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The PRG Burglary Manual

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About the Police Research Group

The Home Office Police Research Group (PRG) was formed in 1992 and aims to increase the influence of research and development in police policy and practice. PRG activities include:

sponsoring and undertaking research and development to improve and strengthen the police service, taking account of Home Office policy;

identifying and disseminating good practice in consultation with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary;

providing an information service which offers guidance on good policing practice and policing related research, and a national co-ordination and dissemination service on police initiated research.

PRG's work is published in two main series, the Crime Detection and Prevention Series and the Police Research Series, together with occasional papers and a periodical on policing research called 'Focus'.

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Foreword

People have a right to feel safe in their own homes. That is why tackling burglary effectively is a key national objective for both the Government and ACPO. At the local level, there have been many successful initiatives to combat the problem.

In 1993 the Home Office Police Research Group, in collaboration with ACPO Crime Committee, took residential burglary as one of its first priorities in a five year programme of research and development on police operations. The findings have been published in a series of research reports.

The practical advice in this manual distils what has been learnt about burglary investigation and prevention from PRG's research programme and work by other agencies including the Audit Commission. It complements the guidance set out in 'Tackling Crime Effectively: Volume II'.

I commend it to all local commanders.



THE RT HON DAVID MACLEAN
Minister of State
Home Office
Autumn 1996

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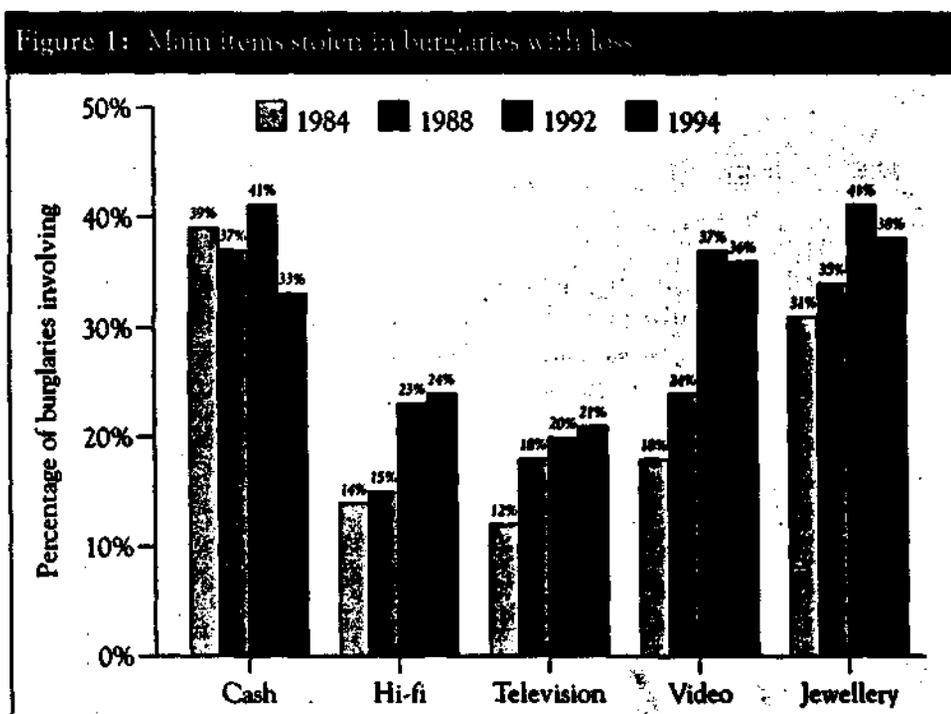
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1. Introduction and background

The latest British Crime Survey reveals that having their home burgled is the crime people fear most. In 1995, 650,000 residential burglary offences were recorded - 13% of all recorded crime in England and Wales.¹ Although the overall number has fallen in the last few years, the risk of being burgled is one of the highest in Europe. Clear up rates for residential burglary are relatively low, averaging 23% in 1995 for primary and secondary detections combined.

The 1994 British Crime Survey shows that items such as jewellery, videos, TVs and hi-fi equipment are the most commonly stolen household goods in residential burglaries. This reflects the increasing levels of ownership of such goods, their high portability and value and the ease with which they can be sold on as stolen goods. Cash is also frequently taken in burglaries. In the 1994 survey, computer equipment was stolen in 8% of residential burglaries.



Source: British Crime Survey, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1994 (weighted data)

¹ *Notifiable Offences England and Wales, 1995. Home Office Statistical Bulletin 3/96*

Tackling residential burglary is a priority area within ACPO crime strategy, and increasing detections is one of the Home Secretary's key national objectives and a key performance indicator for the police. This manual has been compiled to provide guidance, drawing on research by the Police Research Group and others, on how forces might best approach the problem. It complements the advice given in the house burglary section of the Crime Management Handbook recently produced by ACPO Crime Committee.² It does not aim to be prescriptive and encourages forces to develop strategies relevant to local circumstances. Significant steps have already been taken by many forces to reduce the number of burglaries, and this manual offers examples of good practice which have been implemented.

Overview of manual

This manual identifies areas where research has shown that cost-effective improvements can be made in the prevention and detection of burglary.

For strategic planning purposes, it distinguishes between responding to burglary calls (the reactive approach) and taking the initiative to reduce them (the proactive approach). In practice, the two sets of activities interlock and reinforce one another. This requires an integrated approach.

Part two (Setting up the strategy) identifies key elements in an integrated strategy for reducing residential burglary, and includes recommendations from areas of work already carried out. Part three (Responding to calls) breaks down the process of a burglary investigation into its component parts. Part four (Taking the initiative) discusses proactive approaches to burglary.

Each section contains references to recommended further reading.

2. Setting up the strategy

2.1 Introduction

Tackling burglary effectively requires an integrated, strategic approach that acknowledges that *reaction* to the last offence is proaction to the next. Any shift towards more proactive policing should incorporate an increased emphasis on crime prevention. This may require significant cultural and organisational changes. The importance of crime prevention should be reflected in the training of all officers and reinforced by keeping them constantly informed of successful initiatives.

Crime prevention initiatives sometimes have only a short-term effect and require recurrent injections of resources, publicity and enthusiasm to keep making a difference. The 'blip of change' swiftly returns to the norm when the project finishes or the relevant senior officer moves.

This effect can be avoided by introducing a skilful and seamless integration between the reactive and proactive policing functions. One factor is the 'tone from the top'. If senior management are fully involved and supportive, change is encouraged and sustained. Managerial commitment to the idea of doing more proactive work, however, is on its own insufficient to alter significantly the often overwhelmingly reactive pattern of investigative activity at local level. The following sections identify some of the elements of a successful integrated approach.

2.2 Communication, information and co-ordination

Large scale initiatives such as Operation Bumblebee have demonstrated that a key factor for success is effective communication of information. Establishing good information flows to all concerned with the initiative is vital. To ensure a clear understanding of its aims and methods, this should include all officers, at whatever level, who are involved in the strategy, the public, the media and potential offenders.

² Tackling Crime Effectively. Management Handbook Volume II

2. 2.1 Communication between officers

The Audit Commission suggested that a crime management unit might include the following functions:

- crime prevention;
- watch scheme liaison (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Vehicle Watch);
- scenes of crime officers;
- crime pattern analysis;
- intelligence;
 - development of target packages for BCU and HQ proactive teams;
 - help desks for the general public;
- Victim Support liaison;
- administration, including prosecution files;
- witness liaison.

This structure encourages communication between officers, and between officers and the public. The appointment of an individual with responsibility for a geographical area could also facilitate communication. These positions could be staffed by officers who worked primarily days and would deal with repeat victimisation, Neighbourhood Watch, crime prevention advice, Special Constables and liaison with Victim Support and other agencies in that area.

To encourage the flow of information, regular, possibly daily, briefing and debriefing should take place between all relevant functions, for example between the crime desk staff and the burglary team. Other good examples of inter-function liaison include the flow of information between burglary teams and drugs units because of the links between acquisitive crime and drug use. A burglary team may gather a great deal of intelligence which will be useful to the drugs unit and should be encouraged to look for it and share it. This may also be useful in targeting handlers of stolen goods as they may also be drug

dealers, exchanging stolen goods for drugs. Including field intelligence officers (FIOs) or local intelligence officers (LIOs) as members of burglary teams also facilitates communication and assists in the development of proactive 'packages' on target criminals.

2.2.2 Communication between forces and divisions

There is some evidence that when burglaries are followed by the movement of stolen goods across force boundaries this is in part motivated by a desire to frustrate police investigations. When interviewed, burglars and others felt confident that there was little police cross-border liaison on less serious crime. Here is a clear area where establishing procedures for enabling access to records of identifiable stolen property and movements of burglars and handlers between forces and divisions could bring positive results. Increased networking, for example through inter-divisional and inter-force conferences, could also be beneficial.

2.2.3 Communication with the public

Despite the public's persistent pleas for 'police on the streets', deployment of uniformed foot patrol officers is not the most cost-effective way to tackle burglary. A successful strategy against crime publicised through skilful use of the media could be a more effective way of enhancing public relations and customer satisfaction. It could reassure the public that the police share their concerns and are improving their performance.

The media can be used to raise public awareness of crime prevention initiatives and other police successes. They can also be used to mobilise the public's help; the public can be informed about confidential telephone lines and encouraged to report suspicious incidents. The link between burglaries and second hand electrical goods offered in pubs and at car-boot sales could also be spelt out. This might discourage the public from buying these goods.

Further reading:

ACPO Crime Committee (1996) *Tackling Crime Effectively*. Management Handbook Volume II. Unpublished. Copies were distributed to police forces.

ACPO, HMIC, Audit Commission (1994) *Tackling Crime Effectively*. Management Handbook.

Audit Commission (1993) *Helping with Enquiries: Tackling Crime Effectively*. London: HMSO.

Johnston, V, Shapland, J. and Wiles, P (1993) *Developing Police Crime Prevention: Management and Organisational Change*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 41. London: Home Office.

2.3 Resourcing

Strategically planned burglary initiatives have shown that a number of issues about managing and resourcing the strategy must be addressed if it is to be sustainable in the long-term, both to retain the support of officers and to meet the needs of the community it serves. It is also important that any adopted strategy should be kept under review and adapted to meet changing demands and new priorities. If links with drugs, for example, are seen to constitute a major problem in a particular area this component must be targeted.

Each force or BCU will have to consider what is going to be the best way to integrate proactive and reactive strategies. For example, in deciding how best to resource the initial visits to burglaries, they have the choice of setting up specialist teams or retaining a more general response to all crimes. If they retain a general response to burglaries, they will need to consider:

- the best balance between reactive and proactive responses and how to ensure successful communication between the two;
- the appropriate level of expertise needed by officers and how to avoid duplicating police effort;
- the most efficient way to deploy their resources;
- the most effective way to respond to calls.

If forces are setting up burglary teams, there are known advantages to a structure which encourages:

- the development of expertise in the detection and prevention of burglary;
- a teamwork approach encouraging good information-sharing and commitment to strategies developed by the team itself;
- specialism, which can encourage the most effective use of resources.

