



Crime Detection and  
Prevention Series  
Paper 82

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# **Biting Back II: Reducing Repeat Victimisation in Huddersfield**

*Sylvia Chenery  
John Holt  
Ken Pease*

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in Huddersfield

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### **Police Research Group: Crime Detection and Prevention Series**

The Home Office Police Research Group (PRG) was formed in 1992 to increase the influence of research and development in police policy and practice. The objectives are to sponsor and undertake research and development to improve and strengthen the police service and to identify and disseminate good policing practice.

The Crime Detection and Prevention Series follows on from the Crime Prevention Unit papers, a series which has been published by the Home Office since 1983. The recognition that effective crime strategies will often involve both crime prevention and crime investigation, however, has led to the scope of this series being broadened. This new series will present research material on both crime prevention and crime detection in a way which informs policy and practice throughout the service.

A parallel series of papers on resource management and organisational issues is also published by PRG, as is a periodical on policing research called 'Focus'.

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## Foreword

This project represents an important milestone in the Home Office programme of research and development on repeat victimisation. The scope for reducing crime by focusing on victims is now well established; this project aimed to develop ways to integrate this approach into day to day policing.

The first phase of the project, the research and events leading up to the launch of the strategy, was documented in Crime Detection and Prevention paper 58. A subsequent briefing note outlined the early effects. This final report describes the strategy's impact and examines the issues involved in putting it into practice.

The report clearly demonstrates what can be achieved when the police work closely with other agencies, particularly the local authority, both in terms of crime reduction and improved quality of service to victims. The candid account of the lessons to be learned from the Huddersfield experience will be of great practical value to other areas implementing a repeat victimisation strategy.

**S W BOYS SMITH**

*Director of Police Policy*

*Home Office*

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Rev Paul Willcock and Robb Wallace ensured that repeat student victimisation became an issue recognised by the University of Huddersfield. Sir John Harman, Tony Elson, Sheila Collins, John Greenwood, David Forward, Brian Mellor and many of their colleagues of Kirklees Metropolitan Council contributed in many ways. Working with Victim Support in Huddersfield was always a pleasure, made so by Irene Naylor, Joanne Dickenson, and the joiners, John Rooker-Brown and Paul Heap. James Cooke, B & Q Huddersfield helped by offering discount vouchers for distribution to burglary victims.

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## The authors

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PRG would like to thank Dr Trevor Bennett at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge for acting as independent assessor for this report.

## Executive summary

The Biting Back initiative was commissioned as part of the Home Office Police Research Group's 'Police Operations Against Crime' programme in October 1993. It ran from October 1994 until March 1996. Its purpose was to develop and set up a strategy for preventing repeat burglary and motor vehicle crime in the Huddersfield division of West Yorkshire Police. It aimed to identify the advantages, problems and compromises involved in translating the prevention of repeat victimisation from a project-based technique to a standard mode of crime prevention delivery across a large police division.

The project seems to have enjoyed substantial success in helping to reduce rates of domestic burglary, and some success in reducing theft from motor vehicles. Most important, it proved feasible and offered new and valuable experience in setting up a repeat victimisation prevention programme. The world has moved on since the Huddersfield initiative was framed. Fuller (albeit still very incomplete) understanding of repeat victimisation now exists, so that the phenomenon is much more difficult to dismiss as trivial. The question is not now whether policing should take account of repeat victimisation, but how. Indeed, the emerging status of preventing repeat victimisation as a performance indicator for the police means that all British police force areas are now aware of the issue and the controversies surrounding it. Many seem heavily reliant on the Huddersfield approach as a basis for their own initiatives. In this context, it seems appropriate that a 'warts and all' account of the Huddersfield experience should be offered, identifying virtues, but also pitfalls to be avoided by those who come after. While pleasure in the achievement of those who were involved in Huddersfield is justified, lessons learned represent a legacy at least equal in value to its successes.

The main achievements of the project include:

- a reduction in crime – domestic burglary fell by 30% and theft from motor vehicles fell by 20%;
- reduced levels of repeat domestic burglary;
- no evidence to suggest that domestic burglary was displaced rather than prevented;
- an increase in arrests from temporary alarms, from 4% of installations to 14%; and,
- improved quality of service to victims.

Since the end of the official project the division has continued to operate the scheme in relation to burglary, with the general view that such a scheme is not and never will be time limited.

The report sets out the police tasks necessary for areas wishing to implement a divisional repeat victimisation scheme.

- Quantification of repeat victimisation, and determination of how well this is reflected in recorded crime data.
- Routine identification of repeat victims, by the first officer attending, and establishment of Cocoon Watch and Police Watch.
- Purchase of equipment for temporary installation with burglary victims.
- Decision as to allocation of resources to victims, including identification of suitable targets for installation of high-tech equipment, for example videos and alarms.
- Training and oversight of police, and liaison with local authority.
- Monitoring and modification of scheme in the light of developments, including the purchase of new equipment.

The project was characterised by effective partnerships, particularly with the local authority, Victim Support, the university and the victims themselves. Training sessions for all officers in the division immediately before introduction of the scheme proved a valuable exercise, but it is important that communication with officers is sustained. A survey of officers a year into the project, for example, highlighted the need for greater involvement of those in the outlying section stations.

Several areas were identified with scope for further development. These include:

- definitions of repeats based on the risk of repetition and the circumscription of target, in order to identify where a repeat prevention strategy would be most and least productive. The project's repeat definition for car crime – the same household's vehicle(s) in the same location – was too narrow as it led to a low number of repeats and a correspondingly low intensity of response;
- greater involvement of scenes of crime officers (SOCOs) – the scope of detecting repeats from this source was not fully explored; and,
- a potential role for organisations like Victim Support in setting up Cocoon Watches in areas where concrete and immediate neighbour help to individual victims could contribute to the development of community co-operation.

In the writers' view, the next stage is to integrate fully repeat victimisation and offender career information, so that the fact of repetition can aid the detection process more directly. Offender profiling and repeat victimisation are approaches which if brought together fully would advance the understanding of both.

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## 1. Biting background

The project reported on here is part of a long-standing programme of research and development on the phenomenon of repeat victimisation, its scale and implications for crime prevention. Research has begun to establish the scope for reducing crime by targeting preventive effort on recent victims, which will be summarised in a future publication in this series (Pease, forthcoming). In brief, what can we claim to know about repeat victimisation?

- Victimisation predicts victimisation.
- This is because victimisation happens to people and places at risk **and** because victimisation itself heightens that risk.
- When victimisation recurs, it tends to do so quickly.
- The same offender is usually responsible for repeated crimes against the same victim, and the offender who specialises in repeats may be among those most established in criminal careers.
- Experience now extending over a decade shows that crime can be reduced by the targeted prevention of repeat victimisation.
- The Home Office established a repeat victimisation task force in 1995 to advance the understanding and use of the phenomenon. A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for police work focused on preventing repeat victimisation has been introduced.
- The implications of repeat victimisation for all aspects of crime measurement and management is coming to be recognised. Wesley Skogan (1996) refers to it as “the most important criminological insight of the decade”.

### The Huddersfield project

The basic aim of the Huddersfield project was to demonstrate that the prevention of repeats could become a standard, division-wide, means of crime prevention delivery. It was not to demonstrate that the approach could reduce crime as this had been demonstrated by previous smaller-scale projects. Rather it was to try to apply the approach in a large police operational unit. The largest territorial unit in the West Yorkshire force area was therefore chosen.

### Figure 1: Divisional profile

*Huddersfield is the largest geographical division within West Yorkshire. Not only does it border five other divisions, it shares common boundaries with South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Greater Manchester police forces.*

*The division was formed in 1993 from the amalgamation of Huddersfield and Holmfirth subdivisions. The former is a typical urban location with the usual mix of commercial and residential areas, including readily identified problems associated with large local authority housing areas. Holmfirth, on the other hand, is a largely rural area comprising many smaller communities spread across a wide area and is best known for its association with the television programme 'Last of the Summer Wine'.*

*The division itself covers an area of some 31,000 hectares and serves a population of 220,000. Policing Huddersfield is the responsibility of a Superintendent Divisional Commander and a divisional management team comprising three Chief Inspectors (crime, operations and personnel) and a Divisional Administrator. The current operational strength of the division is 325 police officers and 47 civilian support staff.*

*In addition to the main operational centres of Huddersfield and Holmfirth, there are another eight operational stations responsible for providing a 24 hour policing service to local communities. During 1994, which saw the start of the Biting Back project, overall crime for the division stood at 22,660.*

The focus was upon burglary and vehicle crime. The scheme ran from October 1994 to March 1996. A full account of the research and events leading up to implementation was given in Anderson et al. (1995a), and a brief progress report was published as Anderson et al. (1995b). The present report extends the account of the scheme to March 1996, and includes its apparent effects on the types of crime targeted.

The essential points from the earlier reports will be set out to make the present report more self-contained.

