime statistics for ASC showed that 60% of the force's recorded street robberies occurred in Central District. These findings are supported by the Bristol Community Safety Partnership (BCCP, 1999)

Businesses particularly licensed premises, supporting the initiative, have expressed concerns at the effect robbery has on their livelihoods.

University Student Unions in Bristol have been consulted and are active participants in the initiative. Both state that risks are well known and some established students will not socialise in the area.

Bristol Drugs Project has also been involved and have expressed concerns regarding the level of offending against drug addicts, who are being further marginalized by street robbers.

Local homeless outreach workers confirmed the extent of the problem. They are aware of many unreported incidents.

A summary of current theories is as follows:

- 1 A large number of the victims are drug addicts
- 2 A large number of the offenders live in the area
- 3 A large number of the victims are men visiting prostitutes
- 4 A large number of the victims are students
- 5 A large number of the victims are older local residents
- 6 A large number of the victims are in the area for unlawful purposes.
- 7 The general state of disrepair in the area is contributing to the high rate of street crime.

ANALYSIS

The recognised severity of the problem is examined via the distribution of robbery incidents in ASC (Figure 1). It can clearly be seen that most robberies in the force are occurring on Central district. This indicates the importance attached to this initiative by ASC.

Figure 1

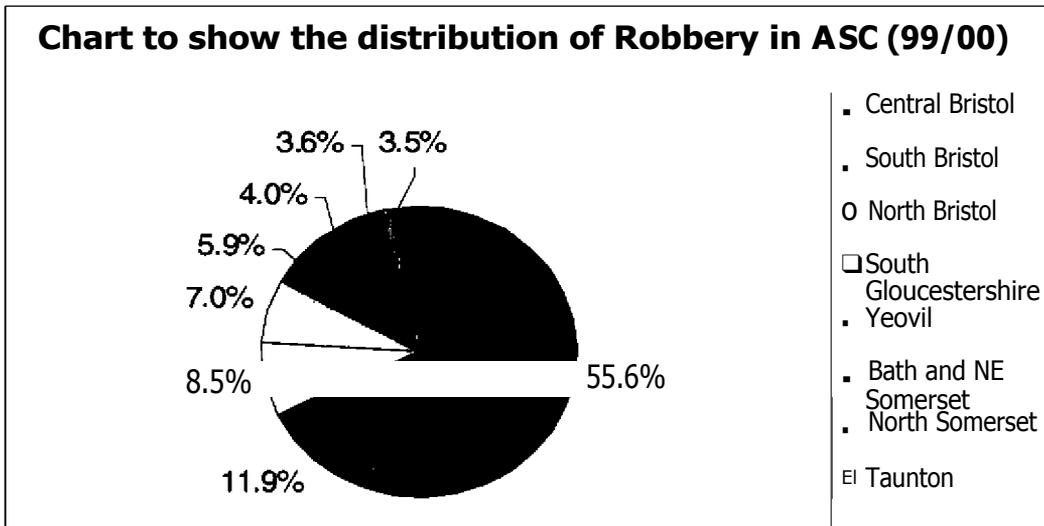
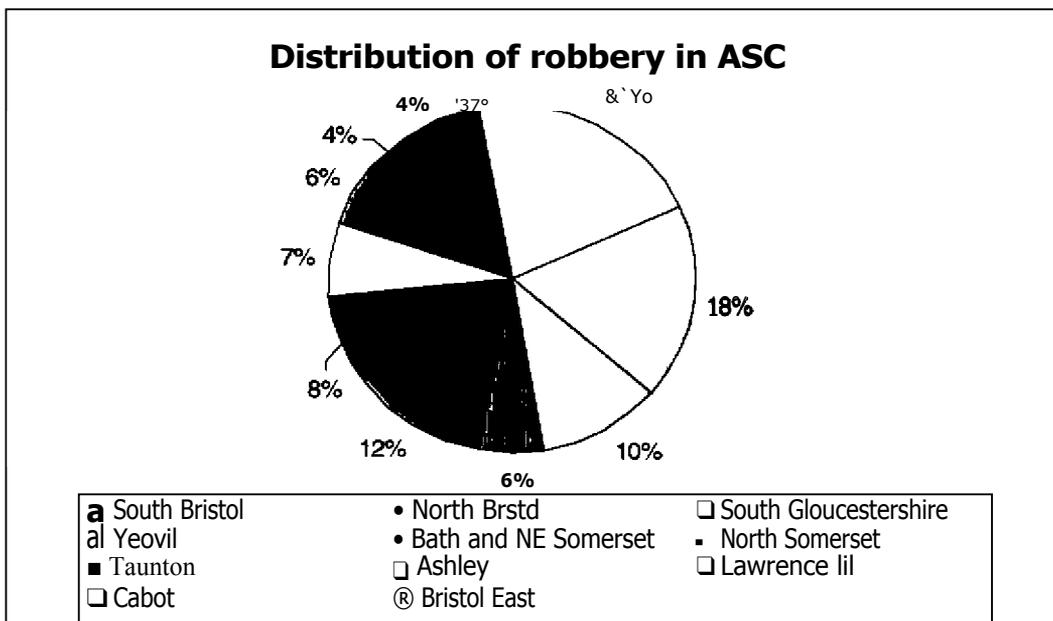


Figure 2 indicates that Ashley Sector has more robberies than the other Bristol Districts combined.