The challenge that forces face in setting up burglary teams is in matching the size of the unit to the amount of burglary in the area. The team has to be of sufficient size to operate efficiently and effectively, and also has to be able to cope with sickness and absences. Specialist teams are more likely to be viable in densely populated areas with a large police presence and plenty of burglaries to deal with. More sparsely populated and thinly policed areas are more likely to need generalist officers.

Some savings can be made by using alternative resources for some tasks, to enable the police to focus on essential policing tasks:

- the public is not averse to speaking to civilians working at police stations, so the use of civilians to work on help desks could be considered;
- the transcription of interview tapes has been shown to be done by civilian typists at lower cost, more quickly and accurately, than by police officers;
- Special Constables could be used for more crime prevention initiatives, including establishing the extent of repeat victimisation in an area, undertaking property marking drives, carrying out domestic security surveys, giving crime prevention advice and stimulating Neighbourhood Watch activity;
- observations and curfew checks of prolific offenders on bail could, where appropriate, be carried out by Special Constables. In some circumstances 'professional witnesses' could be used. This is a person employed by the local authority specifically to witness and give evidence of criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Anti-burglary strategies carried out by officers drawn from both CID and uniformed sections have been beneficial in terms of integrating the work of these sections. They improve co-operation and communication and help achieve agreement on priorities and tactics. They also allow for more flexibility and may encourage all officers to contribute to the success of a burglary initiative, as it is no longer seen solely as the job of CID to 'be proactive'. Officers should be encouraged to suggest ideas for gathering information, targeting handlers or detecting prolific offenders. In one force, overtime was offered to carry out proactive operations suggested by officers. In another, a book was used to log ideas and suggestions, and officers' contributions were used in their appraisals.

Further reading:

HMIC (1995) Obtaining value for money in the *Police Service. A good practice guide*. London: Home Office.

2.4 Training and supervision

It is important that sufficient training and equipment are provided, specifically in:

- the handling of informants;
- targeting/observation;
- crime scene visiting and evaluating whether a scene of crime officer (SOCO) should be called;
- forensic awareness and scene preservation;
- encouraging junior officers to take a more strategic view of burglary, for example looking for patterns of offences, rather than treating each as an isolated incident. At present, only senior officers receive any training in taking a wider view and their attention is generally focused on crimes judged to be more serious than, for example, the handling and receiving of stolen electrical goods.

The use of senior and more experienced officers to supervise junior officers is a key factor in developing their skills and ensuring the delivery of a quality service. Without supervision and the overseeing of new initiatives or changing priorities, there is a danger that the inertia of existing force practices may take its toll on the effort that is put into good training and the introduction of strategic initiatives. Some forces, Nottinghamshire for example, have 'tutor' detectives for this purpose.

2.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The current national key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to burglary are the number of burglaries detected per 100 officers, and the percentage of 999 calls answered within the local target time. Work is also under way to develop a PI aimed at reducing repeat victimisation. Additional measures which forces may wish to consider are provided in the house burglary section of the Crime Management Handbook Volume II.

When forces make decisions such as to use specialised crime scene visitors to attend burglaries or to commence new anti-burglary strategies, the outcomes of these decisions need to be monitored to ensure that detections are not being compromised by time and efficiency savings. Monitoring should include changes in the level of reported crime in the area being policed and the 'quality' of those arrested.

A full evaluation of strategies involves posing a sequence of questions, including:

- was there a real change in the burglary rate?
 - * have arrests and detections gone up?
 - * has the number of arrests of prolific offenders gone up?
 - * has the crime rate gone down and stayed down?
- how much of this change can be attributed to the preventive initiative as opposed to coincidental events (for example, other police operations)?
- what were the side effects of the initiative (for example, abstractions from other duties or displacement into other areas or types of crime. There may also have been a diffusion of benefits with positive effects of the initiative spreading wider than where it was implemented)?

- What was the cost-effectiveness of the initiative in financial and social terms? For example:
 - * increased efficiency and effectiveness in the deployment of resources;
 - * acceptable levels of victim and public satisfaction;
 - * job satisfaction for officers.

In evaluating the use of silent alarms, for example, additional factors besides their purchase price would need to be considered; they use less resources than surveillance and are liable to none of the moral objections about offender entrapment.

Similarly, operations can generate several 'products'. These include satisfying the needs of victims, recovering stolen property and advising on how to prevent repeat victimisation. Satisfying victims can assist in good relations with the public which in turn can profit other investigations - although such benefits are difficult to measure.

If the initiative seems to be slow at producing results, its lack of impact should be examined to assess where the failure has occurred. This allows the opportunity to re-examine the initiative and re-launch if appropriate. An initiative can appear to be failing due to:

- measurement failure (the method of evaluation was wrong);
- programme failure (the scheme was not properly implemented);
- theory failure (the theory behind the scheme was wrong - it does not work).

2.6 Public satisfaction

Anti-burglary strategies have more wide-ranging aims than reducing recorded crime and improving clear up rates. These include enhanced quality of life through not being burgled, providing a better quality of service to burglary victims, improving co-operation between the police, public and other agencies, raising police morale and commitment, and increasing the value for money given by the police service. Skilful use of the media may help in communicating and fulfilling these aims.

The public, whilst they would like to see their stolen goods recovered, do not use this as the sole criterion on which they judge the police. They like to know that police officers care about what has happened to them and will conduct a thorough investigation. Satisfaction with police visits has been shown to rise when the police stayed for at least 20 minutes, and conducted interviews with the victims and other nearby witnesses.

It should not be overlooked that most burglars are caught through help supplied by the public, and not from the sole efforts of the police. It is vital, therefore, that public satisfaction with the police is maintained and improved. It is helpful to keep victims informed of the existence and successes of any static investigations - those which do not involve officers attending the scene, including telephone investigation, crime pattern analysis and intelligence development - to encourage the public to keep supplying the important information which leads to detections.

The public need and want to be advised on what the police action has been, and the outcome of the investigation, be it positive or negative. Should a prosecution take place, the victim and witnesses need to know the status of prosecution and its outcome. Treating them with consideration and respect, and having a two-way flow of information are key to maintaining good relations. Forces should therefore ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide comprehensive and timely feedback.

Further reading:

Amey, P, Hale C. and Uglow, S. (1996) Development and Evaluation of a Crime Management Model. Police Research Series Paper 18. London: Home Office.

Gill, G., Hart, J., Livingstone, K. and Stevens, J. (1996) The Crime Allocation System: Police Investigations into Burglary and Auto Crime. Police Research Series Paper 16. London: Home Office.

Nicholls, J. (forthcoming) Police Force Reorganisation: Getting It Right. London: Police Review.

3. Responding to calls

3.1 Introduction

Reactive responses to burglary are generally initiated by a call to attend a burglary scene. Key areas of activity triggered by a call are usually:

- the grading and allocation of that call (s.3.2);
- the initial visit to the crime scene (s.3.3);
- the decision made on the extent (case allocation) to which the crime can be actively investigated (s.3.4).

3.2 Handling the initial call

Burglaries are usually reported to the police by victims who return to their homes to find that they have been burgled, or by members of the public who witness a break-in or other suspicious behaviour. Those receiving the call, normally the information room, have to decide how to grade the call; as an immediate response, a delayed response, a response by appointment, or no response. Burglaries 'in progress', where the offender is on or leaving the premises, obviously require an immediate response.

Leaving aside crimes 'taken into consideration' (TICS), apprehending a burglar in the course of a crime contributes the highest proportion of primary detections in burglary. Higher detection rates could be achieved by increasing the speed and accuracy of response to burglaries in progress. Whilst the aim of increasing the speed of response has to be balanced against the consideration of the safety of the public and should take account of force objectives on response times, the time between the call being received and allocated should be as short as possible.

In a recent study primary detections in one large force were achieved in the following ways:

| Table 1: Burglary detections | | |
|---|--------|-----------------|
| Detection method | Number | % of detections |
| Offender caught at or near scene | 90 | 43 |
| Information from witnesses (victims or neighbours) at the scene | 70 | 34 |
| Forensic evidence essential in the detection | 13 | 6 |
| Subsequent CID investigation, based on information from local contacts (1%) and informants (4%) | 11 | 5 |
| Subsequent investigation (generally CID) involving surveillance (4%) and/or stop-checks (1%) | 11 | 5 |
| Arrested for another offence | 7 | 3 |
| Additional information discovered by the victim | 6 | 3 |
| Miscellaneous | 1 | 1 |
| Total detections | 209 | 100 |
| Source: Coupe and Griffiths (forthcoming) | | |

Increases in detections are unlikely to be achieved solely by increasing the speed of response. They also need improved quality of response. A carefully planned approach to burglaries in progress involves consideration of the number of officers attending, the roles each one will carry out and the provision of accurate information concerning approaches, geographical features and escape routes to the property being burgled in known high risk areas. Crime pattern analysis and intelligence systems may contribute to this.

Catching offenders during burglaries is very cost-effective, despite the number of officers that may be required to achieve this. One study showed that the time spent at the crime scenes detected in this way worked out at 7.6 hours per detection (taking into account time spent at 'in progress' incidents which were not detected). This is compared to other methods of detection, for example a

detection through the use of SOCOs (144 hours per detection) or through the use of CID (131 hours per detection). The number of burglars caught in the act could be raised by adjusting manning procedures for burglary responses to ensure a quicker response to burglary alerts. A study in one force found that 'in progress' incidents accounted for 10% of all reported residential burglaries. Ninety percent of responses to these 'in progress' calls missed the offender(s). If this figure were reduced to even 85%, burglary detections could increase by a third with little impact on resourcing.

Although forces may have different objectives regarding response times, research recommendations are that:

- officers should aim to reach 'in progress' crime scenes in five minutes or less from receipt of the dispatch, and where possible in three minutes, so that burglars leaving the crime scene can be intercepted. These target times, however, are going to be extremely difficult to achieve in some areas, such as rural districts;
- at least three officers should be dispatched in order to maximise the chances of detecting burglars who have left the crime scene but are still in the vicinity. Local discretion should be used to ensure officer safety. Scheduling officers to cover the peak time for burglaries, the afternoon, would allow officers to look for the offender and question neighbours who may be at home at this time;
- if appropriate for local circumstances, forces should consider the creation of more single-manned units. In one force studied, it was concluded that these could provide 60% more cover with a probable increase in operating costs of less than 10%. The use of single-manned units would also allow one officer at a scene to be dispatched to deal with other calls whilst allowing another to remain. In most 'in progress' incidents, however, it would still be necessary for three officers to be dispatched to the burglary scene, even if they were operating as three separate single-manned units.
- a quality response to burglaries in progress should be planned in advance. In West Midlands, for example, staff in the divisional information rooms can interrogate computerised Ordnance Survey maps for useful information to pass on to the attending officers.