- There were many repeat burglaries and car crimes in Huddersfield. They tended to occur quickly after a prior crime had been suffered.
- There were problems in police recorded data recognising repeats as such, and thus measuring the true extent of repeat victimisation. The report identifies both definite and possible repeats.

- Groups of practitioners were asked to devise ways of reducing crime by reducing repeats.
- The decision was made to grade intensity of response to an offence by the number of prior offences suffered. As number of prior offences increased, the intensity of action to be taken likewise increased. Thus response after a first victimisation would be more modest than after a second, and so on. The emphasis also moved from prevention to detection with increasing numbers of prior offences.
- A matrix of intended responses by number of prior victimisations was arrived at. The package of responses after the first victimisation was termed the bronze response, after the second the silver response, and after the third the gold response.
- The key issue concerned how people were to be identified as one-off or repeat victims. There is unpublished British Crime Survey evidence that as the number of victimisations increases, the proportion of victimisations reported to the police falls. In consequence, there is no realistic substitute for victim report. The first officer attending was thus required to ask for prior victimisations suffered during the year before the current offence – this information was not recorded, but used to decide the appropriate response.
- Considerable attention was given to training and guidance of the practice of officers. In a two-hour training session, officers were made aware of the extent of repeat victimisation (with local illustrations), of the time course of repeats, and the effects on local victims. A laminated aide-mémoire (shown on page 38 of Anderson et al. 1995a) was given to each officer. It contained explicit directions on information to be sought and actions to be taken. It was only after talking to forces which had tried to initiate a strategy without prior officer training that we came to realise the importance of these sessions.

### Structure of the report

Section 2 deals with the practical experience of setting up the project, and the compromises and difficulties which were encountered. Section 3 describes changes in the levels of crime targeted by the project. The final section discusses issues of development and resourcing of projects taking the Biting Back approach. Appendix A contains the letter sent to victims, and Appendix B addresses anticipated criticisms that crime has been displaced, rather than prevented. As is often the case in action research, it cannot be said beyond doubt that the programme implemented produced the effects observed, but the pattern is consistent with it having done so.

### 2. Implementation

A matrix of responses to victims, detailing bronze, silver and gold responses in each offence category, was set out in our first report (Anderson et al. 1995a p30). The report stressed that the matrix would change as a result of experience and incomplete implementation:

*“Already, it seems clear that the response to theft from vehicles needs boosting at all levels. Protection particular to certain types of premises, notably schools, needs further consideration. We hope to stimulate modifications of equipment to serve novel functions, and are in contact with many manufacturers of security devices. The unchanging attributes are the fact that the responses are graded, and that higher level responses are geared towards detection” (p36).*

The package as typically delivered towards the end of the scheme is set out as Table 1. There are a number of differences from the package as originally conceived. Some elements were discarded, such as Microdots, car checks and self-help scheme, car leaflets, special number plates, laminated windows and insurance incentives. Numerous attempts were made to develop agreements with insurance companies and the closest we came to a working relationship was with a company prepared to fund temporary alarm equipment – but only for its own policy holders. This was very different from the kind of incentive system envisaged, where insurers in general required, encouraged or rewarded the installation and use of security equipment after an offence.

The fact that these elements were not used does not indicate their lack of suitability, but in the way the scheme developed other measures were felt to be more appropriate.

Table 1: Measures by offence type and level

Offence	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Burglary	<p>Victim letter, UV marker pen and crime prevention advice;</p> <p>Discount vouchers on security equipment;</p> <p>Informants check;</p> <p>Early check on known outlets;</p> <p>Targeting of offenders;</p> <p>Loan of temporary equipment (alarms, timer switches, dummy alarms);</p> <p>Cocoon Watch;</p> <p>Rapid repairs;</p> <p>Security uprating.</p>	<p>Visit from CPO;</p> <p>Search warrant;</p> <p>Installation of Tunstall Telecom monitored alarm;</p> <p>Police Watch visits (twice weekly);</p> <p>Security equipment loan.</p>	<p>Visit from CPO;</p> <p>Priority AFR;</p> <p>Installation of high-tech equipment i.e. covert cameras and alarms;</p> <p>Police Watch visits (daily);</p> <p>Index Solutions;</p> <p>Tracker.</p>
Vehicle crime	<p>Victim letter with UV marker pen and crime prevention advice;</p> <p>Under 25 scheme;</p> <p>Loan of temporary security equipment;</p> <p>Early liaison with recovery location;</p> <p>Recover damaged cowling for SOCO.</p>	<p>Victim letter;</p> <p>Loan of temporary security equipment.</p>	<p>CPO visit;</p> <p>Installation of high-tech detection equipment;</p> <p>SOCO.</p>

### **New elements added to the original matrix**

#### *Monitored alarms*

Tunstall Telecom manufactures and markets a system known as the Piper Premier, which communicates an alarm activation to a central station. It can be activated in principle by any signal, the most common being panic buttons, door/window contacts or Passive Infra-Red (PIR) systems. Activation alerts a central monitoring station, operated in this case by Kirklees Metropolitan Council staff, brings up case information on a monitor and opens a voice line. The system was originally used by Kirklees only to monitor the health status of the elderly and infirm but its use was offered as part of the Biting Back strategy towards the end of the trial period.

The attractions in using this system were:

- Kirklees staff installed and recovered equipment when instructed;
- they monitored alarm activations, and alerted the police control room by dialling 999 with a specific message – “This is Kirklees Social Services Care Phone Central Monitoring Centre. We have an activation of a Police initiated alarm at...”;
- there was no demand on police headquarters’ alarm technicians; and,
- the Piper units represented additional equipment, rather than extra pressure on the limited police headquarters’ stock of alarms.

Sixteen units were installed during the project period and no further offences were reported at these locations. There were a number of false activations and this equipment was seen as having more deterrent rather than detection value. Interviews with a number of those issued with equipment showed they were reassured by its presence. The system continues to be used and carefully monitored, and is seen as having further potential for the future.

#### *Tracker*

The use of this tracking system has been successful in an unexpected context. All police forces will be familiar with this system, typically used for the recovery of stolen vehicles, and enjoying AA endorsement. Theft of central heating boilers from local authority properties represented a severe problem. Tracker offered the use of their equipment, and a repeatedly victimised location was targeted and a system installed in the boiler, along with a Home Office silent alarm. This first initiative was successful, resulting in the rapid location of the stolen boiler, the arrest of the offender and the detection of a number of previous offences. Additional successes have been achieved, including the application of this technique to a series of computer thefts elsewhere in West Yorkshire resulting in the arrest and conviction of offenders.

Although Tracker represents an arguable prevention and detection success, and high-technology options can be seen as an effective tool, they should not be seen as a means to avoid implementation of simpler preventive measures.

### *Index Solutions*

Index Solutions (Smart Water), marketed by Probe FX, is a system intended to mark offenders in the course of an offence with a unique dye. Each individual unit contains an entirely distinctive dye, displays characteristic scatter patterns and cannot easily be washed away. It is dispensed from a concealed canister and is invisible to the eye under normal lighting. It can be used in conjunction with a silent alarm, so that the spray is activated along with the alarm. The device has excellent evidentiary value, verification being carried out by the Government's Forensic Science Service.

Common sense dictates that this device is most profitably used when there are people already under suspicion. In the future, one can envisage simultaneous use of cameras and Index Solutions, so that offenders can be both photographed and marked. There were no arrests from two installations in Huddersfield, but one canister (and associated equipment) loaned to a neighbouring division led to the arrest of five offenders.

### *Security equipment discount vouchers*

Burglary victims in public housing had their security enhanced by the local authority. However, owner-occupiers had to be encouraged and persuaded to make such improvements themselves. The local B&Q (DIY) store offered discounts on security items and arranged for printed vouchers for inclusion in the crime prevention packages sent to victims. Vouchers are being redeemed, leading us to conclude that informed victims are carrying out security measures for themselves.

## **Measures in the original matrix worthy of further discussion**

### *Cocoon Watch*

Cocoon Watch, whereby the immediate neighbours of a burglary victim were invited to be watchful for a repetition, was first used in the Kirkholt project (Forrester et al. 1988, 1990). They were asked to keep a watchful eye over the victim and informed of the risks of an offender returning.

In Huddersfield, Cocoon Watch was to be set up at all levels of burglary response. A card was given to each neighbour, with contact details for the police officer and Neighbourhood Watch liaison officer, and basic information on the possibility of a repeated offence.

Officers were sympathetic to the principle of Cocoon Watch and were prepared to put it into practice. It was clearly going to be easier to carry out in the higher quality residential areas than in the high crime public housing areas, where it was often assumed

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that the neighbour may well be responsible for the offence. This situation was addressed by asking officers to view Cocoon Watch in these areas as a proactive policing tool, whereby neighbours responsible for local crime were under no illusion that they were under increased observation. Feedback to officers who issued Cocoon Watch cards resulted in a number of arrests following neighbours' increased levels of awareness.

