



Home Office

Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

Tilley Awards 2008 Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. **By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.** Please complete the following form in full, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25th April 2008**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811.

Section A: Application basics

1. Operation Big Wing (Auto crime), Knowsley
2. Tackling & reducing auto crime

Author contact details

3. Detective Chief Inspector Martin Andrew / Detective Inspector Chris Green
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Secondary project contact details

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14. Please mark this box with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):



Section B: Summary of application - *In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).*

Introduction:

Knowsley BCU is one of six BCU areas in Merseyside. It is split into three neighbourhoods; Kirkby (C1), Huyton, (C2) and Halewood & Prescott, (C3), within this submission these policing neighbourhoods will be referred to as C1, C2 and C3.

The BCU is x by x miles in size and has a population of xx. The BCU has x police officers and x police staff.

Scanning:

Historically the borough of Knowsley has suffered a disproportionately high number of auto crime offences per head of population. Despite periodic adhoc research over the years there has never been any definitive identified causation factors to explain this disparity. Several contributing trigger factors have been identified, including demographic profile (significantly higher numbers of 16-24 year old males), unemployment levels and proximity of the motorway network.

Analysis:

Theft from motor vehicle offences within Knowsley were significantly above Police Authority targets dating back to pre 2004-05. The monthly average of offences recorded from 2004 through to September 2007 was in the region of 200. In November 2006, 207 offences of theft from vehicle were recorded; this took the BCU to 73% over target for year to date 2006-07. This was not an exceptional position for the BCU at that time.

Response:

Merseyside Police instigated a problem solving approach to the BCU wide problem targeting hot spot locations, offenders and victims of crime. This included;

- Strategic lead officers appointed both within BCU and Local Authority level.
- Strategic priority status within BCU & force
- Joint analytical group
- Governance structure implemented
- Grass roots Community engagement
- Radical overhaul of end to end processes from report to conviction
- Creation of Desk based investigation unit
- Creation of Auto crime investigation Unit
- Development of innovative tactical options menu
- Partnership funding opportunities maximised
- Increased partnership engagement & activity
- Media strategy implemented

Assessment:

Following implementation of Operation Big Wing (Auto crime), Knowsley in December 2006 theft from motor vehicle offences has been reduced month on month by over 50% consistently. The BCU now records on average 90 offences per month a reduction of over 100 offences per month against pre operation figures.

State number of words: 360

Section C: Description of project - Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 11.

Scanning:

Historically within the BCU theft from motor vehicles had not been viewed as a strategic priority. There was no lead officer identified within the BCU and this led to a lack of accountability and ownership for the problem. Although there had been periodic operations and activity to address very localised spikes and problems within the BCU there had not been a strategic co-ordinated problem solving approach with sustainability factored in.

The process for reporting this type of offence within the BCU was complex and disjointed in that members of the public could report a theft from their vehicle in a multitude of ways. This information was not channelled into one collection point and as a consequence the type and level of response varied dramatically. In each case a different process would be followed for deployment of officer or not as the case may be, crime scene investigator deployment, vehicle scene examination, crime recording and finally allocation. In simple terms there was no standardised single approach, which led to problems of tracking, management, accountability and ownership.

It should be noted that the scanning process identified that Knowsley historically suffers from disproportionately high false reporting in all crime types, specifically robbery, theft from the person and auto crime. This can be linked to deprivation, number of residents in receipt in benefits (evidenced by high percentage per head of crisis loan applications in the borough), perceived ease with which false claims could be made for other claims for compensation.

Forensic opportunities were not maximised under these reporting and investigating procedures. It was often 24 or 48 hours before a crime scene investigator was deployed to the scene of a vehicle crime. Clearly this meant lost opportunity and degradation of forensic evidence and thus fewer yields per scene. The BCU, due to its motorway network, business parks and Hotels has a high percentage of business travellers who would leave the area and county prior to their vehicles being examined, thus losing forensic and physical evidence completely.

The problem was spread throughout the BCU into each of the neighbourhoods, C1, 2 and 3. There were clusters of offences although prior to this operation the problem had not been mapped effectively to highlight hot spot locations prominent offenders and emerging patterns.

Again as a result of the disjointed reporting procedures key details such as detailed property stolen, specific venues and type and style of vehicle were not recorded within an easily recoverable format for analytical work.