This issue will be analysed in terms of the problem analysis triangle, victim - offender - location

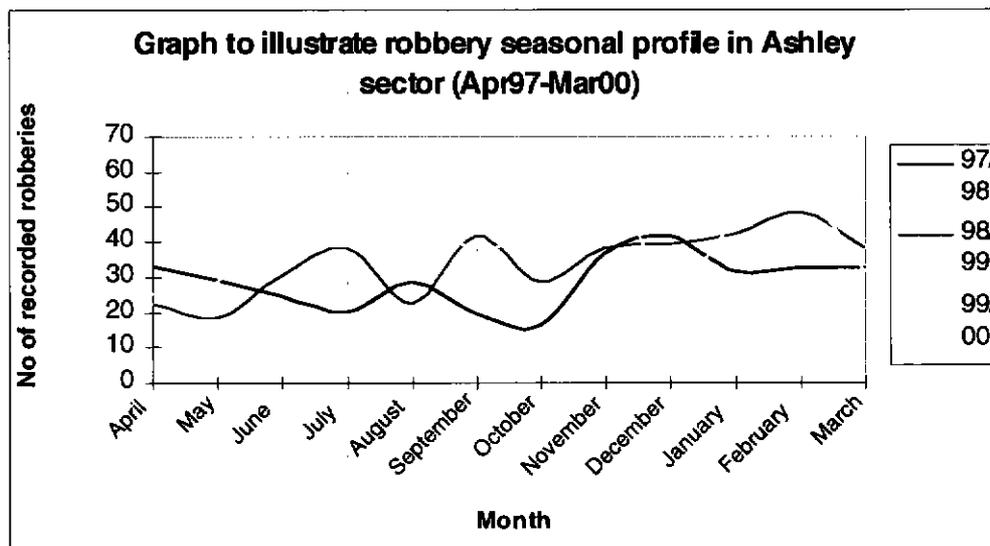
Ashley Sector Analysis

Using the Central District Crime Management figures for the financial year 1999/2000.

- Population of 12,051 (Bristol Census 1991)
- 513 offences
- Robbery rate of 42 per 1000
- 82% of robberies were committed against white males
50% are males between 17 and 30 years old.
- Time and day peaks between 2000 and 0400 from Wednesday to Saturday.

The previous three years 97/98, 98/99 and 99/00 identified three seasonal peaks, as illustrated below.

Figure 3



1. October/November
2. February
3. July

Victim

Victim profile

Ethnicity

- The ethnicity given as white = 82%.

1991 Census shows a resident white population of 71%. This suggests that a proportion of the victims are visitors to the area.

Age (Appendix 1)

The following statements can be made:

- 17 is the age at which robbery is most likely
- 17-30 years accounts for 50% of victims, with the highest concentration between 19 and 28 years
- At 40 years plus, numbers are reduced.

Age by time

When age is plotted against time of day the following statements can be made.

- Crime against 17 year olds occurs constantly through 24 hours
- For ages 18 to 35, crime occurs throughout the day peaking between 2200 — 0400
- All ages over 35 are far less represented.

Sex

- Male = 85%

Victim by Postcode

The significant postcodes are:

- **BS2 =21%** Ashley
- **BS6 =17%** Cotham and Redland
- **BS5 =11%** St George and Easton

In summary

- Victims were alone or in pairs. Robbery of larger groups is rare and concentrated in the youngest age range.
- Victims were commonly under the influence of intoxicants.
- Typical victim profile could be described as a white male aged between 17 and 30 living within 4 miles of Stokes Croft to the north in the area between 2000 and 0400 on a Wednesday to Saturday (typical of a large number of white male university students).

Offender

Robbery offenders are prolific and any solution has to address the offenders as well.

As this initiative is primarily victim based the offender analysis has been limited (see Appendices 2 & 3) .

Robbery offences in terms of armament break down as follows:

Unarmed	74.00 %
Knife	19.00 %
Armed other	6.04 %
Firearm	0.96 %

In the majority of cases the offender will make conversation with the victim prior to the offence to assess suitability and likelihood of resistance.