### *Police Watch*

This was a suggestion from a patrol sergeant at Huddersfield. The underpinning principle is simple – that patrolling effort should be deployed in relation to risk. When a silver or gold response was agreed, the co-ordinator completed a card detailing previous offences with time, date and M.O. These cards were forwarded to the relevant section stations and officers were asked to patrol 'around the times of the previous offences', either at least twice weekly (for a silver response) or daily (for gold), for a six-week period. These cards were then returned to the co-ordinator, who checked that the calls had been made.

Potential spin-offs from using Police Watch as an essential element of a repeat victimisation strategy include:

- **reduced response times** – by having patrolling officers in areas where an offence is likely to take place – at a time when an offence is **known** to have taken place recently;
- **increased intelligence** – by officers patrolling in areas where offenders are **known** to have been most recently active;
- **improved prevention and detection opportunities** – by providing an increased response during the highest risk period following an offence;
- **victim reassurance** – by providing a police presence in areas where crime is highest and where people who most need reassurance are aware of a heightened response.

A classic example of the above points came from an early Police Watch visit. Officers were informed by a recent victim's neighbour that a burglar had just been disturbed at the rear of a temporarily unoccupied house (the occupants were on holiday). They split up and cornered the offender on nearby wasteground; he was arrested and charged with attempted burglary.

### **Staffing the project**

The nature and cost of staffing the project may be of interest. However, it must be borne in mind that Huddersfield was the first project of its kind. The staffing level of subsequent schemes of the same kind will no doubt be lower. An unfair analogy is that the first personal computer cost some £50 million, the millionth cost some £50. The choice with which the first work of any kind is faced is as follows. Lack of

success can be interpreted as either a failure of theory or a failure of implementation. Failure in an innovation tends to be interpreted in terms of the inadequacy of the principle on which it was based. Implementation failure interpreted as theory failure is the most pernicious outcome of a new approach. It is thus preferable to err on the side of greater resourcing, because savings will become available with a more precise understanding of how the project functions. Dewsbury, an adjoining division to Huddersfield, implemented a repeat victimisation initiative with a leaner organisational base. For that reason, the conclusion should not be reached that a divisional repeat victimisation scheme will cost as much per crime prevented as Biting Back. The important aspect of the work involves distinguishing the functions which a repeat victimisation team must carry out. Thus, after setting out the organisation actually in place in Huddersfield, there will follow as part of the final chapter a statement of functions to be filled, to serve as a minimal organisational base for such work.

### *The co-ordinator*

A divisional 'champion' was required, not only for implementation in the early stages but also to ensure that required action was taken both internally and externally. The monitoring function should not be ignored due to a tendency for complacency to set in after an early wave of enthusiasm. Selection for the post was of critical importance, the co-ordinator was well respected within the division, highly motivated with excellent communication skills, and had an ability to make things happen. The rank of the postholder is less important, but it should be noted that there is a fairly strong element of supervision and that he/she will be expected to liaise with external partners.

The co-ordinator was unencumbered by other responsibilities during the training and implementation phase, and as a result 'written off' from other duties for the project period. Beyond the implementation and monitoring stages, it is suggested that responsibility for continued supervision of a strategy should be a matter for consideration by the Divisional Crime Manager.

It was the co-ordinator who made the ultimate decision on which response should be implemented, based on recommendations from investigating officers and the potential vulnerability of the victim. He was also responsible for ensuring that appropriate authority levels were obtained for the installation of covert detection equipment.

### *The Crime Prevention Officer*

Clearly with the scheme's strong preventive element the role of the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) was of critical importance. For too long crime prevention was seen to be the responsibility of a few, and of little relevance to operational policing. The initiative provided the opportunity to bring prevention and detection together as equal

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partners in an overall divisional crime management strategy. As a result, there was a distinct change of emphasis in the functions carried out on a day to day basis.

Although basic crime prevention advice was given to all first time victims by the crime scene visitors, supported by the bronze victim package, the CPOs became responsible for personal visits to all repeat burglary victims. In addition to offering a more professional level of advice, they were also responsible for liaising with the co-ordinator regarding the suitability for installing high-tech detection equipment.

The CPO felt he was acting in a far more focused way, playing a key role with regard to detection, and working closely with the crime scene visitors. Officers previously uninformed about the role of the CPO are thought to be more 'in tune' with what can be achieved with their support.

An extension to the role of the CPO was the involvement in proactive policing; by ensuring that a preventive element was included in any action-planned response to high volume crime areas, as identified by crime pattern analysis. In the past, a traditional response had been to flood problem areas with officers on observations, normally at great expense with little success. In Huddersfield, the first response now involves an area examination by a properly accredited CPO who may identify a recent environmental change as being the catalyst for increased criminal activity.

### *The analysts*

An analyst interrogated the Crime Information System (CIS) daily, looking for the 'hidden' repeats, drawing to the co-ordinator's attention any crime scene officer comments, looking for information that would assist in initiating the correct response, and printing out the daily crimes. A second analyst was assigned to the crime pattern analysis (CPA) system, designed by West Yorkshire Police, piloted in the Huddersfield division at the same time. A daily download of offences from the force CIS took place. This had the capacity to identify repeats, however many repeats were unrecognised by CPA for various reasons. The roles of the two analysts were closely interlinked and many victims would have been neglected if the 'repeats' were solely identified from CPA. The analysts shared an office and relevant skills.

### *The administrator*

One element of the strategy was to send each victim a personalised letter and crime prevention package within one or two days of victimisation (examples of these are included in Appendix A). An administrator was appointed for the project period, and she was also helpful in dealing with the many enquiries and requests for information received from other agencies and police forces.

*Section liaison officers*

A questionnaire about the strategy was sent to all officers within the Huddersfield division, after one year of operation. Although most officers were supportive there were criticisms from the outlying nine section stations. The main issue was that they felt 'out of touch' with what was going on. In a further and more concrete effort to engage the hearts and minds of these officers on the periphery of the division, in autumn 1995 a liaison officer was appointed from each of the nine section stations. They were responsible for maintaining a range of security equipment which included various alarms, timer switches and steering column locks for loan to victims. They also passed on any information from the repeats team to the officers in their area. Comments from police officers interviewed towards the end of the project period included:

*"Victims now taking heed of crime prevention advice."*

*"We now have a good effect on detecting – looking at intelligence."*

*"Feel more motivated and have more job satisfaction."*

Large posters, as shown in Figure 2, were placed in prominent positions in all section stations and divisional headquarters as a reminder to all officers attending burglary scenes.

Figure 2: Poster used in section stations and divisional headquarters



### Partners

#### *The local authority*

Kirklees Metropolitan Council support was evident from the start. The project benefited from an earlier council survey showing crime to be a major concern to residents. The estimated cost of crime to the council was in the region of £2.9m (1% of its net budget). This figure fails to reveal the many hidden costs of crime: 10% of council houses were empty, often simply because people did not wish to live in certain areas; rental losses of around £150,000 per year, plus the extra repair and refurbishment costs. While estimates are notoriously difficult to reach with any confidence, it seems clear that Kirklees saw an economic imperative in crime reduction. The council contributed £40,000 to the project for staffing and equipment, together with executive level commitment. Although it considered whether it could provide equipment to owner-occupiers as community charge payers, this did not happen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> During the scheme help was available to owner-occupiers from project funds, where necessary.

The swift security upgrade of burgled homes was central to the strategy. For council-owned homes, it was originally the task of the co-ordinator to telephone the relevant Housing Manager to arrange for an immediate repair and security upgrade, as agreed in the planning meetings. However, this approach proved complicated and lengthy. There are sixteen separate Housing Offices in Kirklees and getting in touch with the correct area was often frustrating and time consuming. It was considered good sense to appoint a liaison officer as a link between the police and the local authority; someone who knew their way around the local authority and could command and organise when necessary. A former council employee was appointed to implement a plan of action which worked well to the end of the project. Regular contact has since been maintained with the appropriate housing offices, and requests for repair and upgrade are now faxed direct.

At a conference a senior Kirklees executive encouraged other councils to make a firm commitment to a repeat victimisation strategy. His main observations merit summary.

- Support and encourage in principle.
- Support in cash.
- Be involved at the planning stage to identify the links into local authority services.
- Give practical support to make it work.
- Supply administrative help.
- Appoint a liaison officer.
- Publicise the project within the council.

- Put into place clear procedures and specifications.
- Consider the project as the provision of a quality service to residents first, and a means of reducing crime second.

The Kirklees involvement continues. A Business Crime Prevention Officer has been appointed and close liaison with the police repeat victimisation office and the CPOs enables him to prioritise his work. The Tunstall Telecom telephone alarms continue to be installed and monitored by the local authority.

### *Victim Support*

Victim Support maintained daily contact with the repeat analyst who supplied up to date information. The current Victim Support co-ordinator in Huddersfield describes benefits to the victims in the following terms.