Investigation of these offences was spread throughout the BCU, often with the most inexperienced neighbourhood dedicated and patrol officers for further investigation. Amongst these investigations were forensic identifications which again were not co-ordinated or prioritised leading to delays in arresting core suspects who were clearly offending regularly and at will despite the fact that the BCU possessed evidence to arrests and charge. This negatively impacted upon the total number of offences committed each month.

Analysis:

Detailed analysis of the theft from motor vehicle problem within Knowsley over the last half decade and certainly since early 2004 reveals a monthly crime count in this category of between 180-200. In November 2005 the monthly crime count peaked at 296 offences of theft from motor vehicle in 30 days – an average of nearly ten offences per day. (See Table 1 below).

The offences were spread throughout the borough over the three-year period 2003-2006 and when all the offence locations were mapped on a BCU map the only non-affected areas were playing fields and green spaces. Every single residential or business area within the three neighbourhoods of C1, 2 and 3 were featured over that three-year period.

Within this overall picture there were numerous hot spot areas. The main locations were residential streets across

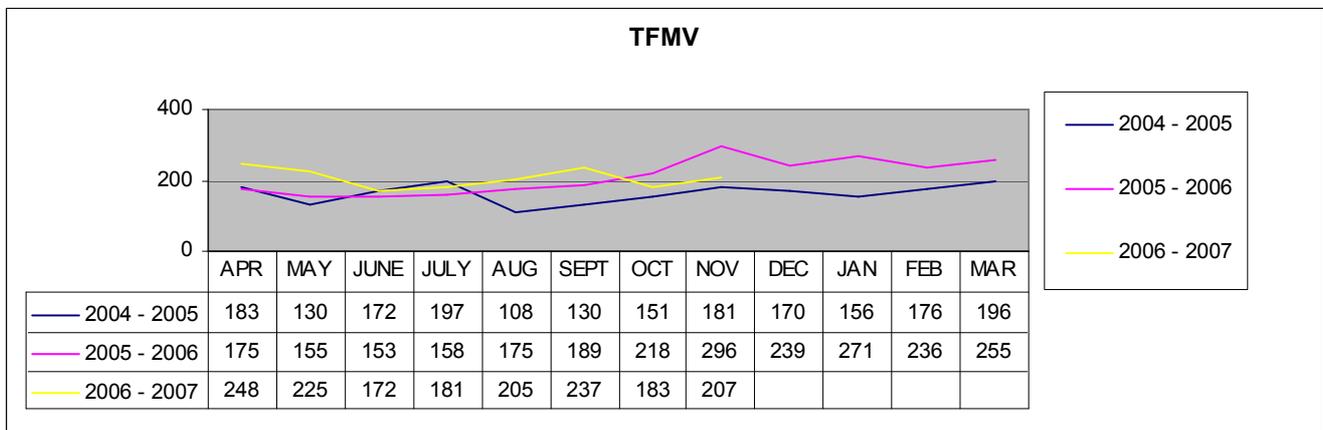
the three areas. At different times during the preceding three years different vehicles took on a greater percentage of attacked vehicles. For example in 2006 Ford motor vehicle were targeted and CD systems stolen. Further analysis for that period showed that a cottage industry had evolved with mini criminal entrepreneurs setting up sites on the internet forum, EBay. Six of the sellers were identified to Huyton, C2. In a six-month period sales of £90,000 worth of ford CD stereos were made by this team.

A further key area targeted were tradesmen’s vehicles. Knowsley has a high percentage of industrial and business areas all of which have small and medium size businesses and due to the motorway links with the M57, M62, & M58 the area is seen as attractive location. At one stage several leading national logistics companies threatened to stop delivering within Knowsley unless the problem abated.

In relation to offenders research in late 2006 around the last one hundred suspects arrested for theft from motor vehicle offences showed that only a handful (6) were repeat arrests.

In conclusion the analysis found a wide and varied location base for this crime type, numerous and single count offenders within the borough and multiple profiles for the victims. This was to be expected to a degree given the high number of offences per month as detailed. With nearly three hundred victims within the borough in November 2006 one would expect to find locations, victims and offenders from all corners.

