

North Wales Police
Flintshire
"Virtual Communities"
Burglary reduction
Tilley Award submission
2002

Programme Co-ordinators

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Local authority	Flintshire
Police Force	North Wales Police
Neighbourhood Watch	Flintshire
Funding Agency	National Assembly for Wales



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Category

Crime (burglary) Reduction

Definition of target area or community

Elderly residents in sheltered accommodation
Flintshire

This project is made up of separate communities identified as having high burglary rates. Due to the rural nature of North Wales, the Phrase "Virtual Community" has been used to best identify the properties subject of the analysis.

Elderly residents in sheltered accommodation

This community consists of elderly residents of sheltered housing in Flintshire. Those included in the target community are the occupants of sixteen sheltered accommodation schemes where the rate of burglary is twice the national average.

Elderly

Burglary of the elderly was quickly highlighted as a problem and subject to particularly low levels of report to the police. The burglary rate for this virtual community was analysed using data from sixteen sheltered accommodation schemes in Flintshire County Council, the properties all being single-occupancy bungalows or flats. Although only half of these locations had a burglary rate twice the national average, the average rate for the total number of locations exceeded the critical level.

Elderly

- **Target hardening** security upgrading on doors and windows (locks, door chains, lighting)
- **Increased awareness of victims** - crime prevention advice
- **Increase vigilance of residents** - expand neighbourhood watch, establish cocoons
- **Remote guardianship** - installation of senior link telephones

A target reduction of 15% in domestic burglary within twelve months of commencing the project was considered to be achievable.

Area	Number of burglary dwellings between 1/4/98 - 1/4/00	Number of burglary dwellings between 1/4/00 – 19/3/02
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Overall Totals	36	15
% Reduction	41%	

The overall impact upon the burglary rate has been dramatic in that the two year period during & following the programme has seen a 41% drop in burglaries within our "Virtual Community".

Further assessment is being carried out via the Home Office and is still awaited at the time this report is being prepared as regards 'control' areas in and around the target premises.

An addition benefit has been the impact the programme has had upon the 'fear of crime' that manifests itself upon this vulnerable element of the community.

The North Wales Police
Burglary Reduction Initiative
"Virtual Communities"

This submission refers to interventions designed to positively impact upon burglaries targeting elderly residents living within Purpose built accommodation in Flintshire

Background

This project **was drawn up in response** to the Home Office 'Reducing Burglary' Initiative' (RBI). Nowhere in North Wales could we find a beat or other area, defined in traditional geographic terms, that reached the 'twice the national rate threshold for eligibility for Crime Reduction Programme funding. However, burglaries were suffered. Our **sense** was that:

1. Burglary of the elderly was a problem, and subject to particularly low levels of report to the police.
2. There were burglary pockets within beats, which disappeared when one averaged the victimisation rates of the policing unit of which they formed part.

The above findings led to the concept of 'Virtual Communities', that is communities that are defined in terms of features other than common geography. Virtual communities need not necessarily occupy a spatially distinct area and may be spread across a number of wards / beats, or indeed counties. By adopting this concept we were able to focus our analysis, and **interventions, on those** classes of **people** or dwellings that soft data suggested were most at risk. Whilst this method enable us to identify and quantify problems the difficulties in terms of data gathering should not be underestimated.

A general issue in North Wales was a major reorganisation of data systems. For all practical purposes, data from the period before 1st April 1997 was unavailable. Thus the **analysis data comprises that from** two full years (April 97 to March 98, and April 98 to March 99) and one period of four months, grossed up to a year.

Scanning and Analysis

The Elderly

While a number of elderly burglary victims had been interviewed, which suggested a high rate of unreported victimisation, there was no way of translating this into a rate. To do that, one would need a number of 'elderly households' by which to divide the number of burgled elderly households. However, no local authority body could supply information. While it would have been possible to provide number representing households that contained an elderly person, this would have been much larger than the number of households populated solely by the elderly. Further, crime reports do not give information about the household composition, just details of the complainant. Recourse was had to the British Crime Survey to estimate the number of households populated exclusively by adults over 65 (i.e. containing no younger adults or children) but this did not help, since the same information could not have been yielded from recorded data about burglary victims. While the sense that the elderly were victimised remained, there was no way of generating a burglary rate that was defensible.