- Their needs and problems now taken seriously by the police.
- The practical difficulties of housing repairs have been dealt with more speedily due to good partnership arrangements with the Housing Department and a designated officer with liaison responsibilities.
- Victims' feelings of vulnerability have been reduced through increased surveillance – i.e. Cocoon Watch and at later stages cameras and alarms to assist in crime detection.
- The installation of these alarms has allayed some fears of personal safety.
- Good liaison between the repeat victimisation office and Victim Support has meant we can now respond more appropriately to victim needs.

### *The University of Huddersfield*

The university played a far more important role than originally envisaged. Student homes frequently suffered repeated burglary and early discussions took place with the Head of Student Services. The university appointed a research assistant to undertake a student victimisation survey and a campus crime campaign. Although crime prevention advice was given by the police after a burglary had been committed, the university's Student Services facility was happy to check whether the recommended repairs and security upgrades had been undertaken and to contact landlords as necessary. Formal procedures now exist which pressure students' landlords to repair and upgrade security after a burglary. They are advised that failure to do so may lead to their removal from the university's official housing list.

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### *The media*

The media were used, particularly local newspapers, to deliver information about victim vulnerability, some of the measures undertaken, and the successes. Considerable discussions took place about the use of the media; would people upgrade the security of their homes after reading these articles, or would fear of crime be evoked? The first author interviewed victims before, during and after the project, and no increase in fear was apparent. She was in regular contact with victims and sensitive to the possible problems, and found that victims appreciated police honesty, which enabled them to put measures into place quickly to prevent further attacks.

### *The victims*

The victims were key partners. If they could not be persuaded to take precautions to prevent repeats, effects would have been minimised. Their recognition of the importance of quick and effective action was crucial. During the project period funding was available for non-council tenants to upgrade the security on their homes. Interestingly, only thirty such victims requested assistance. Most of those who made changes were willing to finance it themselves. Victims, and others, seemed persuaded by the strategy. In the early stages of the initiative, the authors attended a number of police/public fora and were surprised at the public's support and enthusiasm for the strategy. For the police to get a standing ovation from a public meeting is not an everyday occurrence!

There have been many letters of appreciation from victims thanking the police for the crime prevention advice. The tone of these, which recognise the continuing risk but are content to minimise it with the help of the police and others, is instructive. These people are not saying that the knowledge of the risk enfeebles and frightens them; they acknowledge the help of others in reducing it. For example:

*"I wish to take this opportunity of thanking your department for the support, advice and consideration which has been shown to us following the incident. I am particularly grateful to PC Ridley for his efforts on our behalf and for his part in reassuring us and guiding us through the appropriate measures which we needed to take afterwards."*

*"I would like to thank the police, particularly the members of ... on their speed and efficiency in the handling of this matter, and am most appreciative of their consideration to me from the moment I reported the theft. I suppose the really old, like me, who live alone, are especially vulnerable and it is reassuring to know that we are looked after..."*

## Summary of key areas

A summary of key areas in the development of the strategy, shown as Figure 3, may be useful for those wishing to implement a similar initiative.

**Figure 3: Summary of key areas**

### Appointment of co-ordinator

- supervisory considerations
- external liaison required
- enthusiasm
- effective communicator
- respected in division

### Divisional training programme

- personal contact
- promote understanding
- arena for discussion

### Analyst's role

- thorough research
- do not accept face value results
- further research Information System

### Crime Prevention Officer

- prioritise repeat victimisation
- personal visits to repeat victims
- involved in action-planned responses
- crime management role
- heighten profile

### Other agencies

- good communication with local authority
- involve community safety partners
- prompt, accurate information to Victim Support
- up-to-date information to Victim Support
- involve other relevant organisations e.g. university

### Policing responses

- ask the right questions
- good quality crime prevention advice
- Cocoon Watch
- Police Watch
- role in detection

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### **End of the project**

West Yorkshire Police in Huddersfield continue to operate the scheme in relation to burglary, and it is the view of all concerned that such a scheme is not and never will be time limited. The aim from the outset was to ensure that the changes made to service delivery were here to stay. This involved a long-term change in attitude, rather than the all too familiar short-term increase in public expectations that had resulted from previous cash and time limited projects. Since the project ended a number of changes have been made; the CID, burglary squad and local intelligence offices have now merged to form a single proactive team, and a further CPO has been appointed to work purely with the burglary crime scene visitors, concentrating on domestic burglary. It was felt that a CPO working closely with the CID office could concentrate on patterns of crime within the division in a much more effective way.

### 3. Did it work?

Reporting applied research is fraught with difficulty. Overly optimistic accounts are properly discounted by researchers. Caution deemed appropriate by researchers may be interpreted by practitioners as indicating failure and lack of enthusiasm. A further point is that the basic purpose of the Huddersfield work was to demonstrate the division-wide routinisation of a repeat victimisation approach to crime prevention. A very recent indication of what can be achieved on a smaller scale, in which full implementation can be assured, may be found in the report on the Burnley Safer Cities work (Webb 1997).

Table 2 summarises the main outcomes of the Huddersfield project.

**Table 2: Summary of the project's impact**

Measure	Effect
Survey of Huddersfield police officers	Of responding officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 97% understood project rationale;</li> <li>• 92% thought project successful;</li> <li>• 85% thought commitment to project was steady, 7% thought it increasing.</li> </ul>
Survey of W. Yorks domestic burglary victims	Of responding victims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huddersfield victims advised to take a greater level and range of crime prevention than the average W. Yorks victim;</li> <li>• Levels of repeat victimisation during Biting Back were lower in Huddersfield than remainder of force;</li> <li>• Levels of satisfaction among repeat victims higher in Huddersfield than in W. Yorks generally.</li> </ul>
Count of numbers of bronze, silver and gold responses deployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction over time in the number of silver and gold responses for burglary victims, suggesting a reduction in repeats.</li> </ul>
Changes in recorded repeats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater decrease in Huddersfield than elsewhere.</li> </ul>
Changes in recorded crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic burglary declined by 30%;</li> <li>• Theft from motor vehicles declined by 20%.</li> </ul>
Interviews with repeat victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest incomplete implementation a factor in any continuing repeats.</li> </ul>
Examination of displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence suggests displacement not a major factor in declines.</li> </ul>

### What did burglary victims think?

West Yorkshire Police carries out periodic surveys of samples of citizens in its area. One such survey of domestic burglary victims was carried out in 1994, before the Biting Back initiative, and another in 1995/6. The 1995/6 survey allows comparisons of burglary victims' perceptions between Huddersfield and the force as a whole. Before and after comparisons are only possible for the few cases where 1994 questions had been repeated.

#### *Comparisons between the 1994 and 1995/6 surveys*

Most burglary victims responding to the survey expressed high levels of satisfaction with the police service in Huddersfield and elsewhere in the force both before and during Biting Back. For instance, officers were deemed courteous between 96% and 98% of the time in both survey sweeps and both locations. In 1995/6 some 10% more respondents were very satisfied with police service in Huddersfield than in the rest of the force.<sup>2</sup> However, 7% more had already been very satisfied in 1994, during most of which time Biting Back was not active. The two possible interpretations are that the 1994 figures reflect the greater satisfaction of the burglary victims dealt with at the very start of the Biting Back initiative, or simply that in both 1994 and 1996, burglary victims living in Huddersfield were somewhat more satisfied with the service they received.

There are some specific questions with responses suggesting more satisfactory police performance in Huddersfield. For instance, 95% of burglary victims were satisfied with response times during Biting Back, 10% more than before. This contrasts with 82% in the force as a whole, 2% less than before. Asked whether officers attending gave help and advice, there was a 7% increase in Huddersfield, compared with a 2% increase for the force as a whole.

#### *Comparisons within the 1995/6 survey*

More detailed comparisons between Huddersfield and the remainder of the force are possible only for the 1995/6 survey sweep. In most cases, answers were similar for burglary victims in Huddersfield and elsewhere in the force. Officers were deemed to have treated people courteously, fairly and sympathetically in equal measure. Ironically, this gives confidence that where differences did occur, they were not a product of a general 'halo' effect. The questions which distinguished Huddersfield from the remainder of the force were (thankfully) those which should have been answered differently had the Biting Back strategy really been implemented. Crucially, the proportion of victims who said they had received crime prevention advice from the police in 1995/6 was 56% in Huddersfield, compared with 41% elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

This result was the cause of severely mixed emotions within the Biting Back team. It was a cause of satisfaction that there was a substantial difference between

<sup>2</sup> The greater level of satisfaction was statistically significant (Chi-square = 8.11, p=.03, 3df).

<sup>3</sup> (Chi-square = 9.12, 1df, p<.01).

Huddersfield and elsewhere on perhaps the most crucial implementation variable. On the other hand, the team *knows* that effectively 100% of people had been given such advice, in writing as well as from the first officer attending. It may be that the 56% figure represents the maximum achievable level of recall of such advice.

Differences between Huddersfield and elsewhere extended to specific advice. The results are summarised as Table 3, with more Huddersfield victims receiving advice of all but one type.