The above offender analysis is based on convicted offenders and crime report details. The detection rate for robbery is very low (approximately 10%), and descriptions given by victims are generally vague.

In summary a small number of offenders living locally have access to a ready supply of victims

Location

Stokes Croft is an inner city area, to the east of which is the predominantly poorer area of St Paul's and to the west are the noticeably affluent areas of Gotham and Kingsdown.



Stokes Croft

Historically Stokes Croft has had a thriving community. A lack of investment over the past 30 years has resulted in urban decay and left pedestrians feeling vulnerable. Attempts to reduce robbery will have to address the problems created by the physical infrastructure of the area.

There are five dance clubs, nine fast food shops and restaurants with late night refreshment licences within the area.

The following statements can be made:

Time

Peak robbery time	1900 - 2000	then 2300 - 0300
Increased risk	1800 - 0400	
Medium risk	1200 -1400	then 1600 - 1800
Lowest risk	0500 -0700	

Beat

Location of robberies is concentrated on the following police beat areas as evidenced in Appendix 4 :

117 Brunswick;
107 Kingsdown;
121 Montpelier
120 Ashley;
118 St Paul's;

Roads

Busiest roads in terms of offences are as follows

Stokes Croft	10.00%
City Road	6.20%
Ashley Road	5.50%
Grosvenor Road	5.05%

Theory versus Fact

The hypotheses outlined in the scan section have been tested as follows.

1. The "drug addict as a victim" theory is inconclusive.
2. A large number of the offenders live in the local area. This appears to be substantiated.
3. The prostitute theory appears unsupported, as the locations of the offences do not coincide with the areas of prostitution.
4. "A large number of the victims are students" tends to be supported.
5. The older locals theory is unsupported, whilst local addresses feature prominently victims over 40 do not.
6. The unlawful purpose preventing reporting theory is inconclusive, however the high numbers of those robbed stated that they were offered drugs prior to the act of robbery may give credence to this theory.
7. The final theory regarding the physical condition of the area cannot be addressed by this analysis.

Alternative Approaches

1 Weston-Super-Mare.

The problem was late night alcohol-related violence in the town centre. The scheme involved inexpensively produced discount cards for local shops. The cards were gender specific with anti-violence advice on the reverse. The scheme proved to be a qualified success. There was a reduction in serious acts of violence against the person. Perversely, offences of low-level violence increased.

The sponsors reported increased trade directly attributable to the campaign. A significant number of cards tendered had the advice removed.

Conclusion

The concept was successful. The message will need to be very specific and the cards will require laminating to prolong their life and prevent message removal.

2 New York Subways

The crime reduction officer for the Transit Department of the NYPD Lieutenant Wiess stated that the problem of vulnerable persons (unaware of the risks), was similar to that of the New York subways.

Uniformed officers identified potential victims, who were handed a strongly worded flyer explaining their risk behaviour. Simultaneously, a covert operation took place alongside efforts to ensure imprisonment of offenders on conviction. This was followed with encouragement to property owners to maintain their property, and a period of so called Zero Tolerance policing, this cycle was repeated.

New York Subways have had a falling crime rate for the last 10 years.

Conclusion

The New York model is suitable but would need to be altered significantly, to suit the British policing style legal framework, and smaller budget in both cash and personnel.

Student Bodies

The University of Bristol (UoB) Students Union agreed with the findings, and accepted that the student community is at risk of robbery, though the level of under-reporting may be high.

RESPONSE

Potential partners were contacted and each was aligned with the response most relevant to its capabilities.

The partners

Council for	Cleaning Lighting Maintenance Access to education Improvement of employment opportunity for offenders General regeneration of the area Provision of safe transport Implementation of broken window theory
Night clubs	Sponsorship Reinforcement of the message Credibility for the message Assistance for the council's regeneration plans Ownership of the problem near to their club Realisation that it is their consumer base being attacked
Universities /colleges	Access to the target group Reinforcement of the message Identification of the target group Sponsorship Acknowledgement of their duty of care to students Provision of safe transport
Shops	Sponsorship Publicity
Bus Co	Provision of safe transport (potential for sponsored buses)
Schools	Education of offenders and aggrieved as to risks involved
Magistrates	Realistic sentencing for robbery offences
News media	Positive publicity for campaign Public education Positive publicity for area simultaneous with campaign to deflect Community concerns.
Local traders	Part financing of local improvement Pressure on central and local Government for funds Implementation of broken window theory

Police Strategy

The Central District community safety team met to discuss the best Police contribution to the initiative. The results formed the basis for the Bristol Anti Robbery Strategy as follows:

1 The message: -

- Stay with people you genuinely know
- Avoid unlit streets or areas
- Avoid both residential and quiet streets
- Don't buy drugs at night or from strangers
- Go home when you leave the club
- Cover Jewellery and watches when walking at night in areas you don't know
- Get a taxi as soon as you leave the club
- You are at risk if you enter an area for illegal or immoral purposes
- Carry only cash in small "sacrifice" amounts scattered around your body
- Walk with a purpose; appear to know where you're going
- Ignore loud disturbances, they could be staged
- Don't be curious
- Carry an alarm or loud whistle

2 The document: -

- Eye catching brightly coloured
- Obvious symbolism (a large knife or similar)
- Of genuine value
- Recognisable logos for discount or value
- Laminated or high quality to add credibility
- Small enough to be retained
- Large enough to be noticed
- Realistic in language and tone

3 The delivery: -

- Widest target audience as possible
- At a time when it is relevant
- At a time when it
- Periodic without becoming boring
- Rejuvenated each year
- Highest profile possible
- Discreet to avoid embarrassment
- Sensitive to community feeling
- From a credible messenger

Partnership Actions

Following the meeting planned actions were instigated as follows.

a) Media campaign *Commenced May 2000 - ongoing*

1. Ad Hoc free paper
2. Bristol Evening Post
3. Radio Bristol
4. BBC Points West
5. The Eagle radio station
6. The Bristol Observer
7. University Of Bristol (UoB) Students Union
8. ASC staff

b) Personal safety lectures *Commenced May 2000 - ongoing*

1. UoB Security Department
2. UOB Students Union
3. University of the West of England (UWE) Accommodations office
4. ASC staff

c) Student Crime Forum *Convened June 2000 - ongoing*

1. ASC staff from all City Districts (Chair PS Aplin)
2. UOB
3. UOB Security, Accommodations, Students Union
4. UWE
5. UWE Accommodations, Students Union
6. UWE
7. Bristol City Council (BCC)

d) Additional Taxi Rank provision *Completed action June 2000*

1. BCSP
2. BCC Hackney Licensing Dept
3. ASC staff

e) Assistance to developers *Commenced June 2000 ongoing*

1. BCC
2. ASC
3. BCSP (Neil Burwell)

f) Night buses *Completed action August 2000*

1. ASC crime reduction staff
2. First City Line Buses

g) Effective use of the Internet Hyper link created August 2000

WWW.crimereduction.org or WWW.avonandsomerset.golice.

1. ASC staff
2. UoB
3. UoB Students Union

h) BCC Co-ordinating investment and development

Commenced September 2000 on going

1. Stokes Croft Traders association
2. Brunswick and Portland Square business watch
3. ASC staff
4. Prometheus Consultants

i) Production of Anti Robbery flyers

*First run September 2000
Second run February 2001*

1. ASC staff
2. Bristol Rugby FC
3. Bristol City FC
4. Bristol Rovers FC
5. Gloucester CCC
6. Nightclubs The Maze, The Works, Evolution, Creation and Cafe Blue.

j) Distribution of the Anti Robbery flyers

*First run September to November 2000
Second run February to March 2001*

1. UOB Students Union
2. UWE Students Union
3. ASC staff
4. Various licensed premises (too many to list)

k) Operation ASSURE (Covert - offender targeting)

Commenced 27/9/00 concluded 07/10/00

ASC staff comprising: -
Central District Crime Unit,
Central District Vehicle Crime Unit
Ashley Sector Beat Managers

l) Operation ASSURE (Overt - BARS card distribution)

ASSURE 2000 completed 11/10/00 - 04/11/00

ASSURE 2001 completed 08/02/01 - 24/02/01

1. ASC Staff,
2. ASC Special Constabulary,
3. ASC Mounted Section,
4. Neighbourhood Watches,
5. ASC Corporate Communications Office,
6. Local Licensed Premises

m) Management of CCTV

Action Complete October 2000

1. BCC CCTV monitoring centre
2. ASC staff

n) Designing Out Crime Protocol

Commenced November 2000 ongoing

1. BCC
2. ASC
3. BCSP

o) Fly posting eradication

Commenced December 2000 ongoing

1. BCC
2. BCC through SITA cleansing services
3. ASC

**p) Dealing with Drug addicts as victims
(information given to prevent them being targeted)**

Commenced December 2000 ongoing

1. Bristol Drug Project *et al*
2. ASC Crime Reduction staff

q) Extension of CCTV

Ongoing

1. BCC
2. ASC

r) Neighbourhood watch through new developers To be developed

1. ASC neighbourhood watch co-ordinator
2. ASC staff
3. Various Developers

ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION

The media campaign and the personal safety lectures delivered in May 2000 would appear to have had a positive impact on the Ashley sector robbery figures, compared with the same period the previous year (Figure 4).

Figure 4

	May	June	July	Aug
99/00	28	48	59	52
00/01	35	43	33	42

In June, July and August there were no operations running in the sector, so there is little reason for the decrease in robbery, apart from the campaign work.