After a number of abortive attempts to resolve the issue, information was sought from the Flintshire Carelink agency of Flintshire County Council as to the sheltered schemes in that county. These properties were all single-occupancy bungalows or flats. This was cross-referenced to determine the number of burglaries of sheltered accommodation addresses. **Table 1** shows the recorded burglary rate of each of the sites of such accommodation, with the most burgled at the top. To arrive at the rate, data from two years were averaged with data from part of a third year, which was grossed up to yield a third annual total. The number of those in each of the sites is also presented. It will be noted that the smallest groups are the most victimised, **proportionately**. It is acknowledged that it seems very strange to express rates per thousand for small numbers of households. The only reason is that this allows easy comparison with the threshold level of 54 per thousand households that justifies inclusion.

Table 1. Burglary Rate of Sheltered Accommodation Flintshire, by Number of Units and Location

<i>Location</i>	<i>No. of households</i>	<i>Rate/ 1000 households</i>
Penyffordd	19	105
Hope	21	95
Mancot	21	95
6 Sea/and	32	94
mold Central	57	88
North d Easi	23	87
Broughton		
'Saltney	78	64
Caergwrle	<u>35</u>	57
Northop	23	43
Gronant	27	37
wloe	58	34
Bagillt East	39	26
Castle	150	26
Buckley Bistre West	124	24
Connahs Quay Central	218	23
Nolywell East	<u>105</u>	<u>10</u>

Eight of the places yield rates in excess of the critical burglary level. Eight do not. Does that mean that the initiative should be restricted to the eight in excess of the critical level? It probably does not. Imagine the situation when considering burglary rates in a traditional geographic area. Some parts of the area will exceed the average rate of burglary. Some will have fewer burglaries than the area average. Analysis looking at the conventional type of geographic area should not exclude parts of the area with lower than average burglary rates. When we were seeking to submit the bid for funding to the Home Office, our analysis took into consideration average burglary rates above and below the critical level for which bids could be made. By analogy, sheltered housing should be included up to the point at which the overall rate falls below the critical 54/1000 households. **Table 2 shows the overall rate if one includes a particular site and all sites with a higher rate.** Thus Penyfford and Hope together have a combined rate of 100 burglaries per 1000 households. Penyfford, Hope and Mancot combined have a rate of 98 burglaries per 1000 households. Looking much further down the table, Northop and all areas with a higher rate *have* a combined rate of 78 per 1000.

It will be seen that the combined rate falls below the critical level with the inclusion of Buckley Bistre West. Thus the eligible 'virtual community' of vulnerable sheltered housing would exclude Buckley Bistre West, Connahs Quay Central and Holywell East. In practice, the rates of victimisation in two of these areas are not much less than in Castle, and it may well be that local policing practice would include the remaining areas. It should be noted that when Castle and all worse locations of sheltered accommodation are combined, the rate in each of the three years, as well as the annual average, exceeds the critical threshold.

Table 2. Combined Burglary Rate: Each Area Combined with Those More Victimised

Penyfford	105
Hope	100
Mancot	98
Sealand	97
Mold Central	93
North d Easi	92
Broughton	
Saltney	84
Caergwrle	80
Northop	78
6ronant	74
Ewloe	69
Bagillt East	65
Castle	55
Buckley Bistre West	50
Connahs Quay Central	43
Holywell East	40

Proposed Interventions

The following interventions outline the options under **consideration** in relation to the problem. They are all subject to a **partnership-based approach**. All **proposals** are to be considered dynamic, in that it is considered essential to be able to retain the flexibility to tailor action around the variables that may emerge within the problems.

"Response"

The properties subject of this project form a virtual community that consists of small complexes of similar properties spread out over a large geographic area. However the majority of the properties have the same weaknesses and the victims and potential victims in the main are vulnerable and share a lack of easily accessible guardianship.