Even if the burglary is discovered some time after it has been committed, it is normal practice to send an officer to the scene of a burglary for several reasons. These include: to reassure the victims; to check the burglar is no longer at the scene of the crime; to check the premises are secure; and, to ensure the preservation of any forensic evidence. The public view police attendance at the burglary scene as important, even if little can be done in terms of immediate detection. Wherever possible, house-to-house enquiries should be carried out, as evidence given by neighbours is one of the most important factors in gaining detections.

The next section discusses the importance of the initial visit and gives examples of effective modifications to the way in which this visit has traditionally been carried out.

Further reading:

Coupe, T and Griffiths, M. (forthcoming) *Solving Residential Burglary*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series. London: Home Office.

Diez, L. (1995) *The Use of Call Grading: How Calls to the Police are Graded and Resourced*. Police Research Series Paper 13. London: Home Office.

3.3 Visiting the scene

3.3.1 Who should attend?

Several forces have recently been experimenting with the way in which a burglary scene is investigated. Formerly, there may have been up to four visits to a burglary scene, the first visit being made by the officer responding to the initial call, which could then potentially be followed by visits from a CID officer, a SOCO and possibly by an officer giving crime prevention advice.

A number of problems were identified with this approach including:

- the scale of resources involved;
- routine attendance by SOCOs creating a high workload and a slower response;

- poor information exchange between officers;
- difficulties of gaining repeated access to a burglary scene;
- minimal increase in detections arising from additional visits;
- inconvenience to the householder.

To overcome these problems, many forces have now introduced a 'one-stop' approach to burglary investigations. This often involves the formation of a specialist burglary team. If such a team is formed, it may be more practical, particularly if the team is small, for the officers to work during the day so as to be able to interview victims and witnesses at the most convenient time for them. The consequence of this, however, is that should the burglary occur at night, another officer may need to attend. Clear guidelines should be given to officers on exactly what steps should be taken, for example, preserving evidence, making the property secure and reassuring victims. Comprehensive information about the visit must also be passed to the burglary team who may visit subsequently if a follow-up is necessary.

When the burglary team are on duty, they should be the first to visit the crime scene and should aim to do so on the same day that the incident is reported. Ideally, assignments to a specialist burglary team should be rotated so an appreciation of the type of information which needs to be collected and shared is widely spread among officers, and to prevent de-skilling in other areas of crime scene management and investigation. In the crime management model used by Toiler Lane division of West Yorkshire police, for example, uniform constables are seconded from reactive patrol to work with CID officers in Project Teams for up to two years.

Because the officers involved in scene visiting are specialised and assigned only to burglary investigations, the likelihood of them being called from the scene of the crime to deal with other calls is reduced considerably, thus increasing the quality and quantity of the evidence gathered. The intensive focus on burglary also enables officers in the team to build up knowledge and intelligence about burglaries in the area.

Officers assigned to the burglary team should:

- have had training in visiting crime scenes and awareness of what useful forensic evidence/intelligence might be present, and be able to perform

some initial forensic investigation as well as determining if there is sufficient evidence to justify a visit by a SOCO;

- carry out all enquiries pertaining to the burglary including interviewing all neighbours and witnesses;
- give crime prevention advice;
- ensure that victims are kept informed of progress of the investigation.

Another line taken by some forces is that only one multi-skilled officer attends the scene. This may be particularly appropriate to rural areas. Whichever approach is adopted, forces should ensure that officers attending the scene have the necessary skills and training to make decisions on progressing the investigation.

3.3.2 Use of scenes of crime officers (SOCOs)

Routine attendance at all burglary scenes is not the most effective use of SOCOs. Forces should decide on policies as to when SOCOs should attend burglaries, and clear and consistent guidelines should be drawn up and passed to investigating officers as to what factors should be present before a SOCO is called to the crime scene. These have included:

- using the discretion of the investigating officer who believes that there is potential forensic evidence at the scene of the crime. These officers should be given training in how to recognise useful signs of potential evidence;
- all scenes where there is blood;
- all scenes where there are fingerprints;
- all scenes where there are footwear marks;
- all scenes where there are tool marks;
- where there has been repeat victimisation - there may be evidence that could provide links to other offences.

Using SOCOs effectively

Thanet BCU in Kent set up a Crime Scene Unit (CSU) to visit crime scenes. In December 1994 there were 148 scenes examined by the CSU. Of these 22% were referred to SOLO who found fingerprints at 42%. Of these 30% gave positive identification. Prior to the implementation of the CSU, SOCO attended 30% more scenes and yet had 30% fewer positive identifications.

Source: Taylor and Hirst (1996)

Most burglary detections involving SOCOs are made in cases where there is a suspect and/or the forensic evidence is held on a database. Databases exist for fingerprints, footprints and DNA. Where there is a match with the database the burglar can be linked to the scene, and even where there is no match, crime scenes can be linked to other scenes.

The national DNA database

Between the establishment of the national DNA database in April 1995 and March 1996, 2,000 samples from scenes of crime were analysed by the Forensic Science Service, 85% of which were from burglary scenes. Of these 2,000, 470 were linked to an offender or another crime - a 'hit' rate of 20%.

Most samples that are received for testing are blood samples, which are also the most productive in giving testable DNA. However, success can also be achieved with semen samples, cigarette ends, face masks, stamps and envelopes.

One success story involved DNA samples from five burglaries in three different force areas being linked by the DNA database. Although these burglaries could then be seen as a linked series, there was no available suspect. Fingerprint bureaux in all three forces were searched, but to no avail. The Divisional Field Intelligence Officer in one of the forces then supplied the name and fingerprints of a potential suspect - an informer whom the force had relocated outside the force area. Fingerprints and DNA taken from the suspect matched those found at the scenes and the offender was arrested.

Source: National DNA User Group, March 1996

A computerised shoeprint recognition system

Since February 1995 a pilot study has been underway in divisions in four forces, to test a computerised shoeprint recognition system. Although the desired outcome was similar to that for automated fingerprint systems, a very particular program was needed. The program that was selected - SICAR - works by the operator highlighting noticeable aspects of the shoe by picking out pre-coded 'icons'.

The first 'hit' was found when old marks from one division's manual system were entered as practice items onto the new computer. The offence was a commercial burglary and the only evidence was a shoeprint. The suspect that the system picked out seemed unlikely as he had been in prison at the time, but further investigation showed that he had absconded. A full confession was obtained after he had been apprehended.

In another success story, a renowned house burglar, who was suspected not to offend outside his own residential area, was linked to a commercial burglary in the town centre by shoeprint evidence. He confessed and spent 3 months in a young offenders centre. On release he decided to change his modus operandi to escape detection via his shoeprints. He now broke into houses through the kitchen window and before his feet touched the ground, carefully wiped the soles of his trainers with the householder's dishcloth. Unfortunately for him, he then left clear 'clean' prints all over the kitchen floor. He was quickly rearrested.

Source: Helen Blake, West Yorkshire Police, National Conference on Scientific Support, October 1994.

Note: In March 1996 the A CPO Crime Committee agreed that SICAR was an effective system which could be commended to forces and that if adopted nationally it could provide the basis for a nationally compatible system.

Further reading:

McCulloch, H. (1996) Police Use of Forensic Science. Police Research Series Paper 19. London: Home Office.

Taylor, M. and Hirst, J. (1996) Initial Scene Visits to House Burglaries. Police Research Series Paper 14. London: Home Office.

Tilley, N. and Ford, A. (1996) *Forensic Science and Crime Investigation*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 73. London: Home Office.

3.3.3 Information collected at *the scene*

It is essential that good quality information is recorded during the initial visit as the quality of the crime report will impact at later stages of the investigation. If the information obtained is inadequate, or lacking in sufficient detail:

- the potential for effective crime pattern analysis is reduced;
- the input into intelligence-led operations is minimised;
- an extra scene visit may be required;
- an investigation may have to be unnecessarily dropped.

It is vitally important that all investigating officers are aware of the importance of the initial investigation and the information to be gained from it. The identification of repeat victimisation, for example, is difficult if the transfer of information between shifts or across boundaries is imperfect. Burglaries which are repeated are not likely to be dealt with by the same officers and consequently awareness of repeats will not emerge.

In order to maximise the contribution that the initial visit can make, recommendations include:

- ensuring that all officers receive training in what to look for and what to report;
- ensuring that crime assessors take responsibility for identifying cases where inadequate data are collected or entered, and for ensuring that sufficient data are provided;
- giving investigating officers access to crime pattern analysis systems. This enables them to see the level of detail required, and the use to which it is put;

- establishing adequate lines of communication between burglary scene visitors and the officers investigating series of burglaries. For example, daily briefings and intelligence bulletins can be used to pass on details of what sort of information to look for;

- addressing the tendency for officers to be less thorough in completing crime reports where they feel that the crime is unlikely to be subject to further investigation. M.O. forms used in some forces have 'tick boxes' which encourage the thorough recording of all details and are a vital part of the information which needs to be recorded. Ideally, the system should have the capacity to search on a combination of 'tick boxes' and free text.

Table 1 (section 3.2) showed the overall effect on defections of the evidence collected from victims and neighbours. If this figure is broken down, it shows that evidence from victims accounted for 19% of all primary defections. Information from neighbours was the main factor in the detection of 14% of the burglaries that were solved.

Although it is time-consuming to interview neighbours, it is cost-effective in terms of making defections. Not only is it an essential component in burglary investigation, but a valuable public relations exercise, and even where it does not provide evidence for the particular burglary, it may provide evidence relevant to other offences. It is therefore worth investing time in considering how to achieve the maximum number of interviews with neighbours, and ensuring that officers are:

- calling during hours when they are likely to be in;
- leaving cards with telephone numbers where appointments for visits can be made, either at home or at the police station;
- visiting discreetly, for example in plain clothes if there is likely to be a problem with intimidation by neighbours;
- leaving details of confidential telephone lines where anonymous information can be left.

3.4 Crime allocation

One of the most important decisions in the life cycle of a burglary investigation is whether to allocate a crime to a further active investigation. It is often the quality of the information collected on the crime report that determines whether or not this will be done. In order for the correct decision to be made, the crime assessor (or evaluator) must be in possession of information which has been obtained during the course of a high quality first investigation.

The practice of passing all burglary cases to investigating officers results in police effort being duplicated. In some cases, valuable time is wasted re-investigating cases with insufficient evidence. To improve efficiency:

- have cases examined by the crime assessor following the initial police visit to the burglary scene;
- give training to those who carry out crime allocation to standardise the process.

In this way the use of resources can be improved as well as ensuring that only cases with good quality information are investigated. Detectives' time will be liberated by reducing the time they spend doing a second examination of the crime. It will also reduce the number of unproductive investigations they carry out and enable them to spend more time on investigating cases which have good evidence.

Further reading:

Gill, M., Hart, J., Livingstone, K. and Stevens, J. (1996) *The Crime Allocation System: Police Investigations into Burglary and Auto Crime*. Police Research Series Paper 16. London: Home Office.

3.5 Protection of witnesses

Although many burglary detections are due to information given by victims and witnesses, detections could rise even further were it not for the fact that witnesses in certain areas are often reluctant to come forward. In one study on high crime housing estates it was found that 6% of all unreported crimes were not reported by victims and 22%, not reported by witnesses due to fear of

intimidation. Many of them claimed to have valuable information about the offender's identity.