It is difficult at this stage to evaluate the success of the taxi rank and night buses, except to say that the strategic positioning of the pick-up points will help to eradicate the problem due to the availability of public transport.

Communication of the robbery problem has increased significantly across the Ashley sector and beyond, due to the geographic nature of student accommodation. Although it is difficult to measure the success of the Internet pages and the take-up of the flyers, it is safe to say that the message is getting through, evidenced through several hundred hyper-link hits in the first few weeks.

Operation Assure was the most resource intensive part of the robbery campaign and utilised a number of the previously mentioned actions in its strategy. What follows is a comprehensive evaluation of the operation's activities:

Operation Assure

Total crime for Central district during the six-week period prior to 'Assure' was 2870 incidents, of which robbery accounted for 7.5%. Total crime for the district during Operation Assure was 2712 incidents of which robbery accounted for 6.5%.

Operation Assure Part I (Covert)

In the first phase of 'Assure' officers from the DCU, VCU and Ashley Beat Team worked together over an 8-night period to form a team of 1 PS and 8 PC's. They were tasked with conducting observations and targeted stop-checks in the Stokes Croft area.

Sixteen arrests were made for a variety of offences including robbery, possession of drugs with intent to supply, possession of offensive weapon, drink driving and warrants.

The resulting intelligence highlighted 4 names in particular, leading to one individual receiving a curfew between 2000 and 0700.

Operation Assure Part 2 (Overt)

The overt aim of the operation was maximum publicity and maximum visibility.

In the six-week period prior to Operation Assure there were 216 robberies in Central District, which reduced to 178 during the operational period, a decrease of 17% or 38 robberies. Although the operation concentrated its high visibility presence on two beats in Ashley sector, (AS117 and AS107) leaflet drops were made throughout the period at pubs, clubs and take-away's in Cabot sector. Figure 5 below show robberies by sector prior to, and during the operation:

Figure 5

Sector	Robberies in six week period prior to Operation Assure	Robberies in six week period of Operation Assure	Difference
Ashley	59	43	-27%
Cabot	56	32	-43%
Lawrence Hill	74	68	-8%
Bristol East	27	35	+29%
Total	216	178	-17%

If Period 2 is compared with Period 1, (Figure 6), the findings in percentage terms indicate that Operation Assure had a very favourable effect in 2000/01.

Figure 6

Sector	1999/2000 Period 1	1999/2000 Period 2	Difference	2000/2001 Period 1	2000/2001 Period 2	Difference
Ashley	54	73	+35%	59	43	-27%
Cabot	32	24	-25%	56	32	-43%
Lawrence Hill	46	64	+37%	74	68	-8%
Bristol East	11	20	+81%	27	35	+29%
Total	143	181	+26%	216	178	-17%

If Operation Assure not taken place, robberies would have increased in Ashley sector by 35% based on last year's statistics. This would have taken the number of robberies in period 2 this year to 79, instead of the actual 43, a 'saving' of 36 victims of robbery.

In the six-week period prior to the operation there were three repeat victims. While their age differed, the common link was that they were male, lived in the surrounding area, were robbed in Stokes Croft and had been victims in the past 4 months. The good news from 'Assure' was there were no repeat victims in this period.

Costing

The total cost of Operation Assure equates to approximately £24,063. A recent home office study on the economic cost of crime priced the average robbery at £4600. The consequence of the crime to the victim and society accounts for £2800 while the remaining £1800 represents costs to the criminal justice response including police activity.

Therefore, the 36 robberies `saved' in Ashley sector through Operation Assure resulted in a net benefit to society of £165,600. Obviously offset by the cost of the operation of £24,063 this results in a saving of £141,537, indicating that the £24,063 investment has paid for itself more than six times over.

The cost of robbery for *only the* criminal justice response, the operation would have saved £64,800 - £24,063 = £40,737 proving the investment to have paid for itself nearly three times over.

Six weeks on

Figure 10 below shows the period-on-period increases and decreases over the 18-week period of analysis. In the six week period following Operation Assure, robberies decreased by a further 51 crimes or 28% resulting in a total decrease of 89 crimes or 41%.

Figure 7

Sector	Robberies in six week period prior to Operation Assure	Robberies in six week period of Operation Assure (% change)	Robberies in six week period following Operation Assure (% change on Op Assure)	% change in robberies following Assure with robberies prior to Assure
Ashley	59	43 (-27%)	33 (-24%)	-44%
Cabot	56	32 (43%)	32 (0%)	-43%
Lawrence Hill	74	68 (-8%)	47 (-31%)	-36%
Bristol East	27	35 (+29%)	15 (-57%)	-55%
Total	216	178 (-17%)	127 (-28%)	-41 %

Each sector has experienced a substantial decrease in robberies over the 18-week period. The decrease in Ashley, Cabot and parts of Lawrence Hill sectors can be attributed to Operation Assure as they were within or adjacent to, the areas of crime prevention activity.