The initiative will seek to address the two main types of burglary that the occupants of this virtual community are subjected to;

- (1) The 'traditional' breaking and entry whereby entry is achieved via a vulnerable part of the premises
- (2) The distraction burglary whereby offenders gain entry to the premises by convincing the occupant to allow them in.

Forced entry to the target premises is **relatively easy due to poor use** of materials and often-inadequate locks. The presence of an elderly and often immobile occupant does not appear to act as an effective deterrent. Therefore the premises must be the subject of effective target hardening.

The occupants are in general easy prey to bogus callers and action will be taken to increase their awareness of the problems and to provide them with the assistance and knowledge that will better enable them to refuse access to illegitimate callers.

In addition it is intended to increase the level of guardianship by the installation of remote monitoring equipment and by actively encouraging younger more able bodied neighbours to take an active interest in the welfare of the victims /potential victims.

Table 3: Summary of proposed interventions for the elderly in sheltered accommodation

<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Probable Resource Implication</i>
<i>Target hardening</i>	Replacement of glass in vulnerable windows with laminated glass	Police Officer and local authority staff time to conduct surveys The cost of purchase installing appropriate security measures
	Ensuring that locks of adequate quality are fitted on doors and windows	
	Ensuring that doors are fitted with security chains	
	The installation of PIR activated lights	
<i>Increased awareness within victims / potential victims</i>	Production of advice material	Police Officer and local authority staff time
		Production of materials
	Production of warning / advice cards to be fitted near front doors	
	Providing guidance to victims / potential victims by means of direct input and indirectly by providing input to home help workers	
<i>Increased vigilance by residents from neighbouring properties</i>	Extension (where necessary) of Neighbourhood Watch schemes	Police Officer time Production of materials

	Establishing protective cocoons	
	Production and distribution of advice material	
Remote Guardianship	The installation of automatic telephone speaker phones through to the help the aged 'senior link' system or similar	Note: We have already raised some funds specifically to enable the installation of senior link equipment at a number of properties

Estimation of Timing and Costs

Within the proposed interventions there are initiatives aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the effects achieved. In addition, it is proposed that these target areas will be regarded as pilot sites and systems will therefore be put in place to monitor the longer-term maintenance of the reduced burglary rates.

Funding Applied For

	Number of Burglaries over three year period	Allocation of funding (Number of burglaries x £ 100)
Elderly Person Homes	66	£6,600

The time and costing plan below was considered a provisional estimate as flexibility was a necessary management requirement. It was important that all those involved continued to monitor the local situation and were in a position to change the initial approach as indeed was found to be the case in relation to the target hardening.

Cost per intervention

<i>Target Area</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Cost attributed to gram</i>
Elderly	Target hardening of 50 premises	£ 5,000
	Increased awareness by victims / potential victims	£800

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Increased vigilance by residents from neighbouring properties	£800
Remote guardianship	£0
Total	£6,600

Quarterly Milestones

After 1st Quarter

Target Area	Progress	Cost this quarter
Elderly	Survey of target premises	£0
	Commence awareness campaign	£ 800
	Commence introduction of Neighbourhood Watch / Cocoons	£100
First quarter costs		£900.00

After 2nd Quarter

Target Area	Progress	Cost this quarter
Elderly	Target Harden 50 most vulnerable premises	£ 5,000
	Production and distribution of advice material	£ 700
	Further awareness campaign	£0
Second quarter costs		£ 5,700

After 3rd Quarter

Target Area	Progress	Cost this quarter
Elderly	Train / increase awareness of home help etc.	£0
Total this quarter		£0
Total		£6,600

The, remaining quarter would be a period of consolidation and evaluation.

Sustainability

This project will be used as a means of 'piloting' various interventions in order to reduce the burglary problem in virtual communities. It is acknowledged that some interventions will maybe fail to work in that particular context and will have to be reviewed as the project develops. At the end of this **developmental process**, we will have **endeavoured** to discover what interventions work in what contexts. In order to sustain the : intended reduction in burglary, we aim to extract the valuable experience and sense of good practice gained from the three sites and transfer it to areas of similarity.