TABLE 1 - Theft from motor vehicle offences reported by Month – April 2004 – November 2006



Response:

Strategic lead officers appointed both within BCU and Local Authority level.

Detective Chief Inspector Martin Andrew was appointed by the Area Commander as the strategic lead for auto crime within the BCU. The officer assumed responsibility for the BCU’s co-ordinated response to the problem, including review of end-to-end processes. The officer reported on a monthly basis at the Area Commander’s performance meeting. The Local Authority within the CDRP process appointed John Sayers as their strategic lead for acquisitive crime with a specific focus on vehicle crime.

Strategic priority status within BCU & force

In December 2006 as a result of the appointment of the strategic lead within the BCU, theft from motor vehicle was given strategic priority status. This meant that within the tasking and co-ordination process and performance meeting agenda this crime type took a higher status than previously it had.

Joint analytical group

In partnership with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council the BCU formed a joint analytical group. Police staff and local authority staff were merged into a joint intelligence section specifically looking at analysis. For the first time information from numerous sources was channelled into one analytic group, which provided a much-needed link between the different agencies and bodies.

Governance structure implemented

Critical to the success of the operation was the creation of a governance structure. The strategic lead set about formulating a meeting structure that encapsulated all the relevant layers of the process. A strategic governance group was created with police, partners and a community member. Below this sat a tactical group encompassing investigators, crime recorders, researchers, analysts, crime scene investigators and neighbourhood inspectors.

Grass roots Community engagement

To this end small victim focus groups were convened. Individuals who had been victims of this crime type were invited to participate in a focus group so that we, the investigative team, could fully debrief what had happened, how it had happened, why they perceived it had happened and then what had been done about it. This grass roots approach has continued for the assessment phase, with similar victims of crime being asked the same questions and the responses compared to ensure that not only the quantitative results are assessed but also the quality of service, customer satisfaction and citizen focus.

Radical overhaul of end to end processes from report to conviction

As earlier stated the disjointed process prior to November 2006 for reporting of theft from vehicle offences meant that opportunities were lost and the quality & assurance of actual crime reports was poor as a result. Every call from a member of the public reporting a possible theft from motor vehicle offence was re-routed from its point of origin to the organisation and fed into one central command & control (Altaris) grouping. In effect at any time of the day or night this 'pot' could be examined to ascertain the level and type of reporting. This served multiple purposes, one of which was to allow for 'real time' deployment during the hours 0700 – 2300.

Instructions had been given to the area control room who if certain criteria were met, i.e. Theft from motor vehicle offence reported and the complainant was with an attacked vehicle then officers from the newly formed auto crime investigation unit (which will be detailed below) would be deployed via the airwaves communications system in real time, so immediately. At the same time a dedicated crime scene investigator for auto crime offences would also be deployed in real time, at the same time. Clearly in terms of forensic evidence recovery this process provides for the highest likelihood of forensic yield. The other clear benefit for this process was the improved customer satisfaction, both in terms of immediate response to a call and the sub conscious feelings complaints derived from the fact that as well as a police investigator attending their report of vehicle crime also a crime scene investigator attended and some physical activity and attempt to gather forensic and physical evidence took place.

These investigators examined all reports for false reporting at the initial stage. This process allowed for some robust Q&A work around the actual reports and during the initial months of the process several false reports were identified and penalty notices issued for wasting police time. This was followed up with 'large & loud' media publication of the fact so as to provide a clear, strong and consistent message to the community that those making false reports of crime in this manner would be dealt with and prosecuted.

Creation of Desk based investigation unit

The desk based investigation unit was formed to play an integral part of the new reporting & investigating process. A mixture of investigators and uniformed neighbourhood staff, five in total, who were conversant with the command & control and crime reporting systems (Niche / IMS) were identified from staff with pre-existing restrictions upon their duty, thus not removing front line staff. This team covered the hours of 0700 to 2300 hours six days per week and worked closely with the newly formed auto crime investigation unit, (ACIU). This was effectively the back office for all reports of theft from motor vehicle and a filtering team. Firstly to ensure that real time deployment of a patrol to the report was being made, (both police investigator & crime scene investigator), secondly to interrogate each report for authenticity and accuracy, thirdly to examine each crime report for additional evidential opportunities and also to provide reassurance and customer feedback to every member of the community involved in those crime reports.