Figure 8 below identifies the specific beats of activity **and the change in number** of robberies since the completion of Operation Assure.

Figure 8

Beat	Robberies in six week period prior to Operation Assure	Robberies in six week period of Operation Assure (% change)	Robberies in six week period following Operation Assure (% change on Op Assure)	% change in robberies following Assure with robberies prior to Assure
AS 107	8	2 (-75%)	5 (+150%)	-37%
AS117	16	6 (-62%)	8 (+33%)	-50%
AS108	5	2 (-60%)	2 (0%)	-60%
AS118	9	4 (-55%)	2 (-50%)	-77%
AS119	3	2 (-33%)	1 (-50%)	-66%
AS120	1	6 (+500%)	2 (-66%)	+100%
AC109	7	5 (-28%)	1 (-80%)	-86%
AC110	6	0 (-100%)	2 (+100%)	-66%
AC111	2	0 (-100%)	1 (+100%)	-50%
AC112	2	4 (+100%)	1 (-75%)	-50%
AC114	3	1 (-66%)	1 (0%)	-66%
Total	62	32 (-48%)	26 (-19%)	-58%

From the above findings, it is clear that although the target beats of AS107 and AS117 have experienced an increase in robbery in the six weeks since the Operation, they are still considerably lower than before the operation began, a combined decrease of 11 robberies or 46%.

Despite no repeat victims during the operation, in the six weeks following the operation there were three repeat victims - two 18-30 white males (students) and an unemployed white female aged 37. All lived within the Ashley sector boundaries.

The figures indicate that Operation Assure had its biggest impact in the six weeks during the campaign. However, there has been a further decrease in robberies in the following weeks by 19%, but in order to see if this is down to Assure or just a seasonal trend it was necessary to compare statistics with the same period in 1999/2000. These have been produced in Figure 9 over:

Figure 9

Sector	1999/2000 Period 2	1999/2000 Period 3	Difference	2000/2001 Period 2	2000/2001 Period 3	Difference
Ashley	73	61	-16%	43	33	-23%
Cabot	24	25	+4%	32	32	0%
Lawrence Hill	64	36	-44%	68	47	-31%
Bristol East	20	15	-25%	35	15	-57%
Total	181	137	-24%	178	127	-29%

Period 2 is the six weeks during Operation Assure and Period 3 is the six weeks following Operation Assure. It is noticeable that in 99/00 Period 3 was considerably lower than Period 2, a difference of 44 robberies or 24%, indicating that the 29% reduction achieved for the entire district cannot be attributed to Operation Assure alone.

With reference to last year's statistics, Ashley sector could have expected to experience a decrease of 16% or 36 robberies in Period 3. Thirty-three robberies actually occurred resulting in a 'saving' of 3 robbery victims. If the previous years statistics are analysed it would appear that December 1999 was a blip and that in actual fact the number of robberies 'saved' is likely to be in excess of 3. Comparison of actual figures for Ashley sector it is apparent that despite the percentage differences between periods 2 and 3, the figures are considerably lower in 00/01 than in 99/00.

The total economic cost of the three 'saved' robberies for Period 3 and the 36 'saved' in Period 2 results in a net benefit to society of £179,400. The cost of the operation £24,063 results in a net saving of **£155,337**.

Operation Assure Conclusions

Operation Assure has obviously been a success, as evidenced below:

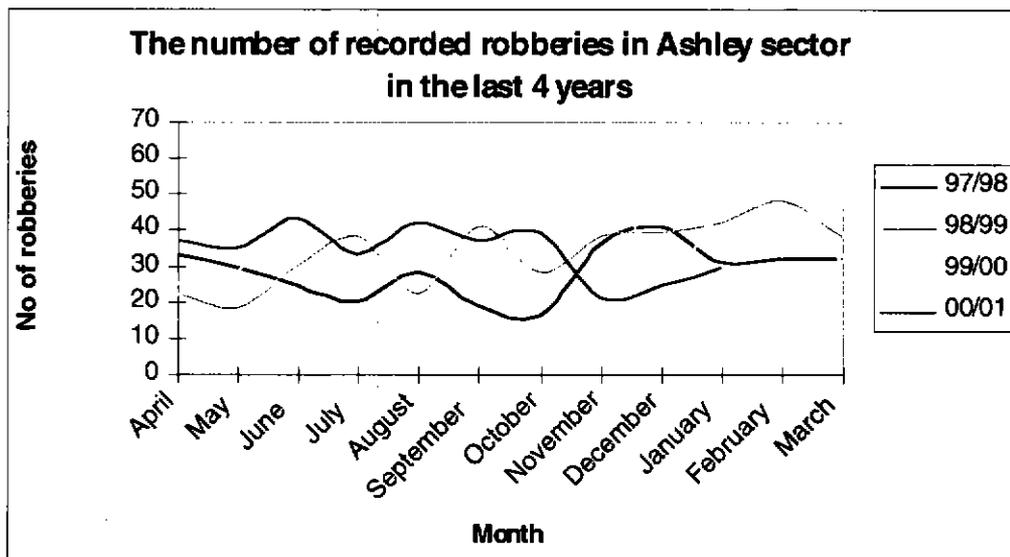
- Robberies cut in beats AS107 and AS117 by 46%
- No repeat victims during the operation
- The operation resulted in a net benefit to society of £155,337
- 31 stop/searches carried out
- 22 arrests made
- A total of 15865 leaflets/cards were distributed heightening public awareness with a positive knock-on effect for the whole of Bristol City
- **Media interests including BBC** Points West and BBC Radio Bristol, added to the general public safety message.