Partnership responses

During the response phase, a number of difficulties arose. Most of these were due to staff changes within the original 'teams' who embarked upon the project.

In addition, it became apparent that changes from the original plan, in particular the 'target hardening' phase, was necessary. The provision of **window locks to all the premises** within the target area had been agreed initially as the 'M.O.' of the burglaries had been to force entry via the vulnerable rear windows. When this was pointed out to the local Authority Housing Department, they agreed to prioritise a replacement window programme, thus removing the need for additional locking devices. It is worth noting that this replacement programme incurred substantial addition expenditure on behalf of the local Authority, taking the anticipated cost of the interventions beyond original estimates. These figures have not been included however because the Authority did agree that they were costs that would ultimately have been incurred during the normal course of the refurbishment programme. An additional £5,000 was provided by the Housing department to assist in the purchasing of the door grills.

However, in those premises subject of the window replacement, the burglary 'M.O.' soon switched to breaking through the poor quality glazing on the rear doors. Consequently, a local company was contracted to fit the premises considered most at risk with internal grillwork. The cost of this was far in excess of the original window locks and only 50 units could be fitted. Those premises not fitted have been highlighted as a priority for impending CCTV coverage.

Area	Street	Number of burg dwellings between; 1/4/98 -1/4/00	Number of burg dwellings between 1/4/00 -19/3/02
Broughton 2 y	Herons Close	0	1 30/12/00
Tot 1		0	1
Saltney x z	Larch Way	2 05/10/98,06/10/98	0
	Douglas Place	2 15/04/99, 08/03/99	1 30/11/01
	Linden Grove	1 16/03/99	1 05/11/01
Total		5	2
Caergwrle 3 ~S	Tegfan Court	0	0
	Meadow Crescent	0	0
	Tan y Bryn	2 02/04/98, 07/09/98	0
	Conway Close	0	0
Total		2	0
Ewloe y	Woodside Close	3 01/07/99, 10/09/98, 09/09/98	0
Total		3	0
Buckley ~ f / y	Stanley Road	0	3 11/02/01, 20/01/01 x 2
	Bistre Close	1 14/09/98	0
	Southfield Close	2 30/10/98, 11/11/99	0
Total		3	3
Mancot i 5	Ashleigh Close	2 16/03/99, 27/10/98	0
	Leaches Close	2 18/09/98, 18/12/98	0
	Prince William Gardens	0	0
Total		4	0

Area	Street	Number of burg dwellings between 1/4/98 = 1/4/00	Number of burg dwellings between 1/4/00 = 19/3/02
Sealand ~/?"	Stonleigh Close	5 04/01/99, 10/06/98, 11/11/99, 23/02/99 x 2	2* 21/01/02, 09/02/01 *Distraction
	Orchard Way	0	0
Total		5	2
Northop 2 I }	Ffordd Gwynedd	0	0
	Ffordd Owen	1 24/05/98	0
	Ffordd Edwin	1 30/10/98	0
	Glan yr Eglws	2 04/11/98, 05/11/98	0
Total		4	0
Gronant 2 ↓ 37	Ffordd Wyn	0	1 30/07/00
	Nant y Gro	2 18/08/98, 01/07/99	0
	Llys Edward	0	0
	Bryn Mor	0	0
Total		2	1
Overall Totals		36	15
% Reduction			41%

Areas shown in red were in provided with replacement windows
Area in blue had target hardening of doors with internal grills

Conclusion

The overall impact upon the burglary rate has been dramatic in that the two year period during & following the programme has seen a 41% drop in burglaries within our "Virtual Community".

Further assessment is being carried out via the Home Office and is still awaited at the time this report is being **prepared** as regards 'control' areas in and around the target premises.

Although relatively few, high risk premises received the target hardening intervention. All the residents were provided with advice and guidance through training of wardens and development of cocoon **Neighbourhood** Watch schemes.