Real time deployment

As it says on the tin – in theory this concept is simple but given competing priorities and challenges for resource allocation and complexities of deployment policies it is not easy in practice. Having set up the desk-based investigators and the auto crime investigation unit and to maximise arrest, investigative and customer satisfaction opportunities officers were deployed in real time, so there and then – immediate response to offences of theft from motor vehicle. This real time deployment was not just for the police investigators but also the crime scene investigators. A dedicated vehicle crime examiner was allocated each day and late shift and deployed in the same

fashion. The idea being that when a member of the public reported a theft from their vehicle an investigator and crime scene officer would attend in tandem and provide a one-stop shop. This process maximised evidential yield and provided a real high quality level of service, thereby hitting to of our clear objectives for this operation which we trusted would take us one step closer to the overall aim of the operation, to reduce the number of offences in a sustained fashion.

Creation of Auto crime investigation Unit

As highlighted within the initial scanning process, it was recognised that there had been a lack of ownership in respect of vehicle crime and specifically with regard to investigations over many years within the BCU.

To address this the Strategic Lead (police) created a unit within the Crime Wing who assumed the title of Auto Crime Investigation Unit. This unit comprised of 1 x Detective Sergeant and 4 x Detective Constables they sat under the responsibility of the Detective Inspector for Burglary, Robbery, Auto Crime.

The function of the ACIU included:

Reviewing the validity of all auto crime reports on a daily basis.

During the course of the daily review they would identify trends and patterns and ensure that any potential lines of enquiry were exploited as a priority by one of the team members.

The unit was also responsible for interviewing all prisoners arrested in relation to auto crime and would assume responsibility for the interview of known auto crime offenders arrested for non auto crime matters. As a result the officers quickly built up a rapport and clearly became familiar with individuals committing auto crime within Knowsley.

The unit assumed responsibility for progressing all forensic identifications for vehicle crime and again would be tasked with progressing identifications received for known auto crime offenders but for unrelated crime.

In addition to this reactive capability they also lead on all pro-active and covert activity. This assisted greatly in providing strong coordination between CID and Uniform officers along with all support units.

The Detective Sergeant for the ACIU in conjunction with the Detective Inspector were responsible for providing weekly written updates in respect of activity undertaken and planned activity for the forthcoming week. These reports were submitted to the Strategic Lead (DCI) enabling an opportunity for objective QA process.

Forensic Process

The forensic process has been supported by the creation of three posts for 'Vehicle Crime Scene Investigators'. These staff are dedicated to the examination of vehicles subject of attack. Again as with the ACIU they have developed a strong sense of ownership for vehicle crime.

The VCSI have worked closely with the ACIU who assume responsibility in 'fast tracking' recoveries from crime scenes.

As with the investigation process allocation of forensic identifications relating to auto crime had previously been poorly managed with a lack of ownership, accountability and tracking process. To remedy this it was agreed that all identifications would be allocated to the ACIU and that due to the priority now being given to Auto Crime that there was an expectation that they would be subject of action within 48 hours. To reinforce this process and instil accountability and audit the Strategic Lead (DCI) was provided with a daily summary of lifts recovered from crime scenes and identifications received and progress made.

Development of innovative tactical options menu

To address a shortfall in previous processes the Strategic Lead (DCI) in conjunction with the DI, Auto Crime devised a programme of new activity which was believed would have an impact to address issues of prevention, reduction and detection.

These initiatives and activities were in part original and the 'brain child' of the two officers in other aspects they were initiatives tried and tested in other parts of the country and in some cases they were modifications to tactics used elsewhere.

To achieve maximum impact in respect of a 'launch' and to highlight the priority now being given to Auto Crime within the Borough and to highlight the drive, commitment and determination to tackle the problem the Strategic Lead arranged for a week long period of activity to be undertaken in December 2006.

To support BCU resources a bid was made for additional resources to be made available from the five other BCU's within the Force. This bid was accepted and as a result a total of 120 staff including police officers, PCSO's and Roads Policing staff were made available to the launch on a daily basis.

The launch was attended by ACC Operations and ACC Citizen Focus along with the BCU Commander and other members of the Senior Command Team. The press and media were in attendance and a pre brief had taken place to ensure maximum coverage within the local media.