Where intimidation is a problem, or is suspected, recommendations for consideration by forces include:

- giving minimal information about witnesses' identities to officers over unencrypted police radios;
- using plain clothes officers to carry out house-to-house enquiries;
- giving witnesses and victims the opportunity of being interviewed at the police station or elsewhere, rather than at their homes;
- advertising Crimestoppers and setting up other confidential telephone lines for information to be given anonymously if necessary;
- providing screens as a matter of course for identification parades, or providing a dedicated identification suite;
- liaising with local authorities in order to bring and enforce civil injunctions forbidding contact or proximity between a defendant and a witness, which could be a viable alternative to criminal charges;
- ensuring victim/witness and suspect do not meet at the police station or in the court foyer;
- setting up appropriate liaison arrangements with Victim Support and with the Crown Court Witness Service to ensure that victims/witnesses are put at ease as much as possible, and that physical protection is available quickly on request, particularly in the court buildings;
- using rapid response alarms to protect vulnerable witnesses.

Further reading:

Maynard, W (1994) *Witness Intimidation: Strategies for Prevention*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 55. London: Home Office.

Morris, S. (1996) *Policing Problem Housing Estates*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 74. London: Home Office.

Witness care: a dedicated identification unit

In April 1996 Northumbria Police, in response to a review of identification procedures, opened a purpose-built, permanently staffed identification unit to serve the whole force. A significant aspect of the design of the unit and procedures adopted for its use concern witness care and security.

There are a number of benefits associated with a dedicated facility:

- a witness information leaflet has been prepared that can be forwarded to witnesses prior to the identification parade to explain the purpose of the parade and what takes place;
- Victim Support scheme volunteers have visited the unit, *arefully* conversant with its operation and can attend with witnesses to give support;
- all witnesses are collected at a convenient location by police officers and escorted to the unit. The witness entrance is unmarked, discreetly located and gives secure access to the unit out of sight of the public;
- the waiting area for witnesses has been designed to create a light and airy environment. Television, periodicals, newspapers, refreshments and toilet facilities are available. Staff supervising witnesses have been selected because of their skills in putting witnesses at ease;

all witnesses are given a conducted tour of the unit prior to viewing the parade to help put them at ease when the time comes to view the actual parade;
- an in-built screen prevents witnesses being identified when viewing a parade. In addition the screen is sound proofed to prevent voice recognition of a sensitive witness;
- similar facilities are available to witnesses following the parade as those prior to viewing the parade. Witnesses leave the unit under police supervision to be returned home or to a convenient location.

Source: Northumbria Police, 1996

4. Taking the initiative

4.1 Introduction

The Audit Commission report 'Helping with Enquiries: Tackling Crime Effectively' recommended that the police increase intelligence-based approaches to crime. This recommendation was founded on the non-random nature of criminal activity and the fact that a relatively small number of criminals commit a large number of crimes. The Audit Commission argued that targeting the active criminal is more efficient than responding to incidents on an individual basis. The components of a proactive approach are therefore:

- preventive strategies against crime and related problems;
- initiatives against particular categories of offences;
- the targeting of 'criminally-active' individuals to obtain evidence for a successful prosecution.

Because proactive approaches are inextricably tied to reactive ones, a balanced relationship between reactive and proactive strategies can maximise results. Until recently, the work of detectives has largely followed a more reactive style, whereby individual reported crimes are allocated to individual officers who attempt, through enquiries at the scene and elsewhere, to establish evidence of the identity of the culprit. Although CID officers have always been encouraged to build up a wider picture of the activities of prolific offenders, and on occasion to set up proactive operations against them, the sheer volume of routine reactive work, together with continual pressure to maintain an adequate 'clear up' rate of reported offences, has severely limited the extent to which this could be achieved.

The introduction of crime desks, crime management systems and administrative support units have helped to manage the workload, but some problems remain. This has led some forces to adopt a more radical approach and to engage in major reorganisation, for example the setting up of complementary reactive and proactive units.

A proactive approach to burglary

In the Toller Lane division of West Yorkshire Police a task-oriented approach, stressing teamwork and accountability was implemented to manage the entire investigative process more effectively. The most striking results have been achieved in tackling residential burglary. Plain clothes PCs seconded to CID are organised into three units dealing with vice, drugs and projects (for example, burglary) and deployed to gather intelligence and target repeat offenders. Each unit is supervised by a sergeant who acts in a managerial capacity, rather than as a senior investigator.

A crime pattern analyst and LIO staff evaluate information and data to help the teams focus their efforts, and a crime evaluator reviews all crime reports to determine if a CID follow up is warranted. The collation, evaluation and dissemination of current crime information is facilitated by morning 'round table' briefings, involving contributions from both operational and support CID staff.

To facilitate such a proactive intelligence-led approach, specific measures include:

- targets for the registration and use of informants for detectives and those with CID 'aspirations' (approximately 30% of all force informants are from the Toller Lane division);
- informant hotlines linked to mobile phones carried by the drug and project units;
- prisoner handling undertaken by CID experienced uniformed constables, freeing Detective Sergeants to manage their dedicated unit;
- targeting of offenders on bail, curfews and other bail conditions checked (predominantly by Special Constables);
- prisoners thoroughly interviewed to secure further admissions and encourage registration as an informant.

The initiative went fully operational on 1 January 1994 and the results regarding residential burglary can be clearly seen. The Toller Lane division achieved a 4% decrease in recorded incidents between 1992-95, compared to a force wide increase of 6%. Reflecting the emphasis on targeting offenders the division recorded an 88% increase in detections compared to a force wide rise of 13%. More specifically, Toller Lane achieved the largest force change in the ratio of primary to secondary detections. Between 1992-95 the ratio rose from 0.36 to 0.95 (ie. from 36 to 95 primaries per 100 secondaries), compared to the force average increase from 0.39 to 0.6. The fact that the team is targeting prolific offenders is borne out by the increase in primary detections per arrest from 2.01 to 3.56 (1.45 to 1.43 force wide) between 1993-1995.

Source: West Yorkshire Police, 1996

Proactive work can be particularly effective in burglary cases where the crime scene yields no eye witnesses, no fingerprints and no forensic evidence. An analysis of the CID activities in the West Midlands found that the use of surveillance, informants, stop-checks and admissions made by suspects during questioning when arrested for another offence, accounted for almost 12% of primary detections for residential burglary. These methods achieved a high proportion of detections relative to other methods at a lower cost.

To make full use of proactive work's contribution to crime control, forces need to develop an integrated strategically managed approach. This should minimise the extent to which officers can be diverted into reactive, demand-led activities and help generate a steady flow of intelligence, crime analysis, preparation of 'target packages' and execution of planned operations. Because proactive approaches are likely to generate an increased number of arrests, consideration needs to be given to the setting up of teams to handle the increased clerical work, thus liberating more time for proactive work.

Proactive policing also covers the activities of crime prevention, and it is important that these are given sufficient weight. The distinction between proactive and preventive work becomes blurred when, for example, aspects of crime pattern analysis and repeat victimisation measures are included. In fact, findings from studies on repeat victimisation such as the Kirkholt study, suggest that had the extent of repeat victimisation been known about before now, the distinction which exists between crime prevention and offender detection would not have occurred.

Some of the factors associated with the success of proactive approaches to tackling crime at a strategic level are:

- a clear lead from the top, coupled with clearly defined internal objectives;
- good communication between officers;
- all officers having the opportunity to contribute to proactive operations;
- steps to ensure that success in arrests does not affect morale by generating too much work for clerical teams;

- not underestimating the cultural factors which may militate against the introduction of more proactive policing;
- access to centrally provided squads being seen to be equitable. If it is not clear under what circumstances these scarce resources are allocated, there is a risk of resentment and disillusionment;

* an effective publicity campaign and positive media coverage.

Further reading:

Forrester, D., Chatterton, M. and Pease, K. (1988) *The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project, Rochdale. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 13. London: Home Office.*

Forrester, D., Frenz, S., O'Connell, M. and Pease K. (1990) *The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project Phase II. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 23. London: Home Office.*

Stockdale, J. and Gresham, P (1995) *Combating Burglary: An Evaluation of Three Strategies. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 59. London: Home Office.*

4.2 Prevention

This section covers a number of recommendations which have been made by various studies. It should be stressed, however, that officers will need to adapt crime prevention initiatives both to local situations and individual victims. It is important to avoid applying solutions 'off the peg' without a proper analysis of the particular problem and whether the solution is appropriate or is likely to work under local circumstances.

4.2.1 Work with other agencies.

Inter-agency work can be an effective way to address issues of community safety, including intractable policing problems such as residential burglary. Examples of successful co-operation have led to:

- housing authorities upgrading the security of homes on estates which have high burglary rates. Often people in high crime areas cannot afford crime prevention measures, so a local authority or other source of funding is needed to supply them;
- work with alcohol abuse advisers, debt counsellors and drug advice workers on problem estates. In one study a quarter of burglars acknowledged the role of drink as a motivating factor in the burglary, 32% linked drug use to it and 7(Tx, were unemployed. Forty one percent owed money, most frequently to the fuel companies and in rent. Another study on the role that drugs play in the motivation of burglars found that in one area, eight of the ten most active burglars were crack cocaine addicts and the remaining two were addicted to heroin;
- work with housing authorities and the electricity company to remove prepayment coin meters and establish alternative payment methods, after the meters were found to be the cause of some repeat burglaries;
- the police working with housing authorities to gather evidence in order to prevent the intimidation of witnesses or to prohibit an offender from an area, using a civil injunction granted under s.222 of the Local Government Act 1993. In addition, council tenants can be warned and subsequently evicted if evidence can be obtained to show that they are in breach of their tenancy agreement with the Housing Authority;
- Merseyside's methadone maintenance project has brought about a fall in the numbers of addicts committing burglaries to support their habits. Co-operation between the police and those running the programmes could lead to a greater number of addicts joining methadone maintenance programmes, which in turn could significantly reduce the number of burglaries committed.

Organisational constraints

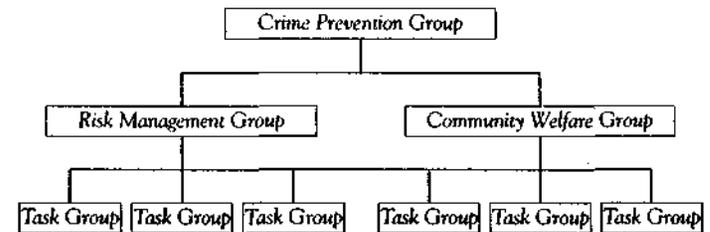
Despite the potential gains in expertise, funding and resources, previous studies have shown that inter-agency work can be difficult to deliver. Recommendations on how to maximise its potential include:

- *Structure* - set up a clear structure to enable the contributions of individual agencies to be targeted to best effect. While the precise framework adopted will need to reflect the local context, a possible model is to establish a steering group to develop strategy, supported by task groups to address specific issues. Whatever model is adopted, roles and responsibilities should be well-defined and both horizontal and vertical communication should be encouraged.
- *Membership* - draw together all appropriate agencies and individuals. Representatives at the strategic level should be as senior as possible, as they are most likely to have the authority to make decisions and commit resources.
- *Information* - develop a workable infrastructure for capturing and disseminating the different agencies' information relevant to understanding crime problems and assessing prevention initiatives.
- *Approach* — use a problem solving approach. This generates more active and uniform support across agencies for the adoption of an action plan style with clearly delegated tasks for individuals, groups and agencies and procedures for 'reporting back' to the group.
- *Sustaining momentum* - review regularly, perhaps annually, the objectives and working arrangements to ensure that they continue to operate effectively.