It is also worth noting that if seasonal variances are ignored, and the number of robberies occurring in the 18-week period for 00/01 is compared with the same period for 99/00, there was a massive 53 fewer robberies this year.

Conclusion

The crime statistics are self-explanatory, as illustrated in Figure 10 below:

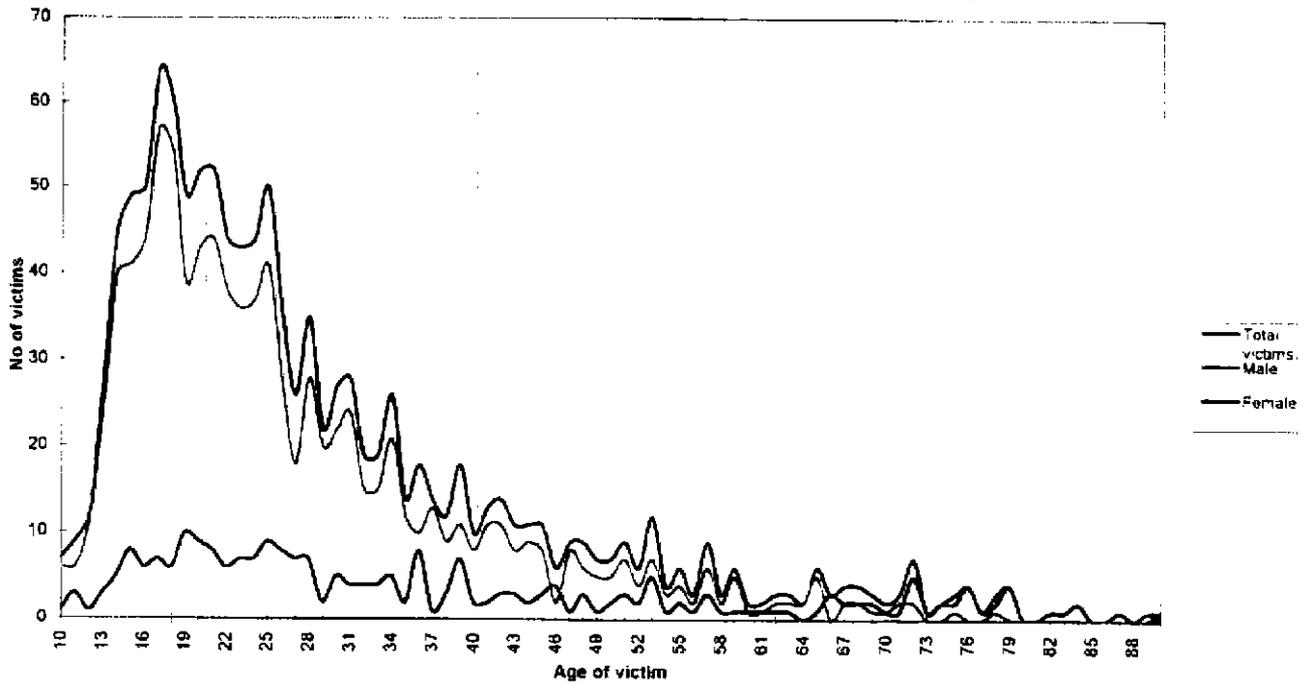
Figure 10



Since June 2000 following the commencement of the robbery campaign, robbery has been significantly lower than 99/00. Analysis of the three other sectors' on Central District has identified an average increase in robbery for the year to date (Apr-Jan01) of 37%, which contrasts with Ashley sector's year to date reduction of 21%. In real terms this represents 88 less victims in Ashley sector over the past ten months.