**Table 3: Percentage of burglary victims reporting crime prevention advice given, by type of advice and location**

Type of advice	Huddersfield	Force
House intruder alarm*	58	42
Window locks*	49	33
Extra security locks to external doors*	51	34
External security lighting*	51	29
Plug-in timer switches	32	22
Suggest closed curtains during absence	20	23
Suggest inform neighbours during absence*	32	22
Leave lights on during absence	48	47

*Note: \* indicates difference reliable at the .05 level of probability or better. Analysis excludes missing responses but percentages were calculated in both ways, with no essential difference in conclusions reached.*

Looking at the general level of satisfaction with police service, it will be recalled that satisfaction levels were higher in Huddersfield in 1995/6, and also higher (to a more modest extent) in 1994. It should be noted that the survey is a postal questionnaire, so that non-response is an option for the disillusioned. A more sensitive index of satisfaction would be the rate of return of questionnaires in the Huddersfield area. This response rate is not currently available, due to the approach used by the force to gather the survey data. However, equal (but unknown) numbers of questionnaires were issued to each division, so that the *relative* rates of return are available. The number of returns from burglary victims in Huddersfield was 32% greater than in the average division.<sup>4</sup>

Evidence that response rate is usable as a measure of satisfaction in Huddersfield comes from examining the relationship between satisfaction ratings in the returned questionnaires and the number of questionnaires returned. This analysis was carried out comparing all divisions (but excluding Huddersfield). Significantly more questionnaires were returned in divisions where satisfaction ratings were greatest.<sup>5</sup> Satisfaction and high numbers of returned questionnaires go together.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that Huddersfield did not have the greatest number of responses. Wakefield beat it by one!

<sup>5</sup> The product-moment correlation between the two variables was .42 ( $p = .05$ , one-tailed test).

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In summary, the pattern of survey responses supports the view that Huddersfield burglary victims were recommended a greater level and range of crime prevention activity in the wake of a domestic burglary than the average West Yorkshire burglary victim. As will be noted later in this report, there is a substantial difference, in Huddersfield's favour, in the satisfaction with police service expressed by *repeat* burglary victims.

### **Did the scheme reduce repeats?**

There are three ways of assessing whether the level of repeats changed over the course of the scheme, based on:

- the count of responses deployed;
- the force questionnaire to burglary victims; and,
- changes in recorded repeats.

#### *Responses deployed*

The first method of measuring repeat reduction is to count the number of gold, silver and bronze responses deployed. This is simple in conception, and the response allocated was gathered systematically from January 1995. However, it is vulnerable to changes in the conscientiousness with which victims are asked the question about unreported prior victimisation, and the way in which discretion is exercised in deciding the response level. The project team has been assiduous in following up crime reports which do not contain the necessary information, so this is not thought likely. These figures must, of course, be seen against the background of the total number of burglaries. By itself, Table 4 shows a change in responses deployed, not a reason for the decline shown.

Table 4: Number of silver and gold responses, by month and crime type

	Domestic burglary			Other burglary			Vehicle crime		
	Silver	Gold	S + G	Silver	Gold	S + G	Silver	Gold	S + G
Jan 95	42	17	59	19	35	54	22	7	29
Feb 95	42	7	49	17	33	50	18	8	26
Mar 95	36	11	47	14	29	43	3	3	6
Apr 95	29	6	35	17	22	39	25	14	39
May 95	32	7	39	18	29	47	21	5	26
Jun 95	14	13	27	22	31	53	15	5	20
Jul 95	18	4	22	15	29	44	23	7	30
Aug 95	25	4	29	12	19	31	20	2	22
Sep 95	29	7	36	19	13	32	5	6	11
Oct 95	20	10	30	13	23	36	11	8	19
Nov 95	25	11	36	15	15	30	18	2	20
Dec 95	26	2	28	11	14	25	8	2	10
Jan 96	24	4	28	20	20	40	11	3	14
Feb 96	13	3	16	16	17	33	13	3	16
Mar 96	8	7	15	11	11	22	5	0	5

The most substantial effect is evident for domestic burglary, and the remaining analyses of reducing repeats focus mainly on this offence type.

#### *Force questionnaire to burglary victims*

The second method derives from the force questionnaire to burglary victims referred to earlier. Two questions were asked of burglary victims about their previous burglaries:

- "Was this your first burglary at your present address?"; and,
- "If no, how many other burglaries have taken place at your present home during the past twelve months?"

The effectiveness of Biting Back in preventing repeat burglaries should be reflected in lower numbers of people reporting multiple burglaries. In Huddersfield, 71% of respondents said it was their first burglary at their present address. In the force as a whole, this number was 63%.

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6 More precisely the burglary which led to the issue of a questionnaire – they may have been burgled since.

Since the survey was only answered by burglary victims, 100% of the sample would have been eligible to receive at least a bronze response, had they lived in Huddersfield. One way of expressing the relative levels of repeat victimisation is to say how many would have been eligible to receive silver and gold responses for their most recent burglary.<sup>6</sup> The difference is slight, but in the predicted direction, with 77% of the Huddersfield respondents meriting a bronze response, compared with 71% elsewhere. Another way of putting the modest difference is to say that the average sampled victim in Huddersfield had experienced a mean of .45 burglaries in the previous year, compared with .56 per victim elsewhere.

In short, levels of repeat victimisation during Biting Back were lower in Huddersfield than elsewhere in the force. The counting of bronze, silver and gold responses shows a very large reduction in repeats. The postal questionnaire indicates a much more modest effect. Why is the difference so much slighter by this second method of calculation? One reason could be the relationship between satisfaction with police service and response to the force's questionnaire. It is clear that if repeat victims were more satisfied with police service in Huddersfield than elsewhere, more of them would respond to the survey, and (paradoxically) this would reduce or eliminate the difference between the rates of repeat victimisation in Huddersfield compared with the rest of the force. Put simply:

- satisfaction with police service leads people to respond to the survey;
- repeat victims in Huddersfield are more satisfied with police service than repeat victims elsewhere;
- repeat victims in Huddersfield return their questionnaires more often than repeat victims elsewhere;
- because of this difference in response rates, the lower *actual* rate of repeats in Huddersfield is masked.

Support for this view comes from the direct analysis of the satisfaction with police service exhibited by repeat victims in Huddersfield and elsewhere. Of repeat victims in Huddersfield, some 63% were very satisfied with police service, compared with 42% of repeat victims elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

7 This difference verged on statistical significance ( $p=.07$ ), surprising given the small numbers of repeat victims in the Huddersfield sample.

### *Changes in recorded repeats*

The third method of demonstrating changing levels of repeat victimisation can be achieved by looking at the force's Crime Information System. This was done by sampling, since an analysis of the whole period would have been a mammoth task. A short period in March 1996 was selected (11th – 15th), as the most recent available data. Recorded domestic burglaries to the same Huddersfield address in the year preceding the burglary were noted. The same exercise was carried out for each

of the other West Yorkshire divisions. The whole exercise was repeated for equivalent periods in March 1994. This yielded the annual number of prior recorded victimisations per victimised household for a period before the project and for an equivalent period during the project, separately for Huddersfield and for elsewhere in the force. How many recorded burglaries were suffered in the year before the burglary recorded in the March index period? The rationale of Biting Back would suggest that this should decrease in Huddersfield more than elsewhere. The relevant data presented in Table 5 show this to be the case.

**Table 5: Number of recorded burglaries to the same home in the year preceding an index burglary, 1994 and 1996, Huddersfield and elsewhere in the force area**

Type of advice	Huddersfield	Force
1994 sample	23 (91)	21 (726)
1996 sample	14 (22)	24 (666)
Note: The figures for the remaining divisions are medians, because of outliers <sup>8</sup>		

<sup>8</sup> The median was used to derive a single measure from all the other divisions. This gives equal weight to each division, while avoiding the problem of one small division with a very high number of repeats having disproportionate influence.

The figures shown outside brackets are the number of burglaries suffered in the twelve-month period. Thus, in the Huddersfield 1994 sample, homes suffering a burglary had suffered an average of .23 burglaries each in the preceding year. The number in brackets represents the March burglaries whose previous victimisation was examined. This explains why there were relatively few in Huddersfield in 1996, after the project had been fully implemented.

In summary, all the analytic approaches taken show a reduction in repeated domestic burglary. These vary in magnitude. Those showing the smallest differences are those where the effect may be distorted by the decision to report a crime. For instance, the force burglary questionnaire shows that repeat domestic burglary victims in Huddersfield are more satisfied with police service than such victims elsewhere in the force. By making repeat victims more satisfied, one ensures that they are more likely to report their next victimisation, thus making the scheme appear less effective than it would otherwise.