(getting the structure right)

Since 1991 the Wigan Division of Greater Manchester Police in partnership with the local authority has developed a risk management approach to crime. This involves working with other agencies to identify solutions to those local problems making substantial demands on police and borough resources.

The starting point was to develop a framework for dealing with crime prevention to improve its management and provide better information particularly on outcomes.



A Crime Prevention Group (CPG) was established to set the policy for the working groups and is chaired by the local authority Chief Executive. Membership includes the local police Divisional Commander, Divisional Chief Probation Officer, Director of Social Services, Land and Property Manager and the Director of Education. The CPG is supported by two groups, dealing with reducing opportunities for crime and reducing propensities to offend respectively. There is cross-representation between the three groups and the minutes of each group's meetings are circulated to the others.

Small task groups using a problem solving approach analyse and address individual issues, crimes or problem locations. The progress and recommendations of the task groups are reported and discussed at each CWG or RMG meeting as appropriate.

This focused approach has achieved some significant reductions in crime and demands on police and local authority resources. The imaginative insurance arrangements agreed between the local authority and their insurers have also yielded considerable savings - £1.9m over four years - which have enabled the local authority to fund new initiatives.

Source: Bridgeman (1996)

Crime prevention initiatives can be time consuming and expensive to implement. Without sufficient resources or commitment, however, they either will not be effective or else may work for a short time, then fade away.

Further reading:

Bridgeman, C. (1996) *Crime Risk Management: Making it Work*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 70. London: Home Office.

Home Office (1993) *A Practical Guide to Crime Prevention for Local Partnerships*. Prepared for the Home Office by Crime Concern. London: Home Office.

Liddle, M. and Gelsthorpe, L. (1994a) *Inter-agency Crime Prevention: Organising Local Delivery*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 52. London: Home Office.

Liddle, M. and Gelsthorpe, L. (1994b) *Crime Prevention and Inter-agency Co-operation*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 53. London: Home Office.

Parker, H. and Kirkby, P (1996) *Methadone Maintenance and Crime Reduction on Merseyside*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 72. London: Home Office.

Sampson, A. and Farrell, G. (1990) *Victim Support and Crime Prevention in an Inner City Setting*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 21. London: Home Office.

Sampson, A. (1991) *Lessons from a Victim Support Crime Prevention Project*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 25. London: Home Office.

Shapland, J., Wiles, P and Wilcox, P (1994) *Targeted Crime Reduction for Local Areas. Principles and Methods*. Police Research Group Crime Prevention Handbook. London: Home Office.

4.2.2 Role of the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO)

Whilst all officers should consider crime prevention as an integral part of their role, forces need to consider the most effective use of their specialist crime

prevention staff. In the past, the work of the CPO has not necessarily been co-ordinated with the rest of the policing service or even with a particular division's main priorities for crime reduction. It is now generally accepted by HMIC and ACPO that the majority of the time of specialist crime prevention staff cannot be devoted to purely reactive tasks such as domestic security surveys and burglar alarm problems. The work of CPOs should involve co-operative working with other officers in the implementation of a local crime reduction strategy.

New and creative roles for the CPO are being developed, involving them as consultants to police management and other agencies on all aspects of crime prevention, as well as encouraging involvement at all stages of the design, implementation and evaluation of crime prevention and detection initiatives. Forces will need to consider how to support CPOs as they move into new roles, requiring additional skills. Such a change in role may need to be reflected in the selection criteria for CPOs appointed in the future. It may be appropriate to consider civilians for the post.

Using CPOs effectively

In an initiative in *the* Metropolitan Police District, CPOs trained Home Beat Officers (HBOs) to carry out domestic security surveys. This *enabled* HBOs to meet community members and liberated CPOs to become involved in crime tasking meetings. *Their* use as trainers raised their profile and made them known. Slowly, CPOs moved into the mainstream and become an important component in generating initiatives.

Source: Johnston et al. (1993)

Further reading:

Johnston, V., Shapland, J. and Wiles, P (1993) *Developing Police Crime Prevention: Management and Organisational Change*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 41. London: Home Office.

4.1.3 Neighbourhood Watch

There are 147,000 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the UK. Seventy percent of these, however, are in low risk areas and 10% in high risk.

Neighbourhood Watch is a positive and popular movement, which has helped to reduce crime and improve community spirit in many individual circumstances, but it undoubtedly makes demands on police resources.

Ideally, Neighbourhood Watch should be developed in response to an area's base crime rate. When used in a way to target known problems, this might positively affect an area and prevent a medium crime area from 'tipping' into a high crime area.

Suggestions for targeting police Neighbourhood Watch activities are listed below. It should be noted that intimidation can occur in any area, not just those with high crime rates.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Low crime area: | provide simple set-up support for new schemes, but encourage them to become self-sufficient thereafter; put schemes in touch with other agencies which may be able to help them (eg. local authorities, voluntary groups, etc.); regularly provide basic crime data and feedback on outcome when incident reported by Watch members. |
| Medium crime area: | as for low crime areas, but respond promptly to emerging crime problems, and get Neighbourhood Watch involved at an early stage; also involve CPO. |
| High crime area: | as for medium crime areas, but also have rapid response policy to intimidation, offer domestic security surveys. |

In all areas where repeat victimisation is a problem, it would be worth considering whether Neighbourhood Watch activity can be targeted to help counter it.

In high crime areas with higher tolerance levels of crime and incivilities, people need more encouragement to take control. They therefore need to

have confidence in the support of local agencies, particularly the local authority and the police. This will require sustained and tangible commitment at all levels. In some high crime areas police/public relations may already be damaged and initiatives are often far more labour-intensive to set up. In addition, activities need to be tailor-made to reflect local concerns. In some areas people may put themselves at risk in belonging to a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, in which case officers may need to adopt a more covert approach.

Recommendations to maximise the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch include:

- develop an induction pack for new residents as newness in an area increases the risk of burglary. This could include an introduction to their neighbours, property marking and having a security survey.
- inform members of the availability of confidential telephone lines which could enable them to leave tip-offs and information from residents without having to be used as witnesses;
- ensure that there is considerable advance publicity in the area before starting the initiative;
- consider using a door-to-door approach by police and/or Special Constables and donating free marking equipment. Although it is inevitable that officers will be calling at the homes of burglars, this usefully serves to make them aware of the operation;
- use the local media to publicise successful detections and drops in crime rates;
- ensure that Watch co-ordinators are kept informed of crime trends and relevant incident outcomes.

Further reading:

Johnston, V, Shapland, J. and Wiles, P (1993) Developing Police Crime Prevention: Management and Organisational Change. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 41. London: Home Office.

Laycock, G. and Tilley, N. (1995) Policing and Neighbourhood Watch: Strategic Issues. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 60. London: Home Office.

4.2.4 Domestic security surveys

Studies show that the number of requests for domestic security surveys is increasing. It is undoubtedly the case that their provision contributes to improved police/public relations and links with housing associations and local authorities. In terms of crime reduction, however, the problem with a purely 'reactive' approach to security surveys is that it may not target the right people.

One study showed that of those requesting surveys, the majority were professional or semi-professional. Only 4% of people requesting surveys were skilled or semi-skilled. Ninety eight percent were owner occupiers, 71% lived in detached houses with three or four bedrooms and 11% lived in semi-detached homes. As these figures show, the majority of requests were originating from middle-class people, who are likely to be living in relatively low burglary areas. In addition, homes seeking advice generally had some security measures already.

Those who have had a survey carried out may not necessarily follow crime prevention advice. Only 11% of householders in one survey implemented all the advice given on perimeter security (eg. gates, fences etc.), but the households who requested a survey because they or their neighbours had direct experience of a burglary were most likely to take advice.

In order to use resources most effectively, the following measures are recommended. Forces should be prepared, however, to be flexible in cases of particular need:

- target domestic security surveys on high burglary areas;
- prepare a written pack of security measures to be sent to those requesting advice but who have not been burgled before, or who live in low crime areas;
- carry out domestic security surveys as part of burglary team practices on burgled premises. Neighbours willing to be involved in 'cocoon watches'

(that is neighbours living close to a recently burgled property being alert and ready to report revictimisation) could be offered a survey as an incentive;

- consider training Permanent Beat Officers or Special Constables to carry out surveys.

Further reading:

Laycock, G. (1989) An Evaluation of Domestic Security Surveys. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 18. London: Home Office.

4.2.5 Property marking

Property marking has been recognised as a key factor in discouraging and detecting crime. Studies carried out in the UK have shown that with a sufficiently high take-up rate and extensive publicity a substantial deterrent effect can be achieved. This effect has been noted to wear off with time, however, which suggests that periodic injections of publicity will be a necessary condition to sustain the impact.

However, little progress has been made in successfully introducing widespread property marking and acting on the advantage it gives. Whilst there is nothing about property marking which intrinsically reduces vulnerability to theft, its effectiveness lies in being part of a wider initiative which includes persuading prospective offenders that risks to them will increase and/or disposal of goods will be more difficult.

In addition to introducing property marking drives amongst the public, therefore, steps also need to be taken to convince burglars and handlers that the risk of being detected has increased. Publicity campaigns can assist here, as can strategically-released newspaper articles detailing successes. Officers should ensure that ultra violet lights are available to them on raids of houses or shops suspected of dealing in stolen goods. They also need to pay attention to those disposing of stolen goods and ensure that this is an integral part of the strategy (see also section 4.6.3).

Property tagging

Property tagging draws on a range of technology to identify the item or the owner of property. It can be achieved with barcodes, labels, engraving, microscopic marks, chemically engineered dyes and liquids, postcodes and electronic tags. Many products rely on police officers contacting a commercial database to access the details of the owner or obtaining a scanning device.

The A CPO Property Tracking Group (PTG) deals with police issues and in conjunction with the Home Office is attempting to bring some order to the situation and create a realistic chance that operational police officers can detect the products or devices and access the information with the minimum effort.

The agreed principles are that the product must comprise or be identified on the property with a securely fixed and visible identifier bearing information which leads to the identification of the owner. Thus an engraved postcode will suffice but a covert tag must be supported with a permanent visible mark which causes the police to scan the item.

A CPO have set up a Directory of property identification products on the Police National Computer (PNC) which went live in June 1996. Apart from listing the product it gives details on how it can be identified, whether any specialist equipment is required and how that equipment or any databases can be accessed, including 24 hour contact numbers for police officers. The system is duplicated on EPI-Centre. The Directory does not give any judgement on the efficacy of the product.