An unforeseen benefit of the programme was the impact it had upon the fear of crime experienced by the elderly. A recipient of **one** of the door grill units best identified this. The Lady, in her 80's and living alone, was describing to Mr. Chris Downes of the Home Office Crime Reduction Unit, how much safer she felt now that the (decorative) grills were in place following 'the burglary'. Mr. Downes enquired as to what had been stolen during the break-in only to be told, "Oh it wasn't **me** that was broken into, it was my neighbour across the road!"

Programme co-ordinators

PC Andrea Pashley, North Wales Police
Dawn Evans, Carelink, Flintshire County Council.
Sandra Jones, Housing, Flintshire County Council
Tony Walker, Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch
Sgt. Paul Firth, North Wales Police
Sgt. Mark Radcliffe, North Wales Police
A/Sgt Graham Lewis, North Wales Police

Example minutes of Project meeting

FLINTSHIRE BURGLARY BID

Minutes for meeting held at Mold Police Station Friday 3rd November 2000

Present

Sandra Jones, Housing, Flintshire County Council
Tony Walker, Flintshire Neighbourhood Watch
Sgt. Paul Firth, North Wales Police
PC Ian Mc Donald, North Wales Police
Dawn Evans, Carelink, Flintshire County Council.
PC Andrea Pashley, North Wales Police

Apologies

Evette Price, Housing, Flintshire County Council.

Sgt Firth welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those present for their attendance. The background to the bidding system details of the bid submitted by North Wales Police on behalf of the Crime and Disorder partnerships explained by the Sgt.

It was explained that a total of £6600 had been granted to the County for work in reducing crime and the fear of crime against the elderly residents of sheltered housing.
£5000 of the **money** was set aside **for** target hardening **of** the **50 most vulnerable properties**.

Sandra Jones stated that she held the security budget for these properties and was prepared to match the funding already granted for suitable schemes to be put in place.

The remaining money was granted in order to increase awareness of the residents, train relevant staff - wardens and home helps and to increase

vigilance by the introduction of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the surrounding areas.

It was explained by Sgt Firth that receipts for the use of the funds had to be raised in order to claim the **money, and that the group had** flexibility in agreeing a start date for the activities, which were set out into quarterly milestones.

1' Quarter - August, September and October

Work to be undertaken was specified as survey of target premises, commence awareness campaign and commence neighbourhood watch campaign.

Dawn Evans stated that all wardens had received awareness training as a result of the 'Watching You' campaign, which had been part of the work of the Elderly Crime Action Team. This campaign had also included presentations to all residents of sheltered schemes in the county, which were given by Community Safety and local Community Beat Officers.

The group agreed that this was the work referred to in the bid, and invoices for the time of the staff involved should be raised.

Tony Walker stated that one of the area co-ordinators of NHW was also a warden and had been trying to encourage the scheme amongst her colleagues. Dawn Evans who stated that the warden (Heather Wren) had given a presentation to **her colleagues on the scheme** confirmed this.

It was agreed that £100 should go to NHW for literature and expenses in setting up of new schemes.

ACTION

Dawn Evans and Sandra Jones to provide cost per hour of staff to a total of 20hrs for administration, preparation and training of staff.

Dawn Evans to cost the training of wardens in NHW - 20hrs and also for the time taken by Heather Wren to prepare and provide the presentation - 10hrs

2nd Quarter November, December and January

*As some of the target surveys had not **been** commenced in the 1st quarter it was agreed that they needed to be completed ASAP in order for the target hardening set out in the bid for the second quarter to commence.*

It was agreed that details of work carried out by the County were needed and a survey of the wardens' views would also assist. PCs McDonald and Pashley were also asked to visit the specified sites and collate their recommendations. It was felt that analysis of the crime trends was needed along with the **above** work in **order** for a **decision to** be made on the best use of the funds.

ACTION

Dawn Evans to provide details of work carried out by the County and conduct survey of Wardens thoughts on security needs.

PC Ian McDonald and PC Andrea Pashley to undertake site visits and make recommendations of the work carried out

Crime Pattern Analysis to be obtained by the Police.

All members of the group were asked to bring any thoughts or ideas on ways to progress the bid to the next meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

WEDNESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2000. 10AM MOLD POLICE STATION.