### Did Biting Back reduce crime?

To this point, attention has been devoted to whether Biting Back changed the distribution of crime, in particular by changing the proportion of crime which were repeats. The more basic question is whether Biting Back was associated with a reduction in crime. The basic index of crime has traditionally been incidence, i.e. the

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number of crimes in relation to the population. This has been supplemented (especially for statistical modelling of crime risks, see for example Miethe and Meier 1994) by crime prevalence, which measures the proportion of a population which is victimised. Much more neglected has been the measure of concentration, namely the number of victimisations per victim. In the preceding section, we suggested that the distribution of domestic burglary under Biting Back had indeed changed, with a reduction in crime concentration. This will only be translated into crime reduction if the prevalence of victimisation has not increased.

### *Trends in recorded crime as captured by the force statistical department*

Seasonal changes were crudely excluded by weighting according to 1993 monthly figures; i.e. monthly crime numbers from January 1994 to March 1996 were adjusted so that they would have eliminated month by month variation had the seasonal pattern been as it was in 1993. January 1994 was then indexed at 100 and changes relative to that figure were graphed as Figure 4 for domestic burglary and Figure 5 for theft from motor vehicles.<sup>9</sup> It will be seen that domestic burglary shows a marked decline over the period of the project to some 70% of its pre-project level i.e. a 30% reduction,<sup>10</sup> and theft from motor vehicles a more modest drop, with an average of some 20% decline over the second half of the project period relative to the rest of the force.

<sup>9</sup> Figures are three-point moving averages, with first and last values being actual values. The rest of the force figures exclude those divisions with a common boundary with the Huddersfield division. This is because, if cross-divisional displacement occurred, a spurious impression of success would be created by including contiguous divisions. Graphs for other burglary and theft/taking of motor vehicles are not included. Being rarer crimes, they show considerable month-by-month variation – and no difference between Huddersfield and the rest of the force.

<sup>10</sup> The reduction is greater if measured relative to January 1994, but the appropriate baseline should be October-November 1994.

Figure 4: Domestic burglary change from January 1994

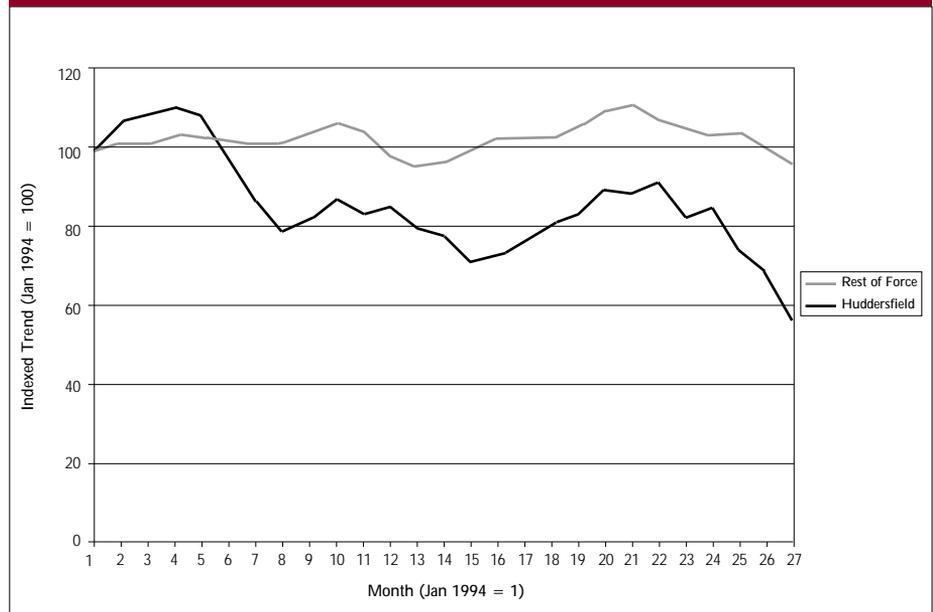
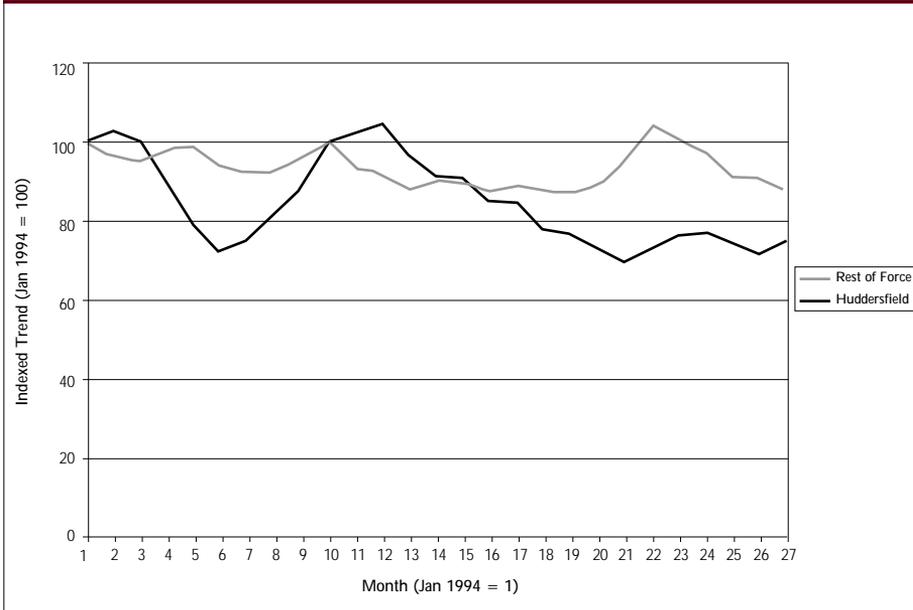


Figure 5: Theft from motor vehicle change from January 1994



Three points are worth noting.

- Some officers strongly believe that one of the effects of the project was to make victims more likely to report crimes. Without a victimisation survey we cannot directly check this, but indirect evidence (in terms of amount taken and damage done) could clarify this. If those officers are correct, it means that the project effect is understated.
- The marked second-phase reduction in domestic burglary in Huddersfield from autumn 1995 coincided with the greater involvement of liaison officers in section stations. Our sense is that this was no coincidence, and that the greater immediacy of the project to officers in those stations from that time improved its implementation.
- The focus which repeat victimisation gave to the use of technology led to a greater proportion of installations leading to arrests (see Anderson et al. 1995b). The significance of this approach in the wake of prior victimisation should not be understated.

### Crime reduction or displacement?

Whenever crime prevention is claimed, displacement is the first alternative account typically proposed. Crime, the proponents of displacement claim, has merely been

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moved, typically to a place outside the area covered by the study. Thus, in the present context, domestic burglary in Huddersfield has not been prevented, merely relocated. The discussion of displacement is necessarily detailed and is presented in Appendix B. The conclusion reached is that an assiduous search for displaced crime fails to find powerful evidence of it. In this, it is consistent with other reviews of the subject (e.g. Hesseling 1995). In short, there is no evidence that prevented crime has been displaced elsewhere in the West Yorkshire force area, or to hitherto unvictimized people in the Huddersfield area.

## 4. Lessons learned and hopes for the future

### With the benefit of hindsight: defining repeat vehicle crime

Repeat victimisation can be thought of in terms of location or victim identity, and in broad or narrow terms. For burglary (except where people or businesses move), the distinction is largely academic. For vehicle crime, it is not. One can think of a repeat vehicle crime as:

- offences against precisely the same vehicle;
- offences against any vehicle so long as it has the same keeper;
- any vehicle in precisely the same place (just as a domestic burglary would be the same kind of event whoever happened to be in the home at the time).

None of these is a 'true' measure, in the sense of being preferable to others in all circumstances. Unfortunately, we chose for our repeat definition in relation to motor vehicles the same household's vehicle(s) in the same location.<sup>11</sup> This led to a low number of repeats, and a correspondingly low intensity of response.<sup>12</sup>

What should we have done? The advantage of a repeat victimisation strategy is that it deploys effort according to risk. The ideal situation is where the risk is high and the place of risk is circumscribed. Thus, preventive action can be limited in scale, and the risk is such that the action will often not have been in vain. If a crime against a particular target is certain and imminent, that presents the ideal policing situation. In concrete terms, this means that if a car is victimised wherever it goes, then the car should be protected because the chance of a crime happening in the near future to *that* car is high enough to justify special action.

Defining only some repeated crime against the same car as repeats was a mistake. It is like defining domestic violence as only occurring within the home. A spouse who is attacked in the street, at her work and in her parents' home is a repeat victim. The comparison verges on tastelessness, but the owner of a car stolen in a variety of different places is a repeat victim. Despite the excessive narrowness of the definition of motor vehicle repeats, it seems that enough motorists may have changed their behaviour in the light of the bronze response to yield a reduction in theft from vehicles.

How would we be thinking about the issue of repeat definition were we starting Huddersfield again? We can think of two variables:

- the risk of repetition; and,
- the circumscription of the target.