Radio tagging involves the implant of a small transponder which emits a unique code. Several devices are available but at present there is no single scanning device to read the information on different tags. Whilst some police forces have accepted scanners from some companies for particular projects, A CPO and the Home Office have declined to support the wholesale issuing of scanners until a single scanner is available and some basic standards are adopted by the industry. They have, however, joined with major UK companies and the MOD in supporting a project by the Centre for the Exploitation of Science and Technology (CEST) to establish such requirements and liaise with the suppliers.

The marketing of some security products can create an unrealistic expectation of police activity in the minds of the purchaser. Care should be exercised in supporting a particular product and preferably should be referred to the A CPO Property Tracking Group for consideration of inclusion in the PNC Directory.

Source: ACPO Property Tracking Group, 1996

Further reading:

Kock, E., Kemp, T and Rix, B. (1996) *Disrupting the Distribution of Stolen Electrical Goods. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 69. London: Home Office.*

Laycock, G. (1985) *Property Marking: A Deterrent to Domestic Burglary? Crime Prevention Unit Paper 3. London: Home Office.*

Tilley, N. and Webb, J. (1994) *Burglary Reduction: Findings from the Safer Cities Schemes. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 51. London: Home Office.*

4.2.6 Use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

Closed Circuit Television may provide the police with a cost-effective tool, which:

- acts as a deterrent;
- may encourage offenders to admit guilt when confronted with filmed evidence;
- can assist in detections, and;
- provides the police with evidence which can be used to clarify what happened.

To be most effective, CCTV systems need to be incorporated into information rooms to inform decisions about how best to co-ordinate a response to incidents and deploy officers. If CCTV is monitored by bodies other than the police, for example by the local authority or shopping centre management, there should be a direct link into police information rooms. The police are then in a position to take 'control' once they are notified that an offence is occurring.

Using CCTV to reduce burglary

A study on commercial burglary in Newcastle found that there was a 56% drop in average monthly figures for burglary following the installation of CCTV. Although burglary fell in most areas in the force over the period, the most dramatic falls were in areas covered by CCTV and were associated with an increased risk of arrest. The fall within the CCTV area occurred after the cameras were installed but before they became fully operational. This suggests that in the first instance the presence of cameras was deterring crime. Unlike many crime prevention initiatives, the effect has been sustained, suggesting that further action has consolidated and continued the initial effect. There is little evidence to suggest that crime has been displaced either to other locations or from one type of offence into another.

Source: Brown (1995)

Most CCTV systems have so far been installed in public and commercial areas. They are, however, increasingly appearing in residential areas. Research shows that there is a lot of public support for CCTV, but care needs to be taken over such issues as privacy protection and that the tapes are not misused.

The police need to keep a record of where CCTV systems are installed. This should be held as an accessible list together with keyholder details. West Yorkshire, for example, has a computer database of keyholders which is used in conjunction with alarm activations. This has been adapted to include details of premises where CCTV systems are installed. In serious crime investigations, such systems save time and enable the speedy seizure of all tapes which may provide evidence, minimising the risk of tapes being erased or re-used.

Further reading:

Brown, B. (1995) CCTV in Town Centres: Three Case Studies. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 68. London: Home Office.

Home Office Crime Prevention Unit (1994) CCTV: Looking out for you. London: Home Office.

4.2.7 Conclusion

The steps mentioned above can be combined and integrated to design a package of crime prevention measures against burglary. Using a combination of measures each designed to reinforce one another has been shown to be more effective than implementing a single measure. If burglary is to be most effectively controlled, however, the balance between conventional prevention and detection work will have to be seriously addressed. The next section offers recommendations on other strategies which can be combined with preventive work to reduce residential burglary.

4.3 Intelligence

Intelligence is the product resulting from the collection, processing, collation, integration, analysis and interpretation of information.³

Intelligence relates to crime and criminals. The first part of this section deals with crime pattern analysis systems which can help to identify local patterns of offences and problem areas. The second part discusses intelligence systems on offenders.

4.3.1 Crime pattern analysis (CPA)

Crime analysis at a local level can be used to plan resource allocation, provide management information, identify crime series, design and evaluate crime prevention schemes, or inform participants in partnership approaches (for example, Neighbourhood Watch and local authorities). CPA systems can either be computerised or in paper form.

Because information is input on all burglaries, CPA systems can help build a case against prolific offenders. Information from other sources such as offences taken into consideration or obtained on post sentence visits can also usefully be input into CPA systems to provide the fullest possible information.

³ Price, B. (1991) Intelligence and the fight against ^drugs^siⁿ. S. Flood (ed.) Illicit Drugs and Organised Crime: Issues for a Unified Europe. UIC Office of International Criminal Justice.

CPA systems can be used in developing anti-burglary strategies. The process is shown in table 2. Ideally, the CPA function should work closely with the intelligence unit. A practice already in place in some forces is for all hits on the DNA database and fingerprint identifications to be researched by CPA for

Table 2: Using CPA systems

1. Collect good quality information about the area in question; ensure that it is complete enough as police records may not be sufficient. Consider the possibility of inputting data from other sources, for example, records held by Victim Support or housing departments on repairs, in order to get a full picture of the patterns of crime
2. use the data to establish a clear and valid picture of the nature, timing, location and circumstance of the criminal events
3. devise strategies closely targeted on the pattern of crime revealed
4. put the strategies into practice
5. evaluate the effect of the strategies upon crime in a rigorous way
6. if necessary, revise strategies accordingly

Source: adapted from Read and Oldfield (1995)

Improving the quality of information

In a project to combat drug-related burglaries at Newton-le-Willows, the co-ordinating officer found that the quality of the information on the form designed to supplement the existing crime reporting sheet was not adequate for analysis. Distinct briefings of all sections took place, but the best method of education was found to be a 'hands on' process. Officers were encouraged to interrogate the system and see for themselves the inadequacies of their own documentation. Those officers who have undergone this process have markedly improved the information submitted.

Source: cited in Read and Oldfield (1995)

links and any details of repeat victimisation before any action is taken by an arresting officer.

Further reading:

Read, T and Oldfield, D. (1995) Local Crime Analysis. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 65. London: Home Office.

4.3.2 Intelligence systems

Most forces now have a database which stores intelligence records. These are formed from intelligence logs which are passed generally to local intelligence officers (LIOs) by all officers and staff.

To enhance the quality both of the information contained in these systems and its use, the following is recommended:

- convince officers that it is their intelligence system, and feed back useful information to them. This will help persuade officers to submit intelligence reports;
- ensure that communications from LIOs and FIOs are current and of interest to operational officers. This has the effect of reinforcing their commitment to the submission of regular reports;
- critically examine the quality and quantity of information which should go into the system to support proactive operations. Data collection should focus on the most important and active offenders;
- fill LIO positions with dynamic and progressive individuals, capable of proactive work;
- encourage all staff in information rooms to submit reports;
- consider making intelligence logs submissible directly via computer links and by telephone, as well as in paper form;

- ensure that there are sufficient resources available to make use of the information. This may sound obvious but if there are no resources to use the information, there is little point in collecting it and the system will soon fall into disrepute;

- ensure that computerised databases are user friendly and capable of free text retrieval. Give full training and provide adequate numbers of computer terminals to enable officers to use the intelligence provided by the system;

- maximise the opportunity of a suspect brought in for questioning about a specific offence. Where appropriate, consider searching their house and car. Try to ascertain:

- * information about any other offences they may have committed;

- information about other offences and individuals; and,

- whether there is any possibility of recruiting them as an informant.

pass on relevant intelligence to regional and national intelligence systems.

A 'real time' crime management *model*

Devon and Cornwall have developed a 'corporate' *force-wide* crime management *model* which aims to ensure a consistent approach to tackling crime, including a common screening policy and co-ordinated *intelligence* handling. At the heart of the model is the force 'intelligence structure' which is made up of the Force Intelligence Bureau and a central Crime Bureau. It is the interaction *between these* bureaux and their linking *of* intelligence with operational *requirements* that aims to provide officers with an 'edge' when *responding* to incidents.

The intelligence structure is built around the Operational Information System (OIS) and the Crime Information System (CIS). The OIS creates *incident logs* which can be generated anywhere in the force and allows the despatch *f* resources and the *monitoring of* incidents. The CIS records and updates all reports regarding crime and intelligence against various nominal records and provides a live 'news' briefing facility for officers throughout the force.

Incident logs (OIS) are immediately subjected to Intelligence Research (CIS). This 'online' use of intelligence enables a more targeted *deployment of* resources *and* may be said to represent 'real time' intelligence-led policing, rather than 'slow time', when information is analysed after incidents to try to identify offenders or predict hotspots. By providing officers with more information *when faced* with an incident (eg. when questioning persons near a crime scene) the chances *of* an early offender identification are maximised.

"Following the report *of a* burglary of a *warehouse* in Plymouth on the local system (CIS) where goods to the value of £25,000 were stolen, *immediate research* led to Warwickshire and West Midlands Police and identified a team *suspected of committing* such offences. An immediate alert to *South West* and *Midland* forces resulted in *the* offenders being arrested on the M5 in West Mercia in possession of all the stolen goods three *hours* after the report *of the* crime."

The sooner suspects can be tackled, the 'hotter' the target ie. there is a greater chance that they will be in possession *f* the same clothing, *vehicle* and any stolen property. An 'operational alert scheme' also links the Intelligence Researchers to *Neighbourhood Watch* and *Early Warning Schemes*, representing an immediate source of both crime and intelligence *information*, as well as a means of warning *residents and* commercial proprietors about offenders.

Source: Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, 1996

4.4 Informants

Working with informants can be a difficult area and great care is needed. Naturally, some officers are better suited than others to this type of work, but there should be opportunities for skills to be developed. The ACPO Guidelines on Use and Management of Informants provide comprehensive and authoritative procedures which should be adopted in all dealings with informants.

Research indicates that there is presently a wide disparity across forces in terms of the level of commitment to the use of informants in the intelligence gathering process. Generally, most informants tend to be registered by CID officers, however some forces are actively encouraging all officers to recruit, register and handle them. The Audit Commission (1993) commented on the cost-effectiveness of using informants and identified the scope for their greater and improved employment.

Recent research has made recommendations including:

- that forces encourage more officers, both within the CID and from the uniform branch, to recruit and handle informants - every arrested person should be considered as a potential informant;
- the provision of quality training in informant management and handling at all levels of the service;
- the concept of identifying 'advanced informant handlers'- those officers with particular skills at recruiting and handling informants should be identified and provided with additional training to enhance their capabilities and enable their use as 'mentors' to less experienced colleagues;
- recognising the potential for integrating informants within the criminal intelligence system and tasking them as a proactive resource rather than a passive one;
- encouraging the appointment of a handler and co-handler for each informant - to maintain objectivity, continuity, efficacy and to maximise the intelligence from an informant, forces should, as far as possible, direct that two officers are always present at meetings;

- to maximise the use of intelligence provided by increases in the number of informants, forces will need to implement effective management and dissemination procedures.