A detailed overarching plan was produced in relation to the activities that week and individual; plans were created for each of the teams undertaking specific and varied activity. Again Team Leaders were identified for each of the units deployed, these team leaders had received personal briefings from the DI and DCI in respect of their specific responsibilities.

Many of the activities and tactics now utilised throughout the BCU to address Vehicle Crime have been identified as 'best practice' within the Force. Some of these tactics were launched during the week long operational activity in December 2006; some have been implemented since that date. In summary the tactical options menu now includes:

Operation Trawl

An operation whereby a number (usually 6) officers are deployed in plain clothes to a 'hot spot' location. Their role is to identify known vehicle crime offenders or other persons within hot spot locations whom it is believed should be stopped and spoken to by the police. Having identified individuals they provide the information to a Command Vehicle who then deploys double crewed officers in uniform in marked vehicles to effect the stop, and to search where appropriate and justified. The Plain Clothes officers maintain view of the individuals until the officers are in contact with them as previous experience showed that youths would star burst on sight of a liveried vehicle.

Operation Cashmere

Involves the deployment of a decoy vehicle. This vehicle is a car or van and is fitted with a Satellite Navigation system, which is on display. The vehicle is deployed with a current hot spot location. Officers in plain clothes maintain observations on the target vehicle and await an attack upon it.

Hot Streets

Having identified crime trends further research is undertaken to identify specific roads where offences are more prevalent.

Officers lead by a senior officer then patrol these locations in high numbers and for a limited period of time before moving to the next location.

The activity usually involves Police Officers including CID, PCSO's and Local Authority Wardens numbers vary between 20 and 40.

At the 'hot street' location officers deploy on foot and in uniform and distribute leaflets to each of the households. The leaflets are specific to vehicle crime in that area and include a preventative element along with reassurance highlighting that officers are patrolling in uniform but also in plain clothes. Telephone numbers are also provided for those wishing to discuss the matter further.

The liveried vehicles used for transport remain in the area with illuminated blue warning lights to maximise impact.

Warning Letters

During the course of the Hot Streets activity warning letters are served on known auto crime offenders or individuals where intelligence indicates they are involved in vehicle crime.

The letters warn them that they will be subject to surveillance where appropriate, their premises will be subject to search and ASB legislation will be considered where appropriate if they continue committing crime or engaging in anti social behaviour.

Trojan Dog

A variation on Cashmere. A van is deployed portraying to be a delivery vehicle. It is left in the hot spot location. A police dog and handler are secreted in the rear of the van. Observations are maintained on the vehicle by officers in plain clothes. When attacked the dog and handler exit and apprehend the offenders. This initiative has been subject of national media interest and has alone had a dramatic impact of attacks on commercial vehicles.

Other activities included: deployment of decoy vehicle fitted with Smartwater spray activated upon an attack, improved usage of Street Posters highlighting the use of Smartwater, Plain Clothes Officer etc etc, surveillance of subjects

Partnership funding opportunities maximised

Due to the strong links forged between the police strategic lead and support officers and Local Authority Strategic Lead it has been possible for the police in particular to access significant funding streams through the CDRP and others.

This has provided an opportunity for greater flexibility in respect of hire vehicles, covert equipment and specialist training available to support the drive to reduce vehicle crime.

Funding has always been used to assist in sustainability of activity and professionalism.

Media strategy implemented

Far greater use of the media has been made since the launch of Big Wing Auto Crime. This has included inviting reporters to accompany both overt raids and covert operations. Successes are widely publicised due to the relationship developed with reporters operating within Merseyside. A specific tactic is to highlight success of a tactic and then to portray the fact that it will continue indefinitely when it is known by the police that this is not possible. The Trojan Dog activity was featured on national TV and radio (GMTV and Radio 5) and it is still feared as a tactic by local criminals.