In general terms, the wider the target, the higher the risk of repetition. You can (sadly) guarantee that there will be a domestic burglary somewhere in Huddersfield today – but you do not know where to go to prevent it. Repeat prevention makes most sense when there is a non-trivial risk of an offence in a context specific enough to deploy prevention

*11 With the exception of car dealerships, which were defined by location alone.*

*12 We believe that the modest success achieved in respect of theft from the vehicle occurred because of the bronze response. All those suffering this offence got crime prevention advice, and insofar as they took it, further offences of the same kind were less likely. The point is that only those suffering a repeat crime in the same place received the silver response. This drew the notion of repeat too narrowly.*

resources. If there were even a 10% chance of there being a burglary at 10 Cleary Street, Huddersfield today (or even this month) it may make sense to devote resources to its prevention. The higher the risk of repetition and the more circumscribed the target to be protected, the greater the practicality of repeat prevention.

Circumscription of target may be thought of in terms of person, place or thing. So a particular car which (wherever it travels) has a high risk of being the target of crime is an appropriate object of attention. A particular bay in a car park which (whatever car occupies it) has a high risk of being the location of crime is an appropriate object of attention. The car park example also illustrates the inverse relationship between risk and circumscription. It may be that a particular bay in a car park has a 1% chance of being the location of crime during the next month. This may make it the most victimised bay in town, but the level of victimisation is not such as to justify the deployment of preventive resources. The deck on which the most victimised bay is located has a 20% chance of being the location of crime during the next month, but because the location is not so circumscribed as the individual bay, the practicability of its prevention is lower and the cost higher. The whole car park in which the most victimised bay is located stands an 80% chance of being the location of crime during the next month, but because the location is still less circumscribed, the practicability of its prevention is even lower and the cost even higher.

In principle, it would be possible to calculate anticipated expenditure per prevented repeat, perhaps weighted by the seriousness of the anticipated repeat. That would allow the specification of the circumstances where a repeat prevention strategy would be most and least productive. Perhaps even more importantly, it would allow the delineation of those offences where it is economically rational for the victim to prevent repetitions. For instance, the economic analysis of the benefits of crime prevention by the police and local authority in Wigan was necessary for the highly successful strategy put in place there (Bridgeman 1996). The reason for spelling out these issues is simply that, if they had been the basis for our thinking when the Huddersfield project was in its infancy, we would have done somewhat different preparatory research and certainly defined motor vehicle repeats differently.

### **Implementation opportunities**

If victims, or others on their behalf, change those things which made them vulnerable, the chances of repetition decline. At many points above, there was reason to believe that implementation was imperfect. Officers from outlying stations only became fully involved late in the day, and there were reports that victims (particularly commercial victims) failed to act in recommended ways. There were reports that Police Watch and Cocoon Watch were implemented patchily in the most difficult areas to police. Indeed, for school burglary, which comprised so much of the non-domestic burglary, our (over-simple) description was that it had simply been put in the 'too difficult' drawer.

It seemed important to get some idea of what had failed when there were repeated offences during the project period. For that reason, 'gold' victims in 1996 were interviewed. The following represents a sample of cases to give a feel of the nature of the implementation failure involved.

### Case A

This was a three-time domestic burglary victim, with offences in November 1995, March and April 1996. According to the householder, the possibility of a repeat burglary was not mentioned by the police. The officer did give crime prevention advice, but this was not acted upon until after the third burglary. The M.O. used was identical in the three offences, the third attack coming through a boarded-up window. *This case seems to represent simple implementation failure.*

### Case B

This was a three-time burglary victim. Following the first attack security was improved as recommended. Both second and third burglaries were in fact attempts. The location of the second attempt has now had its security uprated. *While statistically a failure, the declining success of the burglar in this case makes it arguably a partial prevention success.*

### Case C

There were three burglaries of this scrapyard in February, April and May 1996. All advice acknowledged to have been given by the police had been disregarded – except that the holes in the fence were repaired. *This illustrates implementation failure where the prime responsibility lies with the victim.*

### Case D

This local authority library was burgled in December 1995, January and April 1996. In the third attack entry was gained but there was failure to steal the targeted computer, which was now firmly secured to desk and wall. A silent alarm was fitted after the third attack, and no subsequent attempts at burglary have been made. Extra security is now in place. The librarian feels that if the local authority had acted more swiftly to implement police recommendations, the second and third offences would have been prevented. *This case seems to suggest implementation failure, and reinforces the need for swift action after an offence.*

### Case E

There were three domestic burglaries of this home in January, April and May 1996. Security on the window which was the point of attack was upgraded after the first and second attacks and an alarm installed after the second. The third attack was through a door, and was thwarted by the activation of the alarm. The security

equipment was purchased with the B&Q discount vouchers. *This case suggests a degree of tactical displacement, and highlights the importance of general security uprating, rather than an improvement specific to the original point of entry.*

### Case F

Entry was gained to the home of this council tenant in October 1995, February and May 1996. Police recommended security devices and lighting. The council fitted locks after the second attack, but no lights, so the point of entry remained dark. The improved lock was smashed off during the third attack. At the time of writing the victim is still waiting for its replacement and the light. The victim felt unhappy with the council's response. *This case suggests implementation failure.*

In brief, and to oversimplify, recent repeated burglaries strongly suggest the primary role of implementation failure rather than theory failure. A factor which we sensed to be relevant in implementation was the initial attitude of the officers towards the offences. They did not need to be persuaded to help a domestic burglary victim. The same enthusiasm was not seen with commercial burglaries or vehicle crime. Further, vehicle crime is reported solely through the Help Desk, which takes details from the victim and gives a crime reference number for insurance purposes. This means that the immediacy of advice from the first officer attending did not exist with respect to vehicle crime. With hindsight, it may have been advisable to concentrate in the first instance on implementing a repeat victimisation initiative with an offence like domestic burglary. This is because officer sympathies are already engaged and new ways of working can develop without having to enlist support at the same time. A more thoroughgoing implementation of the project on domestic burglary would have engaged with SOCOs more fully. The scope of detecting repeats from this source was not fully explored.

A final note on implementation must be in terms of the paradox that the areas with most to gain from a repeat prevention strategy (see Trickett et al. 1992) are also those where officers are least inclined to implement it routinely. Setting up Cocoon Watch with unco-operative residents is nobody's favourite way of spending time. It is probably this that makes the large-area approach more difficult to implement than concentrating on small areas with more acute problems, as in Kirkholt. It is perhaps in this context that organisations like Victim Support have much challenging work to do in developing cocoons, suffering less hostility than the police. An image used in talks about Kirkholt was that Cocoon Watch is the grit from which the pearl of community co-operation might grow. Fragmented communities need help, but the contribution of concrete and immediate neighbour help to individual victims should not be derided. It is arguably at least as valuable as large scale, often politicised, community development.

### Resourcing

As noted earlier, the resourcing implications necessary elsewhere should not be generalised from the Huddersfield experience. There follows a specification of the police tasks necessary for contributing to a divisional repeat victimisation project, followed by their likely resource implications. For simplicity, it is based on a domestic burglary only project. Greater involvement and cost-sharing by the local authority and others would reduce the specified costs.

1. Quantification of repeat victimisation, and determination of how well this is reflected in recorded crime data.
2. Routine identification of repeat victims, by the first officer attending, and establishment of Cocoon Watch and Police Watch.
3. Purchase of equipment for temporary installation with burglary victims.
4. Decision as to allocation of resources to victims, including identification of suitable targets for installation of high-tech equipment, for example videos and alarms.
5. Training and oversight of police, and liaison with local authority.
6. Monitoring and modification of scheme in the light of developments, including the purchase of new equipment.

Some of these costs vary with the total number of offences, some vary with the number of repeat offences. For instance, letters to burglary victims (with enclosures) would cost £1.40 x victim prevalence. So with say 1,600 new victims in a year, the annual cost would be £2,240. This work could be carried out by a clerical officer along with other work. The largest single cost would be a co-ordinator's salary. At DS rank, he/she would be responsible, with advice, for tasks one (a one-off period of four months), three, four, five and six. This officer would need to be familiar with the force's data systems. Such an appointment seems appropriate for a division characterised by a burglary prevalence of 1,600 per year with 1.25 burglaries per victim (roughly the current West Yorkshire recorded median divisional rate) yielding a burglary incidence of 2,000.

In principle, the second largest cost would be an element of a Crime Prevention Officer's salary. It is hoped that this would be achieved through the re-orientation of work, but it may be prudent to allocate half a salary. *At levels of involvement comparable to those in Huddersfield*, some three hundred visits to two-time victims and two hundred visits (upwards) to three-plus-time victims would be involved, or some twelve visits per working week.

Money spent on equipment is a variable factor, depending on schemes and subsidies from Victim Support and local authorities, and victim ability to contribute. A stock of

security and camera equipment available for loan is a one-off expenditure. Since such equipment rotates between repeat victims for the period of highest risk, it is used to maximum efficiency. At Huddersfield levels, an initial expenditure of £40,000 would be appropriate, with a recurring annual expenditure of some 20% to update and replace equipment. One could cost in an extra hour of police officer time per burglary attended to establish Cocoon Watch and undertake Police Watch. There is a case, however, for saying that this is good practice, and should not be costed separately.