There may also be motivational advantages in devolving budgets to supervisors at local levels with appropriate authorisation procedures.

Another recommendation concerns the support structure needed to encourage an increased use of informants. Research has indicated that some officers handling informants have expressed a need to obtain advice, guidance and support from their senior management. Where this has been made available, there has been a significant increase in the number of informants recruited and in the morale of the officers involved. In recognition that not everyone has the aptitude or opportunity to use informants, measures should be taken to ensure the facility for potential sources to be passed on to officers with the appropriate capability. This could be achieved by nominating certain officers, and local strategies may also include training custody staff to identify and pass on details of detainees with a potential for recruitment as informants.

Under the auspices of ACPO Crime Committee, a secure coded National Informants Database is managed by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS). NCIS does not have access to the true identities of informants but instead uses a coded number system.

The prime aims of the database are to:

- facilitate tasking of informants based on geographical distribution and competency;
- identify and record dangerous informants who are the subject of registration or re-registration in a second force area;
- identify dual registration of informants by forces, NCIS, RCS and other law enforcement agencies.

4.4.1 Proactive recruitment and use of informants

Proactive squads may wish to gain information about target offenders or offences by recruiting an informant who has been identified as being in a

position to be able to generate specific information. The advantage of an 'early' recruitment when the subject has not been arrested, or subject to bail conditions or awaiting the outcome of a court case is that the subject's criminal associates will be unaware of the person having had any contact with the police.

Further reading:

Association of Chief Police Officers (1994) *National Guidelines on the Use and Management of Informants*.

Hanvey, P (1995) *Identifying, Recruiting and Handling Informants*. Police Research Group Special Interest Series Paper 5. London: Home Office.

Maguire, M. and John, T (1995) *Intelligence, Surveillance and Informants: Integrated Approaches*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 64. London: Home Office.

4.5 Surveillance

(see also section 4.6.4 on targeting specific offenders)

Surveillance is a relatively expensive activity, and it is essential that operations are controlled and managed as efficiently as possible. It has been found that speculative surveillance carried out on prolific offenders is not cost-effective and leads to a relatively low number of detections. Surveillance operations are most effective when carried out as part of a wider intelligence-gathering exercise and are in turn justified by other sorts of intelligence. Guidelines issued by the Home Office in 1984 provide authoritative procedures which should be followed on the use of equipment in police surveillance operations.

Surveillance should be used to:

- establish patterns of activity;
- gather criminal intelligence and information on the best time to arrest a suspect;

- observe a suspect at a specific time and place, on information supplied by intelligence sources.

Many senior officers agree that a dedicated full-time surveillance team is preferable to a team assembled on an ad hoc basis. To make these teams as effective and efficient as possible, however, and to ensure that access to central squads by divisions is equitable, recommendations include:

- the type of surveillance required (static, foot, technical or mobile) should be clearly specified and reasons given;
- as surveillance teams - particularly mobile - are one of the most expensive and human resource intensive methods of crime investigation, the work they are assigned to must be sufficiently serious to justify this level of expenditure;
- managers of surveillance squads must be given good quality information on the objectives and timescales of the operation, and what the target is expected to do on a certain date;
- clear guidelines should be agreed as to when and where the squad should be deployed, for example when adequate and sufficient information about the target is available;
- operational teams should understand in what circumstances mobile surveillance squads will be available for operations;
- it is essential that sufficient training and equipment for surveillance are provided;
- the civilianisation of some surveillance activities could be considered.

Civilian surveillance operatives

Whilst the importance of surveillance in intelligence gathering is generally accepted, the cost of such operations is often prohibitive. Hertfordshire Constabulary have applied the principle of civilianisation to strengthen this aspect of their proactive policing and recruited a dedicated civilian surveillance unit.

Although prior surveillance experience was not a job requirement, the team members had a variety of investigative, intelligence gathering and surveillance backgrounds from agencies such as the DSS, the military and other law enforcement bodies. On recruitment, they were provided with eighteen weeks of formal training which includes surveillance and driving techniques, as well as law and instruction on basic police procedure.

Operational since January 1996, the team consists of 12 Force Intelligence Developers managed by a Detective Sergeant. They provide a full operational surveillance facility (static and mobile) using the same covert vehicles and encrypted equipment as their non-civilian central squad counterparts. Tasked by the HQ Crime Management Command Team, the team represents a resource for divisions, targeting offenders deemed outside the remit of the central squads or Special Branch, but beyond the surveillance capability of individual divisions; They tackle all criminal activity which represents a significant problem to divisions and despite their name, are not to be confused with civilian crime or intelligence analysts. Their objective is to help divisions make arrests by providing operational surveillance support, in addition to assisting the development of intelligence packages.

Unlike central squad surveillance, when the police team take overall aspects of an exercise, if a division requires the support of the intelligence developers, the division retains ownership of the operation and must provide officers to follow through with arrests and processing. The intelligence developers are not permitted to make arrests, although they do give evidence in court. Similarly, they are not authorised to become involved in vehicle pursuits or undertake 'hard stops'.

The civilian team represent a significant financial saving over their police counterparts, having been costed at approximately £7.80 per hour per operative, compared to £11.80 for a police officer. This represents a £300 saving for a one day operation.

Source: Hertfordshire Constabulary, 1996

Further reading:

ACPO, HMIC, Audit Commission (1994) Tackling Crime Effectively. Management Handbook.

Maguire, M. and John, T (1995) Intelligence, Surveillance and Informants: An Integrated Approach. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 64. London: Home Office.

4.6 Targeting

Resources available for proactive work and crime prevention are finite and have to be managed carefully. By targeting these resources on areas with the greatest potential for burglary reduction, the greatest cost/benefit can be shown. Bearing in mind local policing plans, consider redeploying resources to target:

- areas with high burglary rates;
- repeat victims;
- handlers of stolen goods;
- specific offenders;
- other problem situations or areas (problem-oriented policing).

4.6.1 High crime areas

The British Crime Survey analyses those areas which are at the greatest risk of burglary.

| Table 3: Residential burglary rates by ACORN group | |
|--|--|
| | Number of incidents per 100 households |
| Affluent greys, rural communities | 2.2 |
| Prosperous pensioners, retirement areas | 2.9 |
| Affluent executives, family areas | 3.8 |
| Well-off workers, family areas | 4.5 |
| Comfortable middle-agers, mature home owning areas | 4.8 |
| Wealthy achievers, suburban areas | 5.1 |
| New home owners, mature communities | 6.4 |
| Skilled workers, home owning areas | 7.5 |
| Older people, less prosperous areas | 8.1 |
| White collar, better-off multi-ethnic areas | 9.9 |
| Affluent urbanites, town and city areas | 11.3 |
| Prosperous professionals, metropolitan areas | 11.4 |
| Council estate residents, high unemployment | 11.6 |
| Council estate residents, better-off homes | 11.8 |
| Better-off executives, inner city areas | 15.3 |
| People in multi-ethnic, low income areas | 17.7 |
| Council estate residents, greatest hardship | 24.4 |
| All areas | 7.6 |
| Source: 1992 and 1994 BCS (weighted data) | |

Table 3 shows that the highest burglary rates are associated with the poorest council estates. These tend to be run-down and some residents may have poor security. Attitudes to the police and general demotivation require a significant

injection of effort into these estates. Whilst these areas are likely to require concentrated and sustained effort, the returns are likely to be very high if initiatives are successful, and represent a potentially effective use of resources.

Components of a successful strategy are likely to include:

- multi-agency working and co-operation;
- activity to protect witnesses from intimidation;
- housing authority co-operation to evict/exclude persistent offenders;
- targeting of offenders through intelligence gathering and crime analysis techniques.

4.6.2 Repeat victimisation

It has been found that some high crime areas have high crime rates because more of the victims are repeatedly victimised, rather than because there are more victims.

The realisation of the extent of repeat victimisation has provided the police with the opportunity, in conjunction with other strategies, to reduce burglary significantly in a most cost-effective way. In looking at crime in general, some estimates from the 1992 British Crime Survey indicate that:

- 60% of the population were *not* victimised during the survey period (just over one year);
- those people who reported having been victimised on two or more occasions, 20% of the population, reported 81% of all incidents;
- the 4% of respondents who experienced five or more crimes, suffered 43% of all crime reported.

In relation to burglary, the survey showed that 18% of victims had been burgled more than once over the recall period, accounting for just over a third of the incidents related to interviewees (35%).

One study on a high crime estate found that once a house had been burgled, its chance of being burgled again was four times the rate of houses that had not been burgled before. Due to the way crime is recorded, this is probably a significant underestimate. Patterns of repeat victimisation have been found in every type of crime which has been scrutinised in this manner.

The benefit of choosing to tackle repeat victimisation is that it identifies a target group who are:

- " motivated to protect themselves because of a recent burglary or burglaries;
- relatively easy to identify, if not from police incident records and other sources, then by asking victims at the time of the complaint;
- most in need because of their prior victimisation and vulnerability to future attack and therefore most deserving of force attention.

The need to act quickly: The risk of revictimisation is greatest in the period immediately after victimisation. One study found that the likelihood of a repeat burglary within one month was more than 12 times the expected rate. Analysis of the repeat burglaries within one month showed that half of the second victimisations occurred within seven days of the first.

Therefore:

crime prevention measures need to be in place soon after victimisation. Analysis shows that for maximum preventive effect, they must be in place within 24 hours;

temporary prevention measures which provide cover during high risk periods after victimisation might be an effective and efficient means of preventing crime.

When steps to tackle repeat victimisation have been implemented, dramatic falls in the numbers of recorded burglaries have been recorded. On the Kirkholt estate, for example, the repeat burglary victimisation rate fell to zero in the first six months of the project and the overall burglary rate fell by 75% over the following three years.

Bitting back: tackling repeat burglary

Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, implemented a strategy to combat repeat victimisation, focusing on burglary and car crime. Depending on the number of times a victim had already been victimised they were awarded a 'bronze', 'silver' or 'gold' package of prevention measures. Briefly, the measures for burglary victims involved:

- Bronze: Victim letter, postcode pen, informants check, early check known outlets, target offenders, CP advice, rapid repair and security uprating, Victim Support, cocoon watch.
- Silver: Victim letter, search warrant, insurance incentives, CPO visit and advice, Police Watch (a form of focused patrolling with at least two visits per week to the premises during the six weeks after an offence), 'Police Aware' stickers, mock occupancy devices, audible or dummy alarm, lighting, roller shutters.
- Gold: Victim letter, priority AFR, RV used to support applications for a remand in custody (RIC), CCTV and video, HO alarm, Police Watch (min. daily), high-tech devices as individually appropriate.

In the first nine months of the strategy, residential burglary fell by 24% and there were reduced levels of repeats. Arrests from alarm activations rose from 3.8% of installations to 14% over a period when rates for the force as a whole dropped from 8% to 4%.