Assessment:

TABLE 2 - Theft from motor vehicle offences reported by Month – Dec 2006 – March 2007

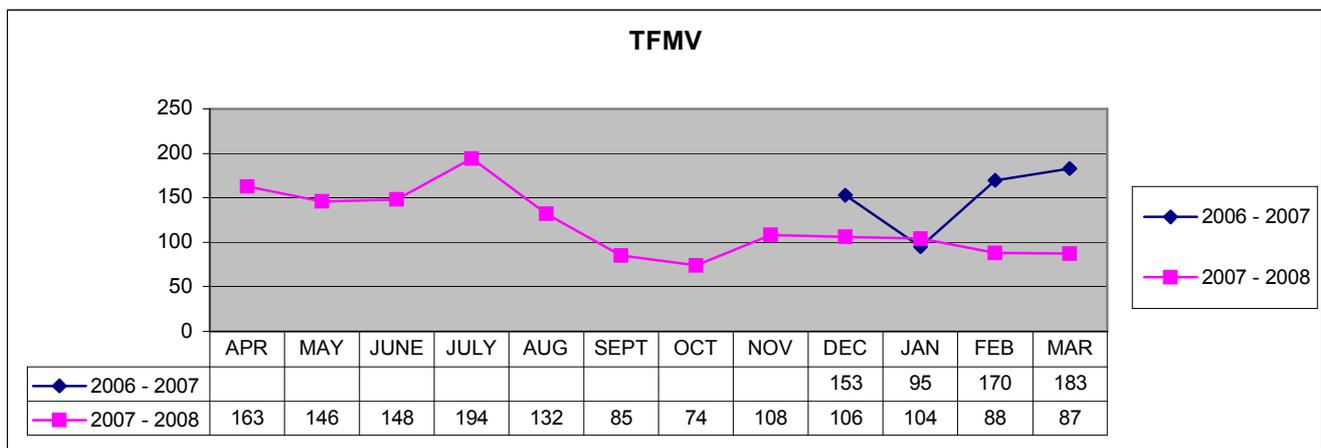


Table 2 speaks for itself in terms of raw statistic returns for the number of offences of theft from motor vehicle reported within the BCU since the commencement of the operation in December 2006. Albeit there was a peak in July 2007 the results assessment shows that an immediate impact was noted following the launch of the operation and the sustained week long activity under the banner of the innovative techniques and operations.

It should be noted that these innovative approaches to tackling the problem, 'Auto crime Big Wing – Trojan dog, Trawl & Hot Streets' were show cased at the Force innovation fair in July 2007 and subsequently the officers presenting and leading on these tactics were commended by the Chief Constable, Mr. Hogan-Howe.

The overall trend is downwards and continuing and since September 2007, so now seven months and continuing into April 2008, so eight months the monthly average offences reported has remained static at around 90 offences. Clear sustained and reduced offending in this crime type and a clear success story.

Arrest rates are improved, detection rates up, prevalence of hot spot areas can now be more easily identified and having to respond now to just a third of the number of calls per month for this crime type has freed up officer time created the opportunity for proactive patrolling of the now more easily identifiable hot spots.

In conclusion, and as stated in the opening of this application, prior to '**Operation Big Wing (Auto crime), Knowsley**' there was no ownership or accountability for this crime type. The introduction of the strategic lead and the ownership that brought was the catalyst for the subsequent operation and activity. Personal ownership and leaders in key positions to drive the activity, both changes to processes, partnership relationship building, joint work streams, and tactical options were all crucial aspects of the success of this operation.

That ownership and leadership remains in place today and the continued performance improvements are testimony to the impact this has made. A problem solving approach was the framework for the overhaul of the end-to-end processes and the tactical responses put in place to address the scanning & analysis. The problem solving activity was driven with visible, strong accountable leadership, which ultimately led to the sustained successes.

State number of words used: 3894

Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative - *Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.*

Checklist for Applicants:

1. Have you read the process and application form guidance?
2. Have you completed all four sections of the application form in full including the endorsement from a senior representative?
3. Have you checked that your entry addresses all aspects of the judging criteria?
4. Have you advised all partner agencies that you are submitting an entry for your project?
5. Have you adhered to the formatting requirements within the guidance?
6. Have you checked whether there are any reasons why your project should **not** be publicised to other police forces, partner agencies and the general public e.g. civil or criminal proceedings pending in relation to your project?
7. Have you inserted your project name as a footer note on the application form? Go to View-Header and Footer to add it.
8. Have you saved you application form as a word document and entitled your message '**Tilley 08 entry (followed by project name in brackets)**' before emailing it?

Once you are satisfied that you have completed your application form in full please email it to Tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. One hard copy must also be posted to Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building (SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and be received by 25th April 2008.