### **Endnote**

The role which the Biting Back project can aspire to is as a worthy staging post on the road to efficient crime prevention. Whatever the ambiguities of results and interpretation which may remain, the conclusion should be that the phenomenon of repeat victimisation is worth further investigation, and the attempt to reduce repeats, and with them crime, seems to have enjoyed worthwhile success. In the writers' view, the next stage is to integrate fully repeat victimisation and offender career information, so that the fact of repetition can aid the detection process more directly. Offender profiling and repeat victimisation are approaches which, if brought together fully, would advance the understanding of both.

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## Appendix A: Letter sent to victims and security equipment discount voucher

### Letter to victims

One element of the strategy was to send each first-time victim a personalised letter and crime prevention package within one or two days of victimisation.

Figure 6: Letter sent to victims



Security equipment discount voucher

Discount vouchers were included in the crime prevention packages sent to victims. This is a good example of a local partnership initiative with the private sector, with mutual benefits.

Figure 7: Security equipment discount voucher



## Appendix B: Displacement: did it happen?

Displacement is a cause for frustration among those seeking to prevent crime, for four reasons.

- In practice it is impossible to show that displacement has not taken place. A burglary moved from Huddersfield may become a similar crime in an adjoining division. If it does not take place there, it may have moved outside the force boundary or been transmuted to another crime type. If all Huddersfield burglars move out of the country, each to a different destination, modest rises in burglary in each of their destinations will not be measurable against a constantly changing background. Total displacement, however implausible, can never be shown not to have occurred.
- All reviews of crime displacement *suggest* that crime reductions are never entirely offset by crime increases elsewhere (see e.g. Hesselting 1995), and that, not infrequently, the opposite to displacement occurs, whereby a crime reduction effect spills over into adjoining areas and times following an initiative. This is known as diffusion of benefits.
- When displacement is claimed to have occurred, the claim is always made after the fact, i.e. when displacement is indistinguishable from crime increases caused by something else. The place to which crime will be displaced is never predicted, always inferred with hindsight.
- The common-sense answer to the displacement claimant is “We’ve prevented crime on our patch. Some of it may have been displaced to yours. Now you prevent it rather than whinge that the total is non-reducible”. This argument makes few friends.

While acknowledging that partial displacement is often a problem, the focus of criminological work has moved to a consideration of the circumstances under which displacement may be expected, and where to (see, for example, Eck 1993, and Bouloukos and Farrell 1996 which deals specifically with repeat victimisation and displacement). In the Huddersfield study, domestic burglary if displaced may be moved elsewhere within the division or elsewhere outside it. Given what is known of the short travel-to-crime distances characteristic of most burglars in places as diverse as Rochdale and Riyadh (Forrester et al. 1988; Al-Kahtani 1996), substantial displacement outside the division seems implausible in the extreme. It makes no sense. A burglar returns to a Huddersfield home he has burgled before. He finds things changed, and decides not to repeat his crime. Why would such a burglar travel fifteen or more miles to commit crimes outside the divisional boundary when there remain many unprotected homes closer to hand? Eck’s (1993) analysis also suggests that displacement is most likely to most similar targets, which will include geographically similar targets.

### Displacement to other divisions

Reluctantly taking cross-divisional displacement seriously, however, we have chosen to address it by looking at a sample of those admitting (or found to have committed) domestic burglaries in Huddersfield just after the start of the scheme. The logic behind this is that displacement would require such burglars to locate their crimes outside Huddersfield more in the year following the start of the scheme than in the year before the scheme. The West Yorkshire Offender Information System yielded details of twenty-four people detected of a domestic burglary in Huddersfield in January 1995. It was then a simple matter to count the number of *other* domestic burglaries cleared to the same offenders in the force area in 1994 (hereafter pre-scheme), and in 1995 (hereafter scheme). Displacement would suggest an increased number of burglaries outside Huddersfield in 1995 compared with 1994. Table 6 shows this not to be the case.

**Table 6: Domestic burglaries committed by those known to have committed at least one Huddersfield domestic burglary in January 1995**

	Huddersfield	Elsewhere
Pre-scheme	15	0
Scheme	40	0

*Note: The numbers are of offences, except that offences by co-offenders both in the sample were counted as single offences. The index offence and other January 1995 offences are excluded.*

The way in which the data had to be accessed means that some offences which could have been domestic burglary in 1994 were excluded. Extending the argument to *all* offences cleared to offenders in the January 1995 sample yields Table 7. Again, there is no indication that those who were active burglars around the start of the scheme offended elsewhere in West Yorkshire to a greater extent in the year following the start of the scheme than in the year preceding it.

**Table 7: Crimes committed by those known to have committed at least one Huddersfield domestic burglary in January 1995**

	Huddersfield	Elsewhere
Pre-scheme	54	13
Scheme	96	16

*Note: The numbers are of offences, except that offences by co-offenders both in the sample were counted as single offences. The index offence and other January 1995 offences are excluded.*

## APPENDIX B

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Since cross-divisional displacement requires the movement of offenders across divisional boundaries it is felt that this analysis, modest though it is, strongly suggests that any such displacement was trivial or absent.

An indirect way of assessing displacement across divisions is to look at the correlations between monthly domestic burglary rates in Huddersfield and in contiguous divisions (and the rest of the force) before and after Biting Back started. Spatial displacement would suggest that there should be a negative relationship between rates in Huddersfield and the division to which domestic burglary was exported during (but not before) the project. As burglars do less in Huddersfield, they should do more elsewhere, on an hypothesis of complete displacement. The data are summarised as Table 8. The pattern, rather than the statistical significance of any one association, is of interest here. It will be seen that the relationship between month by month changes in Huddersfield and those in two of the contiguous divisions (Dewsbury and Calder Valley) was greater in the project period than before, and lower in one (Wakefield) – although still positive. The relationship with the rest of the force declined. No claim for diffusion of benefits is made here, since the changes could result from other changes, unrelated to the project, common to Huddersfield and surrounding divisions. Nonetheless, this kind of pattern, with the positive relationship with contiguous divisions increasing and with other divisions falling, is more consistent with diffusion of benefits than displacement.

**Table 8: Association between domestic burglary rates in Huddersfield and other divisions, before and during project**

	Before	During
Wakefield	.49	.16
Dewsbury	-.05	.41
Calder Valley	.57	.67**
Rest of force	.88**	.68**

*Note: The division between before and during was made at the end of April 1994, to produce two periods of roughly equal length, and to allow for some anticipatory change of practice in Huddersfield.*

\*\* =  $p < 0.01$

Repeating the analysis for theft from motor vehicles in Table 9, the same pattern emerges, with the relationship increasing during the project period in two contiguous divisions (Wakefield and Calder Valley), and declining in the other (Dewsbury) and the remainder of the force.

**Table 9: Association between theft from motor vehicle rates in Huddersfield and other divisions, before and during project**

	Before	During
Wakefield	.33	.41
Dewsbury	.69*	.20
Calder Valley	.54	.66**
Rest of force	.65	-.07

*Note: The division between before and during was made at the end of April 1994, to produce two periods of roughly equal length, and to allow for some anticipatory change of practice in Huddersfield.*

\* =  $p < 0.05$   
 \*\* =  $p < 0.01$

### Displacement to similar targets in Huddersfield

A second form of displacement involves burgling previously unburgled houses within Huddersfield. This would involve an increase in the prevalence of burglary victimisation in the area before and after the project. If the small-scale estimates of concentration (detailed in section 3) are accurate, then the prevalence of victimisation shows a very modest reduction.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Some 7%, comparing incidence October-December 1993 with incidence January-March 1996.

### Displacement to other crime types

An alternative form of displacement involves that between crime types within the division, so that domestic burglars take cars or burgle places other than homes. Some check on this can be made by looking at the correlation between crime types within Huddersfield before and during the project, setting it alongside such correlations for the rest of the force. These calculations are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Association between monthly rates of domestic burglary and other crime types, before and during project**

	Huddersfield before	Huddersfield during	Rest before	Rest during
Other burglary	.35	-.01	-.46	-.34
Theft of MV	-.27	.26	.70*	.52*
Theft from MV	-.14	-.36	-0.5	.12

*Note: The division between before and during was made at the end of April 1994, to produce two periods of roughly equal length, and to allow for some anticipatory change of practice in Huddersfield.*

\* =  $p < 0.05$

While none of the associations reaches statistical reliability, there may be a suggestion that months during the project when the rate of domestic burglary was (relatively) higher were those months when the rate of theft from motor vehicles was (relatively) lower. However, it should be remembered that these were the two crime types showing declines, so their association cannot represent a case for displacement. The links simply mean that generally those months in which domestic burglary declined fast were those when theft from motor vehicles declined slowly.

More attention has been devoted to the issue of displacement than we would have liked, because it is from believers in displacement that criticism will come. It is contended that the evidence (particularly in terms of patterns in detected crime) argues against the view that displacement occurs to such an extent as to offset the effects of crime prevention.

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