Source: Anderson et al. (1995)

In order to institute a strategy for tackling repeat victimisation forces need to:

- identify the prevailing patterns of repeat victimisation, not a simple exercise as existing statistical systems are not good at detecting repeat events;
- decide how resources are to be prioritised and applied in the most cost-effective way, based on the patterns revealed, and estimates of the extent and probabilities of first, second and third (etc.) repeats.

Further reading:

Anderson, D., Chenery, S. and Pease, K. (1995) *Biting Back: Tackling Repeat Burglary and Car Crime*. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 58. London: Home Office.

Bridgeman, C. and Sampson, A. (1994) *Wise After the Event: Tackling Repeat Victimisation*. A Report by the National Board for Crime Prevention. London: Home Office.

Farrell, G. and Pease, K. (1993) *Once Bitten, Twice Bitten: Repeat Victimisation and its Implications for Crime Prevention*. Crime Prevention Unit Paper 46. London: Home Office.

4.6.3 Handlers of stolen goods

Police activity against crime involving stolen goods currently focuses primarily on one element of the distribution chain, the original burglary or theft itself. Other parts of the chain, for example when the stolen goods are passed to handlers or sold to 'new owners', enable burglars to realise the proceeds of burglaries, and are another target for police activity.

In some cases the transfer of stolen property from burglar to handler may take place at a regular location or at known times of the day. Prior to arresting handlers, officers have the option of photographing those bringing goods to the handler with a view to the identification of suspects and securing evidence.

One study reported that informants do not hold current police operations against handlers in high regard. They claimed that it was easy to spot police officers, whether on surveillance or not. Officers in plain clothes were felt to dress similarly, even off duty. Additionally, all police cars were known to criminals and were readily identifiable. Adequate surveillance training would help raise awareness of these issues.

Should forces decide to target handlers and other suspects, it is recommended that police officers adopt appropriate covert or surveillance techniques. This might include:

- making a conscious effort to dress less conspicuously;

- considering using civilians or more women;
- not travelling in pairs;
- changing their cars more frequently, for example by hiring older, 'distressed' cars;
- carrying an ultra violet lamp with them on all dwelling searches, and examine all electrical goods for property marking.

Handlers were reported to be confident that they would not be targeted by police, as handling was widely viewed by the police and by the courts as a relatively minor crime. Measures to disrupt the distribution chain for stolen goods include:

- encourage breweries to issue notices to publican tenants forbidding the trading of goods in pubs;
- conduct property marking campaigns;
- improve relations and communication with officers in neighbouring divisions or different forces as handlers, often aware of poor communication may collect goods in one area and sell them in another. Ideally, easily accessible cross-force records of stolen goods should be set up;
- appoint a "dealers' detective", whose responsibilities include liaison with jewellers and second hand goods outlets;
- run publicity campaigns to persuade the public not to buy 'secondhand' electrical goods in pubs and car boot sales;
- increase the use of informants in this area to identify and target handlers; a cost-effective way to increase detections and disrupt the relationship between burglar and handler.

Further reading:

Kock, E., Kemp, T. and Rix, B. (1996) Disrupting the Distribution of Stolen Electrical Goods. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 69. London: Home Office.

4.6.4 Targeting specific offenders

Prolific offenders are almost always known to the police. Burglars appear to have a tendency to commit crimes close to where they live and repeat offenders may use the same MO. Crime pattern analysis applied to effective crime intelligence on the location of burglaries and the methods used can give a good indication of likely suspects.

An effective use of resources is to target specific offenders. Steps which have been used to target offenders include the following:

- adopt a burglar schemes. Individual officers (often beat officers) are identified with a nominated criminal and are asked to take a particular interest in a criminal and gather information about them, sometimes involving the use of informants;
- analyses of convicted offenders to match unsolved offences with known offenders;
- a structured system of checking bail conditions has been established to ensure that persistent offenders who breach their bail conditions, especially curfew, will be rearrested;
- remands in custody are vigorously pursued where appropriate for those involved in house burglary; information about suspected repeat victimisation and patterns of linked offences are put before magistrates to support an application.

4.6.5 Identifying and resolving problems

The previous sections have illustrated the need to analyse local problems and devise tailor-made solutions within the overall strategy. It is important to

recognise that what works in one situation may not work in another. In selecting appropriate measures, it is helpful to think through the conditions giving rise to the problem and the mechanisms that you need to trigger to reduce the problem. So, for example, if an estate was characterised by a high rate of burglary with many repeats, the mechanism that you might want to trigger is the perception that there is much more risk of being caught burgling homes that have been burgled before. This could be achieved through a combination of improved security of such houses and making sure that any arrests are well publicised.

There are several approaches which may help forces to define problems in a practical way. These include situational crime prevention, routine activity theory and problem-oriented policing.

Situational crime prevention

Situational crime prevention focuses on reducing opportunities for crime, by increasing the effort and risks associated with crime and reducing the rewards. There is a broad menu of preventive measures and an array of studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in preventing a wide variety of crimes in an equal variety of contexts.

(making targets more resistant or difficult to remove/damage for example, fitting strong doors, shutters and window locks);

(restricting access to vulnerable sites for example, locked doors, entry phones);

- Deflecting offenders (diverting offenders from particular localities or offences for example, residents' parking, tavern locations);

Controlling facilitators (restricting access to the means to commit crime, for example bricks lying nearby).

Increasing the risks:

- Entry/exit screening (identifying potential offenders at entry/exit points for example, in and out of car parks);
- Formal surveillance (using technology and staff to deter and identify potential offenders for example, using CCTV, burglar alarms);
- Surveillance by employees (for example, caretakers, cleaners);
- Natural surveillance (maximising routine surveillance by local people for example, lighting, removal of bushes, Neighbourhood Watch).

Reducing the rewards:

- Target removal (permanent/ temporary removal of vulnerable property for example, removing gas and electric coin meters);
- Identifying property (marking property to make it more difficult to use/dispose of for example, postcoding with ultra violet pens);
- Removing inducements (making crimes less worthwhile, for example, keep valuables out of sight, rapid repair);
- Denying benefits (for example, cracking down on handlers).

Inhibiting rationalizations:

- Facilitating compliance (for example, school education programmes);
- Controlling disinhibitors (for example, enforce underage drink laws);

- Rule setting (codifying legal or acceptable social behaviour for example, tenancy agreements);
- Informal sanctions (for example, publicity campaigns).

Routine activity theory

Routine activity theory provides another useful framework for organising a systematic response to crime.

This states that three elements have to be present for a crime to take place:

- a suitable victim;
- a motivated offender; and,
- the absence of a capable guardian.

To prevent crime, you need to take action to affect at least one of those conditions.

Biting back: developing a strategy

In the Huddersfield project on repeat victimisation; it was decided to use routine activity theory to generate a strategy. Task groups were set up to develop measures to:

- reduce the suitability of victims;
- de-motivate offenders; and,
- improve guardianship.

A separate group was established to deal with the CPA systems needed to identify the problem.

These groups generated a number of ideas and suggestions which formed the basis of the gold, silver and bronze measures described previously.

Source: Anderson et al. (1995)

Problem-oriented policing

Problem-oriented policing takes the problem solving approach one stage further, by systematically applying it to all calls to the police, addressing both crime and anti-social behaviour. It encourages the police to group incidents into problems rather than deal with them as isolated events. It involves working with the local community and agencies to identify problems and together devise solutions. A vital component of this approach is a crime pattern analysis model to enable problems to be identified more easily and crime prevention methods to be tailored.

The steps in identifying problems are known by their acronym, SARA:

- Scanning (identifying the problem);
- Analysis (teaming the problem's causes, scope and effects);
- Response (acting to alleviate the problem); and,
- Assessment (determining whether the response worked).

Problem-oriented policing has fundamental implications for the way police work is organised and can offer:

- savings in police time because repeat calls are reduced;
- a better-served public whose concerns are attended at source;
- enhanced job satisfaction for officers;
- savings in the cost of the CJS since problems (eg. neighbour disputes) can be solved before the behaviour becomes criminal.

In the past, problem-oriented policing has been introduced to varying extents in this country. Work is currently underway to implement a problem-oriented approach in Leicestershire involving the whole BCU and identifying problems at grass-roots level.

A problem oriented approach to burglary

In 1993 in Newcastle West external funding for civilian posts freed up six officers from station duties to be used exclusively on foot as permanent beat officers or community officers. Their brief was to become old style village bobbies and to address the needs of their communities. The emphasis was on quality rather than speed of response.

One of their main philosophies was to adopt a problem-oriented approach and be innovative in seeking solutions to the problems identified. They were superimposed upon the traditional shift system and were not therefore subject to the demands of calls for service and had the time to analyse recurring problems to seek lasting solutions.

Permanent beat officers identified that burglaries were occurring at the same addresses again and again. The means of entry were nearly always similar; via insecure or semi-insecure doors or windows. The area was one of high unemployment, with many one parent and low income families. It appeared to the officers that part of the reason for the repeat burglaries was inadequate security. Despite being provided with crime prevention literature, the residents did not have the resources to implement even the most basic security measures and so were given just sufficient time to replace items of value before being targeted again.

A partnership was developed with:

- City Challenge as funders;
- NACRONew Careers Training as the workforce (workers on training for work programme);
- the police as referral agents and managers of the scheme.

This meant that practical target hardening assistance could be offered by the officer attending the initial call to the burglary. A basic package of Mortice bolts, window, locks, door chains and viewers, and a smoke alarm were offered free to each residential burglary victim, with free fitting by a team of workers security vetted and endorsed by the police. The fitting team expanded their remit by removing bushes that caused danger spots and fitting extra security devices supplied by the householder.

A questionnaire is completed at the time of completing the work and an identical one is completed twelve months later. Of the 250 properties completed in 1995, less than 3% have been subject to a further successful attack. A survey of the residents involved revealed a reduction in fear of crime and a survey of police officers attending burglaries revealed increased job satisfaction.

Source: Northumbria Police, 1996

Further reculing:

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Goldstein, H. (1990) *Problem-Oriented Policing*. New York: McGraw Hill.

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5. Conclusion

The previous sections have outlined the elements of policing activity which need to be considered when developing a response to residential burglary. Adopting a systematic approach which integrates the proactive and reactive policing functions should help maximise the contribution of each to the overall anti-burglary strategy. This may require both organisational and cultural changes. Managing this process will require sustained effort, but as the many examples of good practice have shown, this can yield significant benefits. Better targeting of existing resources can reduce the number of burglaries, improve quality of life for the public and improve officer morale.

While each force will need to take account of local priorities and circumstances when designing and implementing initiatives, successful strategies are likely to combine the following components.

- a proactive intelligence-based approach;
- increased emphasis on the contribution of crime prevention;
- a crime management system which ensures an appropriate, co-ordinated response to reported burglaries and an efficient supportive service to victims, including follow-up contact on progress and outcomes;
- targeting resources, including scientific support, making full use of available crime pattern analysis and intelligence systems;
- multi-agency and community involvement;
- an effective communication system, within and between forces, and with the public;
- efficient mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating initiatives.