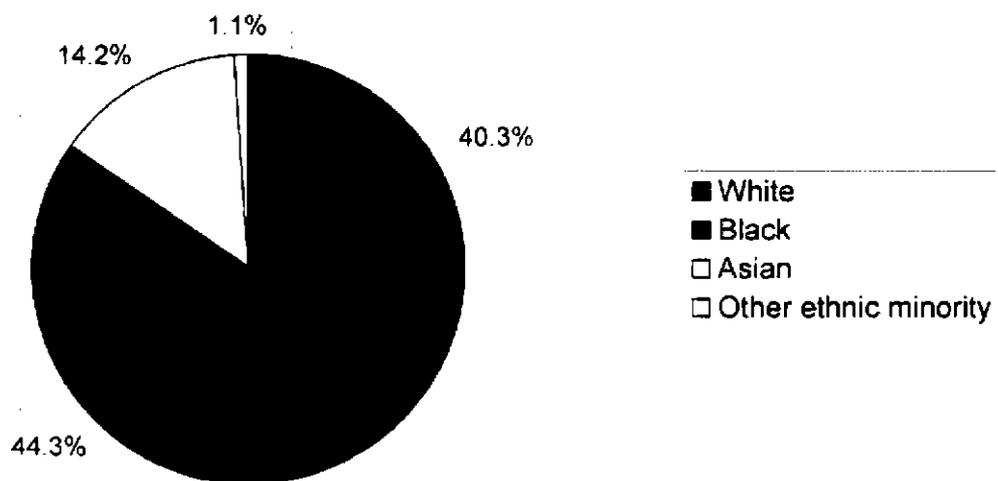
Appendix 1

Graph to show the robbery victim profile in Ashley sector by age (99/00)



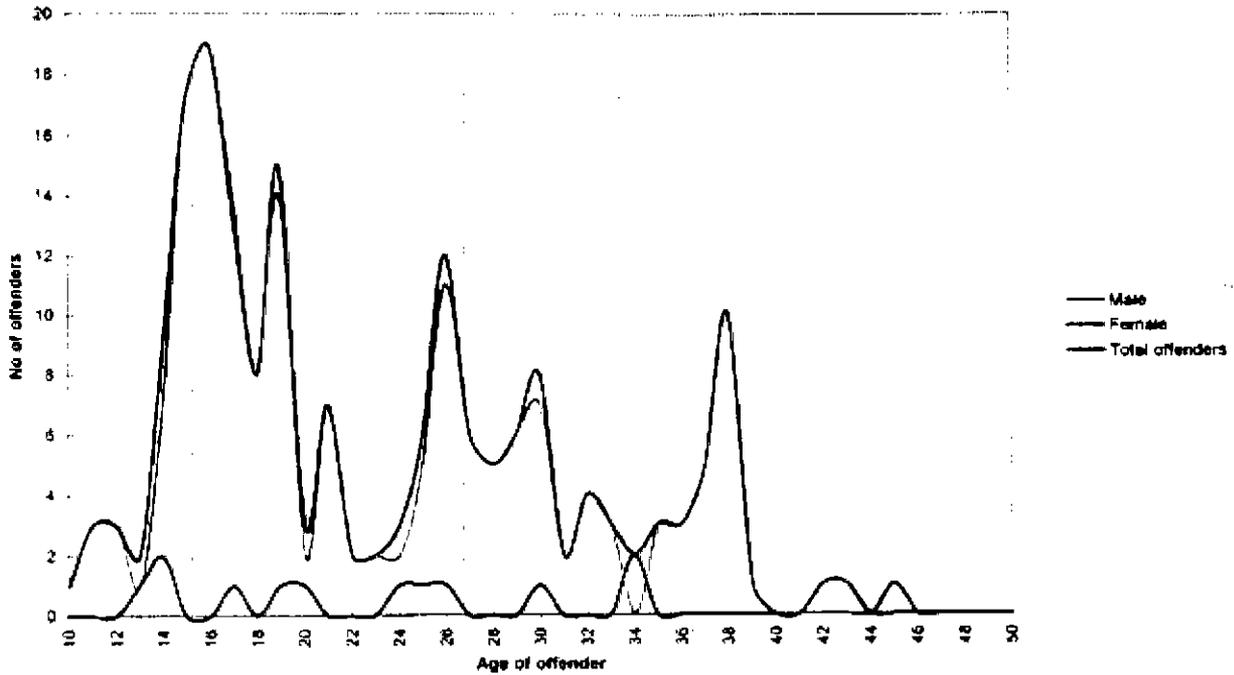
Appendix 2

Chart to show the ethnicity of robbery offenders on Ashley sector (99/00)



Appendix 3

Graph to show the robbery offender profile in Ashley sector by age (99/00)



Appendix 4

Recorded robbery in Ashley sector by beat (99/00)

